

Commander's Call Topics



May 24, 2012

"Our fallen heroes deserve the highest honor and respect. And we are committed to taking steps to ensure that lapses do not occur in the future." -- Pentagon Press Secretary George Little speaking of the punishment of supervisors accused of retaliating against [whistleblowers at the Port Mortuary](#) at Dover Air Force Base.

► CURRENT ISSUES

[New, lighter ABU available in June](#)

The new, Rip-stop Airman Battle Uniform (RABU), featuring a lighter nylon-cotton blend, will be available to Airmen at 16 U.S. bases and through AAFES online starting in June.

[Law authorizes mobilizing reservists to respond to natural disasters](#)

New authority in this year's Defense Department authorization act allows reservists in Air Force Reserve Command and other reserve components to be called to duty in response to natural disasters or emergencies in the homeland. The law also permits mobilizations for extended periods to support theater security missions around the world.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

[Knowing common hiring authorities critical in filling civilian positions](#)

As the Air Force continues to reform its hiring processes, hiring managers can make better, timelier decisions when they understand which hiring authorities they should use when recruiting new employees.

[Additional civilian employee self-service requests available online](#)

Air Force Personnel Center human resources officials have expanded a self-service initiative allowing civilians to request updates to their personnel records online.

[JBSA-Randolph to test run new PCS process](#)

Starting at the end of May and going through February 2013, officials here will help test a new procedure to centralize steps military members take to get their permanent change of station orders and other actions prior to out-processing.

► FAMILY, HEALTH AND SAFETY

['Pink slime' products to be permanently removed from commissary shelves](#)

While commissary officials assure customers that the lean finely textured beef antibacterial process has been approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration for decades, the officials made the decision recently to phase out these products in response to customer concerns.

[Coalition nations sign international 'Interfly' agreement](#)

U.S. Air Force Surgeon General Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Charles B. Green, along with the surgeons general of Australia, Canada and Great Britain, signed an international "Interfly" Proclamation of Understanding on May 14, in Atlanta, Ga.

► RESOURCES

AF.mil

<http://www.af.mil>

Airman magazine

<http://www.airmanonline.af.mil/>

Air Force Community

<http://www.afcommunity.af.mil/>

Air Force Outreach

<http://www.afoutreach.af.mil/>

Military OneSource

<http://www.militaryonesource.com/>

Military HOMEFRONT

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/>

Air Force Personnel Center

<https://gum-crm.csd.disa.mil>

<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>

Air Reserve Personnel Center

<http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/>

Department of Defense

<http://www.defense.gov>

Department of Defense News

<http://www.defenselink.mil>

Department of Veterans Affairs

<http://www.va.gov>

TRICARE

<http://www.tricare.mil>

U.S. Government Website

<http://www.firstgov.gov/>

Employment Opportunities

www.usajobs.com

www.nafjobs.org

Air Force Association Scholarships

<http://www.afa.org/aef/aid/scholars.asp>

► MEMORIAL DAY

“Decoration Day.” The original name for Memorial Day conjures up reminders of post-World War II America with sunshiny days, patriotic parades, multi-generational family picnics, and the date-certain start of summer: May 30th.

In truth, Decoration Day began shortly after the Civil War as a day to put flags and flowers on the graves of Union soldiers to honor them. Although many Union war dead were buried where they fell, many had been buried in family plots. It soon became a custom to honor all the deceased in a family, and for the living members of the family to gather in a sort of annual reunion. This ritual was further enhanced by a religious service and what was known as “dinner on the ground,” a sort of potluck supper spread out on tablecloths on the ground.

On May 5, 1868, John A. Logan, Sr., as commander-in-chief of The Grand Army of the Republic, a fraternal organization for Union Civil War veterans, issued a proclamation that Decoration Day be observed nationwide. According to *The Folklore of American Holidays*, the holiday was observed for the first time on May 30th of that same year, the date having been chosen because it was *not* the anniversary of any battle. Decoration Day was quickly being embraced as an American tradition, not just a veteran’s experience. In 1868, memorial events were held in 183 cemeteries in 27 states; by 1869—a year later—there had been an uptick of more than 80 percent to 336 events. In 1871, Michigan made Decoration Day an official state holiday. By 1890, every northern state had also declared it an official state holiday.

Following World War I, Decoration Day was no longer limited to the commemoration of the Civil War dead. The day honored all Americans who died in service to their country. It wasn’t until 1967 that the holiday’s name was officially changed by federal law to Memorial Day.

Decoration Day, and then Memorial Day, was officially designated as May 30, regardless of the day of the week on which it fell. However, as a result of the Uniform Holidays Act, which took effect at the federal level in 1971, Memorial Day has been officially observed on the last Monday of May, thereby creating a three-day weekend as the unofficial, yet traditional, start of summer.

The day itself may move around a bit, but many traditions linger unchanged. For example, many people observe Memorial Day by visiting cemeteries and memorials, often in the afternoon, to coincide with the national moment of remembrance that takes place at 3:00 P.M. local time. Another tradition is to fly the flag at half-staff from dawn until noon, and at full staff until sunset. Yet another tradition that has seen a resurgence in recent years and is almost a harkening back to the original idea of Decoration Day, volunteers place American flags on each grave site at the 146 national cemeteries throughout the United States.

For many Americans, the central event is attending one of the thousands of parades held on Memorial Day in large and small cities all over the country. Most of these feature marching bands and an overall military theme with the National Guard and other servicemen participating along with veterans, Gold Star Mothers, and military vehicles from various wars.

No parade in your area? Then just think of Ironton, Ohio. The city lays claim to the nation’s oldest continuously running Memorial Day parade. Its first parade—a Decoration Day parade—was held May 5, 1868, and the town has held one every year since. Ironton, Ohio, on the Ohio-Kentucky-West Virginia border, population 11,211, is a town with a lasting tradition and a long memory of who its heroes really are.

► THIS WEEK IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

May 24, 1963 - A Titan II launched from Cape Canaveral made a 6,500-mile flight down the Atlantic Missile Range and dropped the largest nose cone ever carried within one mile of the target.

May 25, 1927 – Lt. James H. Doolittle performed the first known successful outside loop.

May 26, 1961 – Maj. William R. Payne and Capts. William L. Polhelmus and Raymond Wagener flew a B-58 Hustler 4,612 miles from New York to Le Bourget Field, Paris, in FAI record time. They completed the trip in 3 hours 19 minutes 41 seconds by flying at 1,089.36 miles-per-hour to earn the Mackay Trophy. By comparison, Lindbergh's flight took 33 1/2 hours. On June 3, however, the crew died when the B-58 crashed after take-off from LeBourget Field for the Paris Air Show.

May 27, 1966 - The McDonnell Douglas F-4J Phantom made its first public flight.

May 28, 1959 - A Rhesus monkey, Able, and a squirrel monkey, Miss Baker, were the first primates to be launched and recovered successfully from space. They were recovered after their nose cone hit in the Atlantic Ocean near Antigua Island. They flew to 300 miles in altitude on a PGM-19 Jupiter missile launched from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla.

May 29, 1997 - A B-2 from the 509 BW at Whiteman AFB dropped a GAM-113 bomb over the China Lake Range near Edwards AFB. This drop marked the first time the 4,700-pound conventional penetrating weapon was paired with the B-2.

May 30, 1912 - Wilbur Wright died of typhoid fever at the age of 45 in Dayton, Ohio.

For more information on Air Force heritage, visit <http://www.airforcehistory.af.mil>.

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