

A Time to Remember



Memorial Day is for memories. It is a day set aside to remember those who have given their lives for our country, and it is also a day for us to remember all our loved ones who have died.

As a teenager, I recall putting flowers on my grandfather's grave; it was something I felt I had to do that took a few minutes of my holiday. Now placing flowers on a grave on Memorial Day is something I want to do.

The significance of the day has changed for me. Now it's my brother who's buried. Jerry's death at age twenty-one in a truck accident in 1984 was unexpected and shocking. I had never felt such grief before - grief so strong that even as time tries to heal the pain, the scars remain. That's why Memorial Day for me is no longer what it is to many people - a long weekend, a day off work, and the beginning of the swimming and boating season.

This day holds special meaning. While at other times of the year I get teary eyed when a picture or person brings back the thoughts of Jerry, on Memorial Day my emotions are especially sensitive. Memorial Day weekend is an opportunity for our family to share our thoughts, remembering certain things he did.

While some say that Memorial Day is not a traditional holiday such as Christmas or Thanksgiving, I disagree. As we put flowers on Jerry's grave and a group of relatives gather around as I read poems in memory of him and our other deceased loved ones, I feel a strong sense of family.

These people understand how I feel. It's okay to cry. And strangers drive by in their cars and line the roads of the cemetery to pay their own respects. I feel I am not alone.

We all share something. For me, that's what Memorial Day is all about.

This article by Dawn Morville of Springfield, IL, appeared in the June Newsletter of the Coeur D'Alain Chapter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA