

Take time to remember what Memorial Day is really about

War is one of those seemingly necessary evils in our society.

Today – Memorial Day – is when we pause to remember those who lost their lives fighting for the United States. It's a day to put aside our political differences and personal beliefs that led to the deaths of these men and women.

These lost lives are no less significant because we don't agree on what led to their deaths. They died fighting for what our government deemed a worthy cause.

Don't blame the soldiers for the job they do. If you disagree with the battles being fought, then deal with the lawmakers. The soldiers who keep marching, keep training, keep fighting – they deserve our respect and our thanks.



Memorial for
South Lake
Tahoe men who
died in the
Iraq conflict.
Photo/LTN file

Lake Tahoe News takes this time to salute those who given the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

The ones who died deserve a moment of silence today – and more

often. Take a moment from your long weekend and remember that many people have an empty chair at the picnic table today.

Go to one of the many ceremonies at the cemeteries and military halls. Place a flag on the marker of a grave of a soldier. Toast to those who are not with us.

Hardly any community has not been touched by the death of a soldier – including Lake Tahoe.

Some died in combat. Some died in training.

Those who aren't listed are the ones who took their lives because they did not know any other way to conquer the demons they were ravaged by.

Not all of those who died volunteered to serve in one of the branches of the military. But those who join one of the branches today do so willingly. That is to be commended – especially in the world we live in today. Most of these people will see a tour of duty overseas in hostile areas where U.S. citizens are not always welcome.

It is naïve to think the numbers of military deaths will ever be nil. But we must not ever forget those who have died fighting to make the world a better, safer, more livable place.

The *Washington Post* keeps a running list of those who have died in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. While news sites seem to keep these conflicts off the front pages, they are always front and center for the thousands of families who worry each day that the dreaded call will come saying their loved one has died.

We owe it those who have died to not forget them.

Below is a list of the wars, or whatever the government chose to call it, where the U.S. engaged in combat, the dates of the struggle, and the number of people the country lost in the

fight. Of course, the numbers in the last two categories keeps growing.

Conflict	Dates of	Number of casualties
War of Independence 1775-1783		25,000
Northwest Indian War	1785-1795	
		1,221
Quasi-War 1798-1800		20
Barbary Wars 1801-1815		35
War of 1812 1812-1815		20,000
1st Seminole War 1817-1818		30
2nd Seminole War 1835-1842		1,500
Mexican-American War 1846-1848		13,283
3rd Seminole War		

1855-1858

26

Civil War

1861-1865

623,026

Indian Wars

1865-1898

919

Spanish-American War

1898

2,446

Philippine War

1898-1902

4,196

Boxer Rebellion

1900-1901

37

Mexican Revolution

1914-1919

35

Haiti Occupation

1915-1934

146

World War 1

1917 - 1918

116,708

World War 2

1941 - 1945

407,316

Korean War
1950-1953
36,914

Vietnam
War
1964-1973
58,169

El Salvador
1980-1992
20

Beirut
1982-1984
266

Persian Gulf "Support"
1987-1988
39

Invasion of Grenada
1983
19

Invasion of Panama
1989
40

Persian Gulf War
1991
269

Somalia
1992-1993
43

Bosnia

12

Afghanistan

2002 - 2011

1,571

Iraq

2003 - 2011

4,442.