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May Insight

For many of us, Memorial Day is an eagerly anticipated three-day weekend in May. But for our nation's history and collective memory it is much much more and quite rightly so. Originally called Decoration Day, Memorial Day is a national day of remembrance in honor of those who have died to obtain and preserve the freedoms that we enjoy each day as Americans. Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, and was first observed on May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

The Americans who are honored on this day are many, as the casualties of our wars have been great despite the relative youth of the United States. Truly, *freedom is never free!*

Honoring the Fallen

On this Memorial Day there are numerous things that each of us can do to honor these individuals and to instill in our children (and reaffirm in ourselves) an awareness of their sacrifice.

- At 3:00 p.m. local time on Memorial Day there will be a National Moment of Remembrance for all Americans. Take a few minutes away from whatever you and the family are doing and pause for a moment of silence in their memory. Discuss with your children the meaning of that "moment" and make it a family tradition.
- Visit a cemetery such as Arlington or the countless other Veterans' cemeteries throughout the United States and overseas. Place flags or flowers on the graves of our fallen heroes.
- Visit a memorial to the fallen, such as those honoring our World War II or Vietnam Veterans. Learn its history and the history of sacrifice that led to its creation.
- Fly the American, and/or the POW/MIA flags at half-staff from dawn until noon local time at your home. Both are authorized by Congress for Memorial Day display.

TOO MUCH DEBT -

America's national debt is 105% of the size of the US economy today. Our national debt was 54% of the size of the US economy in 1960 (source: White House).

MAKING LESS STUFF -

Manufacturing in the United States represented 21% of the economy in 1980, falling to 12% today. Manufacturing jobs in the United States represented 18.6 million jobs as of 12/31/80, a total that has fallen 34% to 12.3 million jobs as of 4/30/16 (source: Department of Labor, United Nations).

COLLEGE BOUND - Of the 2.97 million students that graduated from American high schools in 2015, 2.05 million (69%) were enrolled in a college or university in the fall of 2015 (source: Department of Labor).

These are the views of James Steen & Jason Pearson. No independent analysis has been performed and the material should not be construed as investment advice.

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