



## **Memorial Day Message**

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War, a conflict so bloody and divisive that many who lived through it simply wished to forget about it once it finally was over. But, in the years immediately following the end of the war, communities and individuals throughout the North and South decided that those who had died in battle could not and should not be forgotten, and so they decorated the graves of the fallen with the fresh-cut flowers of spring.

These simple gestures led to the establishment of Memorial Day, a holiday set aside to honor all Americans who paid the ultimate price while serving this great nation.

Memorial Day now marks the unofficial start of summer, and has become a long holiday weekend packed with picnics, parades and parties. Yet this should also be a time of remembrance, reflection and renewal – remembering those who served on our behalf, reflecting on the sacrifices they made, and renewing our commitment to the principles and values they fought for, and died to defend.

You can show that you understand and care about the true meaning of Memorial Day by attending one of the several observances that will be held in the Quad Cities and surrounding communities. I also ask that you take part in the National Moment of Remembrance, which occurs at 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day. At that time, please pause what you are doing and spend one minute in silence, in honor of all the heroes who silently lie in eternal rest.

Gestures as simple but meaningful as standing in silence, or placing flowers upon the graves of our honored dead, remind us of the cost of our freedom, and so help keep freedom alive and well. That's why we observe Memorial Day, and why this holiday which pays tribute to those who've passed should mean so much to those of us who now enjoy the blessings of liberty and prosperity.

**Maj. Gen. Yves J. Fontaine**  
**Commanding General, U.S. Army Sustainment Command**