

Commentary

Troop Talk

Memorial Day is the traditional American holiday commemorating and honoring our nation's fallen comrades. This year, Memorial Day is especially important since we are still a nation at war. The price of freedom is high, and many Americans will pause to honor all patriots who sacrificed their lives in defense of our nation. We must remember those individuals for their valor and courage, never forgetting their selfless duty and personal sacrifices.



History also tells us that during this holiday period many Americans are vulnerable to being severely injured or killed as a result of traffic accidents. What begins with high expectations for

the ensuring summer ends in tragedy. It is important that all vehicle operators be well rested before starting out on a long trip. When a person is fatigued, driving skills can become severely impaired, and reaction time is reduced. Commanders will discourage long distance driving without sufficient rest and sound trip planning. Stress motorcycle safety to your Soldiers! Individuals must take the basic Motorcycle Defensive Driving Course, Experienced Riders Course, and wear all protective equipment required when riding their motorcycles both on and off this installation. We must continue to engage in the Composite Risk Management process for off-duty events since the number one killer of Army Soldiers is POV accidents.

As summer approaches, members of Team Bliss will participate in more recreational

activities with their families and friends to include swimming and boating. The second leading cause of Army accidental fatalities is drowning. Contributory factors are alcohol consumption, impeded visibility, lack of parental supervision of small children, lack of flotation devices, underwater entanglement, overloaded boats, cold, offshore winds, waves and rip, river, and tidal currents. Education regarding hazards and safe behavior is the key to prevention. No alcohol should be consumed during water activities. Lifeguard supervision and CPR training is a must. Use good judgment in all recreational activities. Have a safe, enjoyable, and accident-free holiday period.

Maj. Gen. Robert P. Lennox
Fort Bliss Commanding General

TRADOC commander sends Memorial Day holiday safety message

TRADOC Team:

Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day during the Civil War and late 1800s, is a time for us to pause and reflect on the contributions of our veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country and freedom. Officially proclaimed May 5, 1868, by Gen. John Logan, Memorial Day was first observed May 30, 1868,

when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate Soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

Today, this solemn, time-honored tradition reflects our tribute to honor the commitment, patriotism and sacrifices of all of our fallen comrades in arms. From the birth of our country in the early battles of the American Revolution, to the internal struggles of the Civil War, and two World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf Wars and others leading up to the current Global War on Terror, our young men and women have valiantly answered the call to duty in defense of this great nation. The

profound words of President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address truly capture the spirit of this day:

"From those honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion ... that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain ..."

Whether fighting to free a nation or protecting their own liberties and freedom, we are eternally grateful for the sacrifices of our brave young men and women; each and every one are heroes and have inspired us all to serve. From their memory emanates thoughts of loyalty, duty, respect,

selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage – our Army Values.

This Memorial Day weekend, as we gather with family and friends, let's pause to remember those who have given their lives in the name of freedom and democracy; and also remember those deployed on the ground in harm's way and standing watch on point for our nation around the world. God bless them and their families.

God bless each of you for your contributions and may God bless America.

Gen. William S. Wallace
TRADOC Commanding General

Memorial on the rocks, servicemembers honored, loved

WILSON A. RIVERA

Monitor Staff

I would like to think of Memorial Day as a tribute to servicemembers who have served their time in the U.S. Armed Forces and have passed away to include those who have died while serving their country.

The Memorial Day ceremony has been moved from the Fort Bliss Cemetery to Memorial Circle on post, where the installation's U.S. flag is flown. I like the change because of the

abundance of parking and shade from the trees, but I will miss the impact the headstones have with me at the cemetery.

I believe the change in the location of the ceremony probably didn't come without scrutinized consideration by Fort Bliss officials. The decision, to me, focuses more toward the vision of how our loved ones are remembered, which is the main reason for the holiday Monday. Does it really matter where servicemembers are honored? No, what

should matter is the manner that we pay respect to them with ceremonial traditions like a 21-gun salute and the playing of "Taps."

Sadly, I don't think I will get the same feeling when I hear the Salute when I'm not surrounded by headstones in the thousands. Yet, with the Fort Bliss Cemetery transitioning its landscaping to an untraditional setting from grass to rocks known as Xeriscape, I just can't imagine the same look of a cemetery. The more commonly scene of pearl

white grave markers contrasting against the green grass has been replaced with the Xeriscape reddish-brown rocks. So, the change to a greener area is a good decision.

Whether I am sitting next to a headstone of a family member, or sitting on the green grass at Memorial Circle, I will be able look up at the towering U.S. Flag they served under and remember them. Looking up at the flag gives me a chill when I think what's beyond there. It gives me some comfort knowing this nation's flag soars high close to heaven where my family looks down on me from.

Despite some frustration about the change of location, remember, our beloved servicemembers are with us. I look forward to Monday at its new location in Memorial Circle and hearing the words from others who have served and know the true meaning of their sacrifice.

Memorial Circle, how fitting for such an occasion like Memorial Day. I will attend and, honor servicemembers who make it possible to live my life by making my own free choices.

2007 DWIs by brigade/unit

| DATE | 6th BDE | 11th BDE | 31ST BDE | 108th BDE | 4/1 CAV | 1st AR DIV | GARRISON | WBAMC | FM/CIV | OTHER TENANT UNITS | OTHER MIL | TOTAL |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|----------|---------------|-----------------|-------|--------|--------------------|--------------|-------|
| JAN - MAR | 3 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 2 | | 7 | 3 | 1 | 33 |
| | HHB 6 BDE | 1/44 AMD X 4 | 13TH MAINT CO | 108th BDE | 2-12 CAV | 1-36 INF BN | MRB GARRISON X2 | | | 402 FA X3 | 63RD REG CMD | |
| | HHB 2/6 BDE | HHB 11TH BDE | HHB 3/2 ADA | 1/7 ADA X2 | | 1ST BDE | | | | | | |
| | 1/56 BN | 5/52 ADA | | 2/43 ADA X2 | | HFB FA 5-1 AD | | | | | | |
| APR - JUN | | | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | 6 | 1 | | 14 |
| | | 1/44 AMD X 2 | 1/44 AMD | 1/7 ADA | | 1ST BDE | | | | 402 FA | | |
| | | 5/52 ADA | 31ST BDE | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 3 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 13 | 4 | 1 | 47 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | TOTAL | 47 |

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