

WAR AND HONORING OUR BRAVE AMERICANS

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION



Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who died in service to their country. The holiday was officially proclaimed in 1868 to honor Union and Confederate soldiers and was expanded after World War I to honor those who died in all wars. To grasp the magnitude of this sacrifice, over one million men and women have died in military service since the Civil War.

Many people confuse Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Memorial Day is a day for remembering and honoring

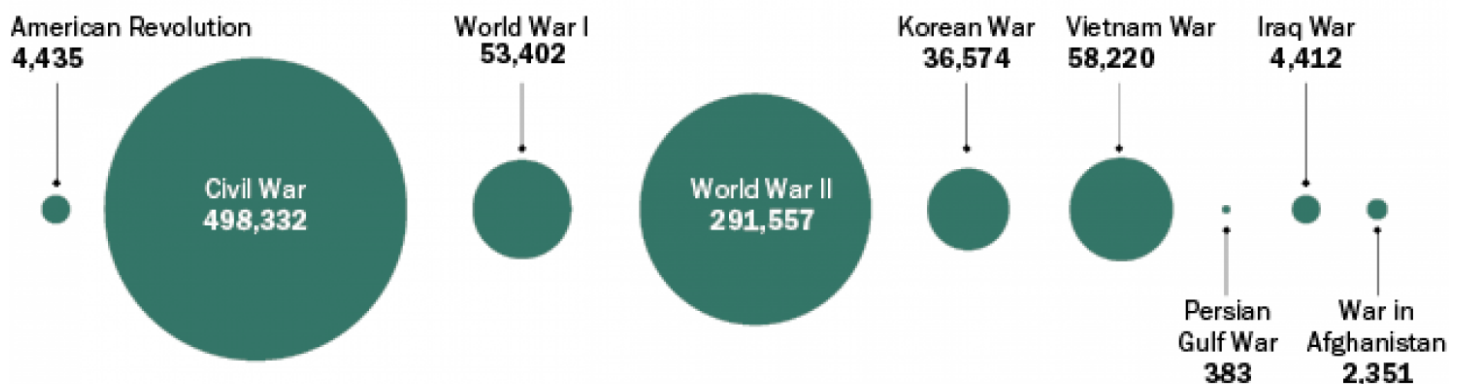
military personnel who died in the service of their country, particularly those who died in battle or as a result of wounds sustained in battle. While those who died are also remembered, Veterans Day is the day set aside to thank and honor ALL those who served honorably in the military — in wartime or peacetime. In fact, Veterans Day is largely intended to thank LIVING veterans for their service, to acknowledge that their contributions to our national security are appreciated, and to underscore the fact that all those who served — not only those who died — have sacrificed and done their duty.

Memorial Day – Monday, May 28, 2018 **Veterans Day – Monday, November 12, 2018**

Regardless of the way we remember the fallen and cherish the living, the staggering numbers of American soldiers who died while fighting in major conflicts should give all of us a greater appreciation of our freedom. Please review the chart below and the table on the next page.

Military Deaths in America's Major Wars

Number of American soldiers who died while fighting in major conflicts...



Note: Figures do not include deaths outside theaters of conflict. Civil War deaths are based on incomplete returns due to estimates of Confederate deaths. Figures as of May 2015.

Source: Congressional Research Service, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; U.S. Department of Defense.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

(over)

American Revolution (1775-1783)

| | |
|--|---------|
| Total U.S. Servicemembers ¹ | 217,000 |
| Battle Deaths | 4,435 |
| Non-mortal Woundings | 6,188 |

War of 1812 (1812-1815)

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Total U.S. Servicemembers | 286,730 |
| Battle Deaths | 2,260 |
| Non-mortal Woundings | 4,505 |

Indian Wars (approx. 1817-1898)

| | |
|---|---------|
| Total U.S. Servicemembers (VA estimate) | 106,000 |
| Battle Deaths (VA estimate) | 1,000 |

