

Our Freedom Holidays

by

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Throughout history groups of people typically fled their native lands either to escape tyrannical governments, religious dictates, and/or to seek out economic wealth. As they settled in new, far-away places they established new governments that would often conflict with the governments of the lands they left. When this happened, armed conflict between the new and old lands would break out. Such is the story and history of the United States.

Between the time when colonists arrived in Chesapeake Bay in 1606 and when sparks between the British and colonists in 1765 initiated the beginning of the American Revolution, colonists fought side-by-side with British forces in six (6) wars. Although the number of Americans who died as a result of these wars is unknown, it is estimated that during the French and Indian War, there were more than 13,400 colonist died.

When looking at the number of Americans who died in war for our nation, we can begin our counting with the American Revolution which resulted in 31,800-35,800 deaths (estimated) (killed in action, died as POWs, died of disease).

Between the American Revolution (1675) and the Civil War (1861), an additional six wars were fought. The most notable ones were the War of 1812 (15,000 estimated deaths) and the War of Texas Independence (13,200 deaths, 17% of those involved).

An estimated 620,000 men (about 2% of the US population of that time) lost their lives during the US Civil War. This is considered the deadliest war in American history.

War	Died
World War I	116,516
World War II	418,500
Korean War	40,000
Vietnam War	58,220
Middle East including Afghanistan	15,000+

TOTAL 648,236+

It may not sound like much when you think about 6.5 hundred thousand men and women who died for our nation over the past 100 years. That's just 6,483 people per year. Ten times that number died of drug overdoses in 2018. There are 10,200 drunk driving deaths annually, according to the Highway Safety Commission.

But what have those who died from overdosing or drunk driving contributed to safeguarding the freedoms you enjoy and protecting our nation from foreign and domestic enemies. Most of those who overdose have not served our nation and its people in any positive manner. With drunk driving deaths, most of the victims were

passengers who died at the hands of a drunk driver, and like those who overdosed, most drivers have not served their country.

We spend more time and money on addressing drug overdosing and drunk driving than on those servants who protect us. These servants are the police, firemen, and soldiers who rely on us, the public, to protect their back as they go into the abyss of destruction, whether it is a lone gunman/gang, fire/other disaster, or foreign/domestic terrorists. We treat these people as slaves, doing the biddings that we place on their backs.

Observances Honoring Our Military

Military Appreciation Month	May (month of)	Pays tribute to those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom
Armed Forces Day.	Third Saturday in May	Shows appreciation for those currently serving in the armed forces
Memorial Day	May 30	Remembrance of all Americans who died while in military service
Independence Day	July 4	Recognizes the day our nation declared its independence from England
Veterans Day Armistice/Remembrance Day	November 11	Recognizes the service of our men and women who have served in the military
Patriot Day	September 11	Remembrance of those who were injured or killed during the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.
Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	December 7	The anniversary of the day Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, signaling US entrance into World War II.

There are a total of 36 military observances. Some observances are national holidays, while others are state and/or local holidays, or simply appreciation days for military personnel and their families.

Typically, veterans (those who have served in the military) are often recognized at local gatherings and veteran organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the American Legion, will hold/conduct special observance activities.

If the word VETERAN were to be an acronym what would it mean to you? Here is one interpretation

- V -- Victory.
- E -- Encouragement.
- T – Tough
- E – Educate

R – Resolve
A – Appreciate
N -- Never

Unlike the military observances, law enforcement and firefighters have only two yearly observances each. Both groups are recognized on Patriot Day (9/11).

January 9 marks National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day while May 4 is International Firefighters' Day (IFFD). But neither of them are “days off” for anyone.

It is unfortunate that these two groups do not receive the attention they deserve, especially since each group plays such a vital role in our day-to-day lives.

All of the above observances we can call our Freedom Holidays. Some are truly holidays that we can celebrate with joy and happiness. Others should be celebrated with remembrances of those who have fallen, while protecting us and our nation.

We need to remember what each observance stands for and act accordingly. We need to also teach our children and grandchildren the importance of remembering those have served us.