

MEMORIAL DAY

by cosmicrat
May24 2013, 6:29 am

The name of this holiday says it is a day of remembrance. We think of it as a day to remember those of our fellow citizens who have been killed and maimed in America's wars, from the War for Independence through the wars of today.

Certainly we should remember them. Whether the wars were justified or not, known or covert, those who fought and died in them were not the ones who decided to wage them. They did what they were told was their duty to their country.

But remembering the sacrifices of our own citizens is not enough. We also need to remember those our country has killed in the wars we have waged.

Killing is what war is about. Killing those designated as our enemies is what our military is ordered to do. Whether military or civilians, killing more of them than they do of us is how wars are won.

But the vast majority of those we killed did not decide to start the war. They may have been fighting to protect their homeland from us, or told by their leaders their cause was just. Each of them was mourned by their loved ones- by parents, wives, husbands, children, brothers, sisters; friends.

Someone knew their names. To us they are mostly anonymous. Most of the time all we know is about how many we killed, and how we did it. Like our own people, some of them survived, but came home with missing parts. Like our own, many ended up with disturbed minds, unable to cope with the killing and dying around them, and unable to resume normal lives when it was over.

They deserve our remembrance, too. They were human beings, not so different from ourselves. But more than that, let us remember that war is not glory, and it is not just dying. It is killing, done by our country; done in our name. If we think about that enough, we might remember to say "no" to the next war. That would be a true Memorial.

--cosmicrat May 24, 2013