

# THE 2016 MEMORIAL DAY ESSAY

MIA FEDERICO

DELIVERED AT BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEMORIAL DAY ~ MAY, 30 2016

Every day, men and women put their lives on the line to protect the United States' citizens from the hate the world suffers. Once a year, a day in May comes around to remind us of what those people have done to keep the American Dream alive - Memorial Day. Memorial Day is a day where the nation remembers those who gave their lives fighting for our freedom. When I was younger, Memorial Day was just a day out of school, until I started paying attention to what has happened in the United States of America. Because I live in Bedford, I have been taught to recognize and understand the importance of Memorial Day.

For the friends and family of the fallen soldiers, Memorial Day is just another day where they are reminded that someone in their lives is missing, but for those lucky enough not to be familiar with the feeling of loss, Memorial Day is important because it makes people stop and think about how lucky they are to be living in America, something people can take for granted. Bedford, a small town in Massachusetts, founded in 1729, because of its history, is a place where the reasons why Memorial Day is so important shine through on a daily basis.

There are many reasons why Bedford's history helps me understand the importance of Memorial Day. The Bedford Flag, the oldest throughout the entire country, to me at least, symbolizes honor and bravery, and the ability to stand strong after everything that has happened. The silver fringe was cut off long ago to make a dress, but I believe that it adds to the flag's importance and symbolism by becoming a sign that even with some pieces missing, the flag still means so much to everyone. Memorial Day is the country's battle flag. The day of remembrance honors those who were brave enough to die serving their

country. It brings people together, and shows how even after all the war and hate we have endured, we are still standing. Even with some pieces that we know will always be missing, our country has survived. Although Bedford is not one of the towns that the textbooks usually mention, Bedford played a big role in the Revolutionary War. No, the town does not have any historically significant sights like Boston and our surrounding towns, Lexington and Concord, but the Bedford Minutemen have always been there. Years ago, I learned all about the Revolutionary War, and learned the basic information about the founding of our country, like most children do, but what interested me the most was that this all happened in my own backyard. Twenty minutes away, Paul Revere's ride happened, and not even five minutes away, in Concord, The Shot Heard 'Round the World started the war for our freedom. In the Bedford Cemetery, a black slave who fought in the war is buried, and is remembered daily. Bedford's history helps me understand the importance of Memorial Day because I am surrounded with reasons why we have a day to honor the members of our militia.

The American Dream is a set of ideals in which freedom includes the opportunity for prosperity and success, and in other words, that our posterity is given the chance to thrive. The United States of America was created because people wanted a say in what happened in their lives, and from April 19th, 1775 to this day, the bravest people in the country risk their lives to protect what we fought for so many years ago - the right to freedom. Memorial Day honors all of those who lost their lives fighting for our freedom, and ensuring that the United States continues its uphill climb since the eighteenth century. Because I live in Bedford and am surrounded by the town's rich history, I understand Memorial Day's importance, and where the country would be without the day to remember. Although the country cannot take back what it has lost over the years, the least the citizens of the United States can do is take a moment to remember and honor the bravery of our militia, not just on Memorial Day, though - take a moment every day to honor those whose bravery ensures America's freedom.