



Butch's Bullet Points – Memorial Day 2026

Memorial Day is more than the unofficial beginning of summer. It is a sacred day of remembrance; a solemn pause in the life of our nation to honor those who gave their lives in defense of liberty. It is a day defined by duty, honor, country, sacrifice, and reverence. In America's cemeteries, flags are placed upon hallowed ground, bugles sound "Taps," and families gather in quiet gratitude for freedoms purchased at a terrible cost.

Too often Memorial Day and Veterans Day are confused, yet they carry different meanings. Veterans Day honors all who have worn the uniform of the United States Armed Forces. Memorial Day specifically honors those who never came home — the fallen heroes who gave what President Abraham Lincoln called "***the last full measure of devotion.***"

Few places symbolize that sacrifice more powerfully than Arlington National Cemetery. Considered the cornerstone of America's military remembrance, Arlington serves as the final resting place for thousands who answered the call to serve. Among those buried there are President John F. Kennedy, General Douglas MacArthur, and the crew members lost aboard the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster. Yet Arlington's deepest meaning is found not only in the famous names, but also in the countless rows of white headstones marking the graves of ordinary Americans — farm boys, factory workers, teachers, parents, sons, and daughters — whose devotion to country became extraordinary through sacrifice. Walking through Arlington leaves no doubt that it is truly hallowed ground.

As our nation approaches America's 250th birthday in 2026, Memorial Day reminds us how fragile and precious freedom truly is. Since America's military origins in 1775, historians estimate that fewer than 8% of Americans have ever served in uniform. Through every generation, that small percentage has carried the responsibility of protecting the liberties enjoyed by all Americans. Their service preserved the ideals upon

which our nation was founded and ensured those principles could be handed to future generations.

President Ronald Reagan once said, ***“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction.”*** Those words remind us why Memorial Day matters. The freedoms we enjoy today were not inherited automatically; they were preserved by sacrifice and passed from generation to generation by Americans committed to duty and service.

Another timeless reminder comes from author G. K. Chesterton, who wrote, ***“Courage is almost a contradiction in terms. It means a strong desire to live taking the form of readiness to die.”*** Memorial Day asks Americans to remember those who demonstrated that courage in defense of others.

Today, honoring sacrifice must also include caring for those who are still carrying the burdens of service. [The American Legion](#) continues this mission through its “Be the ONE” initiative, encouraging Americans to help prevent veteran suicide by reaching out, listening, and supporting veterans during times of struggle. Remembering the fallen also means ensuring the living is never forgotten.

Memorial Day should always keep its solemn atmosphere. The fluttering of flags, the echo of “Taps,” and moments of silence in cemeteries across America remind us that freedom has endured because generation after generation answered the call of duty. As we prepare to celebrate America’s 250th anniversary, may we recommit ourselves to the values of Americanism, service, and gratitude.

May we always remember that no matter in which cemetery you see a small flag on Memorial Day; that beneath every stone marker lies a story of courage, sacrifice, and love of country — and may we remain worthy of the freedoms they died to preserve.
