



# In Memory of the Fallen

May 26, 2025

Today is Memorial Day. It grew out of Decoration Day, which developed into a reconciliation memorial in the late 19th century to honor the fallen soldiers in the Civil War.

Decoration Day started in the South as Confederate Heroes Day and Confederate Decoration Day, but it almost immediately caught on in the North—one can hardly get more Yankee than the Danbury, Connecticut,

avant-garde composer Charles Ives (1874–1954), whose [Decoration Day](#) (1915–1920) tone poem (he later placed it in his Holidays Symphony as the [second movement](#)) is one of the great American orchestral classics (or so I'm told).

By 1890, every Union state had adopted a Memorial Day of some kind, under different names, not always celebrated on the date first promoted in the North, May 30. The two world wars shifted the emphasis even further to a national commemoration, and, in 1968, Congress changed the day of its observance to the last Monday in May; in 1971, Congress standardized the name as “Memorial Day.”

In 2000, Congress passed the National Moment of Remembrance Act, asking people to stop and remember at 3:00 pm. [According to Statista](#), there have been 1,304,705 military fatalities in America's wars. These ultimate sacrifices warrant a special day of remembrance dedicated solely to them.

Don't we owe them our freedom? I certainly believe we owe it to the fallen to *keep* that freedom *alive*.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.