

T.F.S.

Three, five, and seven

3 5 7

By Ed Halpaus, Grand Lodge Education Officer.
Number 172 – June 01, 2010

This publication is issued with the permission of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. and A.M. of Minnesota.

“Courage is almost a contradiction in terms. It means a strong desire to live taking the form of readiness to die.” G.K. Chesterton

Memorial Day!

**“Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not the goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.”**
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Memorial Day is observed on the last Monday of May: It is a day set aside to remember and honor all those who have died and were veterans of the U.S. armed forces and especially those who died while serving in wars.

The history of Memorial Day or Decoration Day, as it used to be called, dates back to the time of America's Civil War, (the War Between the States.) During the four years of this war the total dead from both sides in the conflict were 558,052 and of those there were 184,524 who were killed in action. With so many people dying as a result of this war there were many family members of those deceased who would tend to the graves of their beloved family members. Those who tended to these graves were parents, siblings, spouses, and children of the soldiers killed in the conflict. After the end of the war, many communities seeing the care and decorations on the graves of deceased soldiers began Decoration Day traditions. Several communities across the nation, both north and south, decorated graves of civil war soldiers with flowers and flags much as has been done from that time to this.

Today this holiday is to commemorate those who have died in all the wars of the United States, not just to have a three day weekend without any thought about those who have fought and died: It is our honored Service men and women who have insured that every one of us might have the freedom to have a three day weekend to spend with our friends and families. Parades and picnics are traditional for Memorial Day, and it is thanks to all who served that we are able to do that. A Veteran of the Korean Conflict said this morning that ‘it’s sad to see so many who died in the war, but,’ he said, ‘when you see the prosperity of South Korea and the freedom the South Korean’s enjoy today then you know that we made a difference, the dead did not die in vain.’

I believe that our war dead would be pleased to see people enjoying the freedoms they fought so hard to preserve. And I also believe they and those who survive them would be pleased to know that we remember and honor them for all they did as we enjoy this Memorial Day Weekend with our families and friends.

The history of the development of Memorial Day is an interesting subject. It begins, of course, with the wives and mothers of those who died, but a Mason by the name of John A. Logan had a big hand in the establishment of this day to commemorate the soldiers and sailors who died in the wars of the United States.

Brother John Logan, (Benton Lodge #64 Benton Illinois – raised in Mitchell Lodge #85 Pinckneyville, Illinois,) was a Major General in the Union Army during the Civil War. He entered the Mexican War as a Private and became a Lieutenant in the first Illinois Infantry. After that war he was elected a U.S. Congressman from Illinois and resigned his position to take part in the Civil War. He rose through the ranks to Colonel then Brigadier General then Major General by the end of 1862. After the war he declined appointment as Minister to Mexico and was again elected to

Congress, and later to the United States Senate from Illinois. He was also one of the founders and the second commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic.

The Grand Army of the Republic was a fraternal organization composed of veterans of the Union Army who had served in the American Civil War. It is said that the G.A.R. was based partly on the traditions of the Military and partly on the traditions of Freemasonry, which is not surprising since Brother Logan was one of the founders of the organization. The G.A.R. reached its highest membership in 1890, and it held its "National Encampments" each year from its beginning in 1866 to its last one in 1949. At the August 28-31, 1949 Encampment, held in Indianapolis Indiana, it was decided to cease the encampments because there were only 6 living veterans at that time, and to disband the G.A.R. when the last Union Veteran of the Civil War died. The last to die was Albert Woolson of Duluth, MN on August 2, 1956 at the age of 109. He "answered President Lincoln's call to arms and marched off to war as a drummer boy when he was 17"

The G.A.R. had considerable political influence from 1868 to 1908 and on May 5, 1868 Brother John Logan as commander-in-chief of the G.A.R. issued General order #11 to all G.A.R. members designating May 30th as "A day to honor those who died in the Civil War by decorating the graves of soldiers and sailors from the North and South. Brother Logan called it "Decoration Day." That order made it official and many communities who had been decorating graves previously, (such as the women of Columbus Mississippi who had been doing just that since 1866; and the women of Winchester, Virginia since 1865; and the women of Boalsburg, Pennsylvania since 1866; and Vicksburg, Mississippi since 1865; and Waterloo, New York since 1866; just to name a few,) continued with their traditions and many other communities began this great tradition.

