

# *Memorial Day, 2021*

*(a FamilyDigging Podcast)*

*P: Welcome back to Family Digging. Carolyn Lancaster here, and I am with Paul Hende. Today we are going to talk about one of each year's most important holidays in our minds.*

*C: Memorial Day this year is May 31st, the last Monday in May. It is a time to remember all those in our military who paid the ultimate sacrifice in order that we all might enjoy the freedoms we have today. And it is an opportune time to think about how we can support those they left behind in grief.*

*P: This is NOT Veterans Day (held on November 11th each year), which is a day we set aside to thank and honor all who served, in war time and in peacetime, regardless if they lived or died. No, Memorial Day is specifically set aside for the remembrance of our soldiers who were killed in military service for their country. A good way to not confuse the days we especially remember our military heroes is the following:*

*Armed Forces Day is for those  
Still in their uniform.*

*Veterans Day is for those  
Who hung up their uniform.*

*Memorial Day is for those  
Who never made it out of their uniform.*

*C: Decoration Day, as it was first called, began in the years following the Civil War as a patriotic civil memorial day for the Union's war dead. Later it expanded to include the rebel soldiers as well. It became even more important as World War I caused many more to die. Finally, it evolved to memorialize ALL American military personnel who have died in ALL wars.*

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*C: For about 100 years it was observed as a civil remembrance on May 30th of each year, but in 1968 Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act effective 1971 to change a number of holidays so that they would all create three day weekends for federal employees. At the same time Decoration Day became Memorial Day, now a Federal holiday, celebrated on the last Monday of May*

*P: There are a number of traditions surrounding Memorial Day.*

*P: When we were growing up, just after World War II, it was a day for parades in almost every town, incorporating military personnel and members of veterans' organizations, and with a memorial service following. People spent time cleaning up the grave sites of their patriot heroes and decorating them with flags and sometimes flowers. There were picnics for the families who gathered to do this work and to talk about their fallen loved ones. And everybody but everybody participated in Memorial Day activities. Today, the unfortunate fact is that too few use this day to remember those fallen. To learn how to properly clean a gravestone without damaging it, see the link at the end of this transcript.*

*C: It was also the only day of the year that a holiday was celebrated with flags flown at half mast from sunrise until noon. (It still is done this way.) There is a particular way that this is accomplished: first raising the flag quickly to the very top, and then slowly lowering it to half mast in the morning. Then at noon, the flag is once again raised to the top of the pole. If you have an interest in learning more, we have a link that will take you to the place where you can discover U.S flag etiquette, rules and guidelines at the bottom of this transcript on our familydigging.com website.*

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*P: Then there is a tradition of wearing a poppy in your lapel on Memorial Day. This began during World War I, when Lt. Colonel John McRae wrote a poem called "In Flanders' Fields". Lt. Colonel McRae was a Canadian surgeon for an Allied artillery unit. The poem was first published in Punch Magazine in 1915, and is still one of the most memorable poems ever. Here it is:*

*C:*

*IN FLANDERS' FIELDS*

*By John McRae*

*In Flanders' fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly,  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,  
In Flanders' fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die,  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders' fields.*

*P: The final tradition we will cover today is the National Minute of Silence which is requested of all Americans wherever they are at 3 pm local time. TAPS is often played preceding or following the silence. Appropriate protocol says that one should stand at attention with your hand over your heart for the Minute of Silence and if Taps is being called, same position, but facing where the music is coming from.*

*P: **"Taps"** is a bugle call sounded at 2100 hrs (9 pm) at military facilities to mark the end of each day, during flag ceremonies, and at military funerals by the United States Armed Forces. It is a haunting, beautiful 24 notes that is unforgettable. Many people don't realize that there are also lyrics to TAPS. At the very end of this transcription is a page with all the lyrics we are familiar with, as well as a link to YouTube.com where you can hear the bugle version played.*

*C: Last year, when we were all locked down with Covid running amok, a call for playing TAPS at 3 pm on Memorial Day by all musicians from wherever they were at 3 p.m. was requested, and it looks like another tradition is beginning. They are repeating the request this year, and CBS TV is planning to do a segment on it on the evening news on Memorial Day. A link for details about TAPS Across America is at the bottom of this transcript.*

*P: These days it is all too easy to look at Memorial Day as just another holiday - time for shopping the sales, time for the beach, a barbeque, but Memorial Day is different. We hope you will spend some time remembering all those who gave their lives for all of us living in this country.*

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*C: As usual, if you would like to hear this or any of our other podcasts or want a copy of the transcript with the links mentioned, please go to [familydigging.com](http://familydigging.com), go into our podcast files and have at it. If you would like to be notified of our upcoming podcasts, please subscribe on the home page of our website. And if you would like to comment, ask questions, or say hello, please email us at [familydigging@gmail.com](mailto:familydigging@gmail.com).*

*P: Till next time...Bye now.*

*Paul and Carolyn*

## **LINKS**

*TO CLEAN GRAVESTONES PROPERLY:*

*<https://cemeteryconservatorsunitedstandards.org/standards/cleaning/>*

*FLAG ETIQUETTE:*

*<https://www.almanac.com/us-flag-etiquette-rules-and-guidelines>*

*TAPS Across America*

*<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/taps-across-america-2021/>*

*Note: on the transcription, this page will be done separately with two columns, then attached to the transcript.*

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# TAPS

complete lyrics

Gone the sun,  
From the hills,  
From the lake,  
From the skies.  
All is well,  
Safely rest,  
God is nigh.

Go to sleep,  
Peaceful sleep,  
May the soldier  
Or sailor,  
God keep.  
On the land  
Or the deep,  
Safe in sleep.

Love, good night,  
Must though go,  
When the day  
And the night  
Need thee so?  
All is well.  
Speedeth all  
To Their Rest.

Fades the light;  
And afar  
Goeth day,  
And the stars  
Shineth bright,  
Fare thee well,  
Day has gone,  
Night is on.

Thanks and praise,  
For our days,  
'Neath the sun,  
'Neath the stars,  
'Neath the sky,  
As we go,  
This we know,  
God is nigh.

Links: HORN VERSION US NAVY BAND

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WChTqYIDjtI>