



While most of us are looking forward to an extra day off this week to either hit the lake or links, Memorial Day is a time to step outside our busy lives and remember those who made our country possible. The U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs estimates that as of January 2007, 1,203,640 American soldiers throughout our history have paid the ultimate price for our freedom.

The particular veterans I will remember this Memorial Day are my grandfathers, Lester Kauffman and Albert Mayes. While they survived World War II they have both since passed away.

Tech Sergeant Lester C. Kauffman was with the 16th Armored Division serving in the European Theater at the close of the war, seeing action in then Czechoslovakia and Germany. PFC Albert C. Mayes was with the 743rd Railway Operations Battalion, providing transportation support in France and Belgium. Both men left wives and young families behind to serve their country in it's time of need, sacrificing years of their lives like so many other young men and women continue to do to this day in service to freedom.

As a young history buff, their time in the Army proved to be a bridge between us. Even during the awkward adolescent years their tales would lure me in and provide us with hours of conversation. As an adult I look back on those times with great fondness and pride. I am grateful to my grandfathers not only for their service to their country but for freely sharing those experiences to help me grow and mature. These times created a bond between us that endures to this day; even though they are gone, their influence remains.

While those who died in the service of our country or who have since passed away cannot know how much we appreciate their sacrifice, we can demonstrate this gratitude by honoring those veterans who are in our midst. Please take the time this weekend to attend a Memorial Day service and say "thank you" to one of our many proud veterans. Considering the tyranny America and her allies has opposed over the generations, it is no exaggeration to say that we would not be here if it weren't for them. Thank you, veterans, for your service and sacrifice, and God Bless America!

Memorial Day Service will be held at 10:00 AM on Monday, May 25th between the fire station and the Methodist Church. Commander Lonnie Johnson will introduce the guest speaker, Quartermaster Bob Putnam. The Buffalo High School band will begin the ceremony; refreshments will be served following.