I remember as a kid hearing Memorial Day being referred to as Decoration Day by an awful lot of people, (mostly much older than me at the time,) but an interesting fact is that the G.A.R. in 1882 changed the name from Decoration Day to Memorial Day. This was done because the G.A.R. wanted to recognize soldiers who had fought in any American War, and to highlight the importance of remembering these people as opposed to only decorating their graves. By the time of this change, (1882,) Memorial Day was a legal holiday in the Northern States. The Southern States chose to honor the dead of the Confederacy on a different day. However, following the end of the Great War, (World War One,) the Southern States began to recognize Memorial Day.

It was in 1971 when President Richard Nixon declared Memorial Day to be a National Holiday, and changed the date from May 30th to the last Monday of May in each year.

While the ladies of Columbus Mississippi on April 25, 1866 visited a cemetery to decorate the graves of Confederate Soldiers who had died in the battle at Shiloh, they noticed some neglected graves of some dead of the Union forces. Being disturbed by the sight of those bare graves the ladies placed some flowers on those graves too. This type of benevolence and caring was demonstrated by people in many cities and towns on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line. Over the years, cities and towns from many places in the North and the South have wanted the designation as the "Birthplace" of Memorial Day. Subsequently, as President and Brother Harry Truman stated, when referring to the presidency, "the buck stops here", it fell in 1966 to President and Brother Lyndon Johnson (and E.A.), to decide which location was to be designated as the birthplace of Memorial Day.

One of the first communities to celebrate what would two years later be called Decoration Day was Waterloo, New York. A Pharmacist in Waterloo, Henry C. Welles, organized a town celebration to decorate the Graves of the Civil War Dead, and for the living veterans to be in a Town Parade, so with the help of the citizens of his community, the town officials, and the veterans, he organized one of the first official celebrations and it was held May 5, 1866 two years to the day before Brother Logan would issue his General Order #11. So Brother and President Johnson in 1966 one hundred years later issued a proclamation calling attention to the centennial anniversary of the first observance of Memorial Day. Waterloo, New York is officially the birthplace of Memorial Day.

"In Honor of the American Service Men and Women."

By Brother and General Douglas MacArthur

General of the Armies of the United States of America.

**When the country is in need, it has always been the soldier:
It's the soldier, not the newspaper, which has given us freedom of the press:
It's the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech:
It's the soldier, not the campus organizer, who has given us freedom to demonstrate:
It's the soldier who salutes the flag, who serves under the flag:
It's the soldier who is called upon to defend our American way of life.**

So from me; personally, and as the Grand Lodge Education Officer, on behalf of my Grand Master, M. W. Brother John L. Cook Jr.; a United States Army Viet Nam Veteran, and the officers of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Minnesota, to all of you who served in the Armed Forces of the United States and its Allies; Thank you!

“Honor is the inner garment of the Soul; the first thing put on by it with the flesh, and the last it layeth down at its separation from it.” Akhenaton - BCE ~1375, Egyptian King, Monotheist

Words to live by: “Honor your commitments with integrity.” Les Brown

From volumes of Sacred Law:

“For the Jews there was light and gladness and joy and honor.” Esther 8:16 Tanakh NASB

“And no one takes the honor to himself, but {receives it} when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.” Hebrews 5:4 New Testament NASB

“They have deserved a position of honor in Paradise.” 070:035 Qur'an Khalifa Translation

Please remember: if you would like to participate in the latest Masonic Monday Question, please go to <http://www.lodgebuilder.org> and click on the Lodge Education forum. When you have an answer send it to masonicmonday@gmail.com the Masonic Monday Question for the week of 05/31/10 is: **Regarding the 24 inch gauge: The Graduation in 'inches' is actually an old English measure, but why? And what is the meaning of the symbolism we learn of the 24 inch gauge we learn in the first degree?**

“No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.” President Calvin Coolidge

More Light – Mehr Licht ©, Masonic Matters © and T.F.S. ©, are sent out by Email at no charge to anyone who would like to receive them. If you enjoy these publications please share them with others. To subscribe to these publications just send an E-mail to erhmasonic@gmail.com with Subscribe in the subject line and you will be added to the list to receive the publications.

“Don't hit at all if it is honorably possible to avoid hitting, but never hit soft.”
President and Brother Theodore Roosevelt

The newest Education video from the Grand Lodge of Minnesota can be viewed at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAcUiBn8xI0>.

TFS & Masonic Matters can also be read on Ed's Face Book page;
<http://www.facebook.com/ed.halpaus> - <http://halpaus.blogspot.com> - <http://www.mn-masons.org>
Please remember – Ed's new email address is erhmasonic@gmail.com the old one is going away.

With “Brotherly Love”,
Ed Halpaus
Grand Lodge Education Officer

**Seek to mentor a Brother Mason:
It's good for him, it's good for you, and it's good for Freemasonry!**