

Glendale Memorial Day 2009 'What Memorial Day Means To Me' Essay Competition



Allison Bui, R.J. Ravancho, & Emma Oravec, essay competition winners in the Village of Glendale Memorial Day Parade

2nd Runner UP Essay: What Memorial Day Means to Me by *Emma Oravec*, Bethany School, grade 6

Your life is the greatest gift you can give your country, and on Memorial Day we honor men and women who have given their lives to defend us. On Memorial Day, I go to the cemetery with my family and listen to a special service. The old men from World War II come up to the podium and talk about their friends that died and tell how they respect them. I'm really glad that they were there to stop the Nazis, because they were so mean. Men from other wars like Korea and Vietnam also talk, and I think it is very heart-touching, because they talk about how their friends gave their lives to save us, and I respect that, too. If there are any soldiers home from Afghanistan or Iraq, they stand up and we all clap for them, and that makes me feel happy, sad, and proud all at the same time. I am happy for them, because they fought hard and did a good job. I am sad because they might have to go back and fight again. And I am proud, because they are representing our country. I am glad that America has a day to remember the soldiers who gave us their greatest gift.

1st Runner UP Essay: What Memorial Day Means to Me by *Allison Bui*, St Gabriel Consolidated School, Grade 5

To some people Memorial Day is like a regular day. They know that it's a day to remember soldiers who have died to protect our nation. Well, that's what I've been taught. I guess it is true but there is so much more to it. I know those soldiers were brave and saved many people. You may ask how I know since I never lived in a war zone country under constant attacks and fleeing for my life. The fact is these brave

men and women have saved my parents' lives. They were once called Vietnam refugees.

All the fallen soldiers who have died in that war and all the other wars are remembered on this day. Those veterans are like heroes to our blessed country. So to me Memorial Day is not a regular day but a day of honor, sadness, and remembering. I've realized what makes this day so special to me is that my mother and father actually were saved and for that I am grateful.



R.J. Ravancho reading his winning essay entitled "What Memorial Day Means to Me" during the patriotic presentation after the Village of Glendale Memorial Day Parade.

1st place Essay: What Memorial Day Means to Me by R.J. Ravancho, St Gabriel Consolidated School, grade 4

Memorial Day is a holiday where we honor those citizens living or deceased that paid the ultimate sacrifice to defend our country, values and way of life. I come from a line of proud military members. I am the son, nephew, and grandson of military veterans. My father, Ron Ravancho, served in the U.S. Army as a Ranger and later as a Green Beret. My father and I talk periodically about his time in the service. I never knew that the man I call "Dad" served in foreign campaigns all around the world. He has told me about some of his experiences in Grenada, Honduras, the DMZ, and

Panama. As my Dad and I talk, he always tells me that "It is our duty as citizens to join the military and protect our way of life."

I never knew that my father is an immigrant. He came here to the United States when he was just a little boy from the Philippines. He is very proud to have the opportunity to serve the country that allowed him to live life free from oppression. My grandfather on my Dad's side is a former member of the U. S. Navy and a Vietnam veteran. My grandfather on my Mother's side is a former member of the Army National Guard. My Dad's brother, Uncle Ben, was in the Air Force and my Uncle James was a U. S. Marine.

Most people believe that Memorial Day is just a regular holiday. I know that Memorial Day is a day where all those military veterans past and present are honored and remembered for their actions. I honor my family members every year by putting on my Cub Scout uniform and marching with my pack in Glendale's Memorial Day parade. I believe that every citizen should take a moment on this day to remember those members of the U.S. military that are currently in harm's way and say a small prayer for them and their families that they return home safely.

On this Memorial Day while I am marching in the Glendale parade, I will remember the conversations I have had with my Dad and my grandfathers and continue to march proudly. After all, they are the inspiration for this essay.