

Opinion: A time to remember those who died for the U.S.

Memorial Day is often called the kick-off to summer. The real meaning of today goes much deeper.

Memorial Day is about honoring those in each branch of the military who have died for the United States.

As much as it's easy to say war is not necessary. It is a reality. People have been dying for this country for close to 250 years. They die every week.

The names of these men and women whose lives are cut short are seldom mentioned unless they are from the town where you live. But they were a daughter or son, a mother or father, a niece or nephew, a sister or brother, a friend.

South Lake Tahoe has had its share of recent losses – Pfc. Brandon Williams, 21, died in October 2006; Sgt. Tim Smith,



25, in April 2008; Spc. Garrett A. Grant, 21, September 2011.



Tim Smith's family remembers him every day with this memorial in the Al Tahoe neighborhood of South Lake Tahoe.
Photos/LTN

Walking through Happy Homestead Cemetery tells a story about this areas rich military history. Men and women here have been and continue to serve in the military. Some serve during times of peace, others during war, or other conflicts.

Lake Tahoe News believes a debt of gratitude is owed to the people who today serve on a voluntary basis. And we can't forget about those who were told they would serve or face the threat of being jailed.

How many of us have the courage to wear one of those uniforms? It's a small percentage of the overall population.

As you gather with friends and family today, take a look around. Many families are without someone today because they were killed in action, a training mission or some other circumstance. They did die fighting for our freedoms.

Yes, we all suffer loss, but would we be willing to die for our country?

Ceremonies:

- 11am, Happy Homestead Cemetery, South Lake Tahoe.
- 11am, El Dorado County Veterans Monument, Placerville.