

THE ROANOKE TIMES

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Editorials

A day to remember those who sacrificed

On Memorial Day, we recognize Americans killed or wounded fighting for their country.

Memorial Day traces its roots to the years after the Civil War when an organization of Union veterans established Decoration Day as a day for the nation to adorn the graves of the war's dead. Many southern states refused to participate for decades. They preferred Confederate observances, some of which are still marked today.

By the end of the 19th century, Memorial Day ceremonies were held across the nation on May 30. The holiday's scope grew after World War I, when it became a day to commemorate those who died in all American wars.

Congress finally declared Memorial Day a national holiday in 1971, fixing it on the last Monday of May.

Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (2001 - present)

	Afghanistan	Iraq
Killed in action	1,538	3,526
Nonhostile deaths	317	962
Wounded in action	16,024	31,928

Associated Press



thinkstock.com

American Revolution (1775-83)

Battle deaths	4,435
Nonmortal wounding	6,188

War of 1812 (1812-15)

Battle deaths	2,260
Nonmortal wounding	4,505

Mexican War (1846-48)

Battle deaths	1,733
Nonmortal wounding	4,152

Civil War (1861-65)

	Confederate	Union
Service members	1,050,000	2,213,363
Battle deaths	74,524	140,414
Other service deaths	59,297	224,097
Nonmortal wounding	Unknown	281,881

Spanish-American War (1898-1901)

Battle deaths	385
Nonmortal wounding	1,662

World War I (1917-18)

Battle deaths	53,402
Nonmortal wounding	204,002

World War II (1941-46)

Battle deaths	291,557
Nonmortal wounding	670,846

Korean War (1950-53)

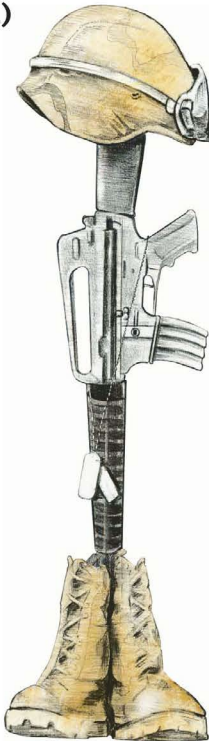
Battle deaths	33,739
Other deaths in-theater	2,835
Nonmortal wounding	103,284

Vietnam War (1964-73)

Battle deaths	47,434
Other deaths in-theater	10,786
Nonmortal wounding	153,303

Persian Gulf War (1990-91)

Battle deaths	147
Nonmortal wounding	467



The (Tacoma) News Tribune

Data compiled from U.S. Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs, Congressional Research Service and news sources.

Women's place, post 9/11

As of Friday, 139 U.S. servicewomen had died in Afghanistan and Iraq. Though women have been caught up in combat for the past decade in wars without front lines, military policy is just starting to catch up to reality on the ground.

Memorial Day 2012 is the first that will see women assigned to once all-male Army combat units. Nine brigades started pilot programs this month assigning female officers and non-coms to noncombat jobs in personnel, intelligence and logistics, among other support roles they've been filling without formal assignment.

The Marines, though, are taking point on the policy shift. Last month, the Marine Corps Times reported that, as part of the corps' research "to determine what additional jobs could be opened to women, an undetermined number of volunteers will attend the Infantry Officers Course in Quantico," where Marine officers are groomed "to serve in direct combat roles and lead troops into battle."

As is its wont, the corps is making a gutsy move, putting so controversial a possibility to the test.