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Memorial Day should honor America's fallen – Washington Times

## Memorial Day must honor all of America's fallen

Union and Confederate combatants never forsook their brotherhood



*Illustration of Confederate soldiers buried in Arlington Cemetery by Alexander Hunter/The Washington Times*

### ANALYSIS/OPINION:

As president of the American Veterans Center, the organization that produces the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington D.C., I am sometimes questioned as to why we include Confederate reenactors in our timeline of American military history. I reply that we strive to be historically accurate; that the Civil War is indisputably one of the monumental (though tragic) events in American military history; and that the Confederate soldiers, though misguided, regarded themselves as Americans who honored George Washington and the Founders, who believed in the Constitution. We also honor the Native Americans and the Buffalo Soldiers who fought them.

Moreover, though most Americans don't know about it, there is a large section of Arlington National Cemetery reserved for Confederate dead and that on Memorial Day almost every president since Woodrow Wilson — including Barack Obama — has sent a wreath to be laid at the memorial.

The Civil War was an interfamily war that not only divided the country, but which also set brother against brother. A story that personifies the tragic internecine split involves my alma mater, Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. A story told best by the late Philip Shriver, a former president of the university. Located only 37 miles north of Cincinnati, which is across the Ohio River from the slave-holding state of Kentucky, Miami was probably more affected by the Civil War than any other college. Twenty-five percent of the student body at the time came from below the Mason-Dixon line and the Civil War split the Miami faculty and student body (then male-only), many whom went on to serve in the military of both sides. Amazingly the alumni of this small institution produced 10 generals in the Union army, three generals in the Confederate army, two of three of the Union's Navy's admirals, two of Lincoln's Cabinet members and six of the 33 governors.

When war broke out on April 13, 1861, 160 students, loyal to the Union and local farmers formed the University Rifle Company and began drilling on the north side of the main campus building. Pro-Confederate students and townsmen began drilling on the south side of the building. On April 19, both Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis issued calls for volunteers and on April 22, the