

My buddy Lee has a statement along the lines of... “There is no sweeter sound than the hearing of one's own name.” It’s a great reminder that all people are important and speaking a person’s name is one way we can show them respect as a cherished individual in our world.

Speaking another’s name has particular importance as we move into the month of May. Amidst all the springtime experiences, there is an important holiday where we speak the names of personnel killed in military service. Memorial Day was officially established in the United States after the Civil War, though for many years prior a similar holiday - Decoration Day – was celebrated.

This holiday allows many of us to extend this time-honored tradition of celebrating the lives of those lost while serving in military service. We honor our military dead and celebrate their lives. And this same time allows us to take pause of all the people - military and other – who have given their lives in service. One can’t help but think of fallen peacekeepers and firefighters, especially given Daryl Gordon’s recent death while fighting a Cincinnati fire. We are deeply indebted to millions of women and men who have given their lives for the sake of our freedom and safety.

While such somber moments are important, it’s also critical to celebrate the lives well-lived in the past and present. For instance, it always touches me when I hear someone thank a person in uniform for her/his service. While it brings bittersweet feelings at times, I feel the same way about what many sports teams do in honoring a member of our military during a ballgame, allowing the crowd to show our appreciation in some small way by clapping and smiling.

The Cincinnati area is blessed with a number of wonderful cemeteries, both in the well-maintained conditions and the lives of people buried in them. Spring Grove cemetery has many military personnel buried there, and many other regional locations have well-marked graves of those who have completed military service. The Mount Washington Cemetery has been written up in the Community Press in the last year or so, describing the dedication of the volunteers maintaining it.

If you get a chance, maybe take a stroll in one of the region’s cemeteries. Time of reflection there provides a wonderful way to remember and celebrate those who have gone before us. Then, move on to enjoying the day, with a renewed spirit of why we’re so pleased to be living in a world where so many contribute to making it a better place.

And, maybe a thank-you to the checkout person, by name, will bring a smile to your lips?

Enjoy the day...and the memories!

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*Steve Long, an Anderson Township resident, is an “aspiring memory missionary.” He and wife Kim are having fun with Long Memories efforts ([www.LongMemories.info](http://www.LongMemories.info)), focusing on helping others in “Making, Capturing, Organizing and Sharing Memories...Now and (Virtually) Forever!”*