Mexican War (1846-1848)

| | |
|---------------------------|--------|
| Total U.S. Servicemembers | 78,718 |
| Battle Deaths | 1,733 |
| Other Deaths (In Theater) | 11,550 |
| Non-mortal Woundings | 4,152 |

Civil War (1861-1865)

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Total U.S. Servicemembers (Union) | 2,213,363 |
| Battle Deaths (Union) | 140,414 |
| Other Deaths (In Theater) (Union) | 224,097 |
| Non-mortal Woundings (Union) | 281,881 |
| Total Servicemembers (Conf.) ² | 1,050,000 |
| Battle Deaths (Confederate) ³ | 74,524 |
| Other Deaths (In Theater) (Confederate) ^{3,4} | 59,297 |
| Non-mortal Woundings (Confederate) | Unknown |

Spanish-American War (1898-1902)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Total U.S. Servicemembers (Worldwide) | 306,760 |
| Battle Deaths | 385 |
| Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater) | 2,061 |
| Non-mortal Woundings | 1,662 |

World War I (1917-1918)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Total U.S. Servicemembers (Worldwide) | 4,734,991 |
| Battle Deaths | 53,402 |
| Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater) | 63,114 |
| Non-mortal Woundings | 204,002 |

World War II (1941 -1945)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Total U.S. Servicemembers (Worldwide) | 16,112,566 |
| Battle Deaths | 291,557 |
| Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater) | 113,842 |
| Non-mortal Woundings | 670,846 |
| Living Veterans ¹⁰ | 696,000 |

Korean War (1950-1953)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Total U.S. Servicemembers (Worldwide) | 5,720,000 |
| Total Serving (In Theater) | 1,789,000 |
| Battle Deaths | 33,739 |
| Other Deaths (In Theater) | 2,835 |
| Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater) | 17,672 |
| Non-mortal Woundings | 103,284 |
| Living Veterans ¹⁰ | 1,592,000 |

Vietnam War (1964-1975)

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Total U.S. Servicemembers (Worldwide) ⁶ | 8,744,000 |
| Deployed to Southeast Asia ⁷ | 3,403,000 |
| Battle Deaths ⁸ | 47,434 |
| Other Deaths (In Theater) ⁸ | 10,786 |
| Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater) ⁸ | 32,000 |
| Non-mortal Woundings ⁹ | 153,303 |
| Living Veterans ¹⁰ | 6,953,000 |

Desert Shield/Desert Storm (1990-1991)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Total U.S. Servicemembers (Worldwide) | 2,322,000 |
| Deployed to Gulf | 694,550 |
| Battle Deaths | 148 |
| Other Deaths (In Theater) | 235 |
| Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater) | 1,565 |
| Non-mortal Woundings | 467 |
| Living Veterans ¹⁰ | 4,483,000 |

America's Wars Total (1775 -1991)

| | |
|--|------------|
| U.S. Military Service during Wartime | 41,892,128 |
| Battle Deaths | 651,031 |
| Other Deaths (In Theater) | 308,800 |
| Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater) | 230,254 |
| Non-mortal Woundings | 1,430,290 |
| Living War Veterans | 16,104,000 |
| Living Veterans (Periods of War & Peace) | 21,368,000 |

Global War on Terror (Oct 2001 -)

The Global War on Terror (GWOT), including Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), are ongoing conflicts. For the most current GWOT statistics visit the following Department of Defense Website:

<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcass/pages/casualties.xhtml>

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Living Veterans ¹⁰ | 4,398,000 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|

Discussion Review - Questions related to this article.

- When and why do we celebrate Memorial Day? _____
- When and why do we celebrate Veterans Day? _____
- What was the original name of "Memorial Day?" _____
- Which war had the most American casualties? _____ How many? _____
- How many American battle deaths in the Spanish-American War? _____
- Which war had more American casualties, World War I or World War II? _____
- Did the American Revolution have more or less casualties than the Korean War? _____