

## **KEN-TON BEE ARTICLE**

**May, 2014**

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For many families, Memorial Day is the unofficial start of the summer season – a day to gather with family and friends, fire up the grill, and head out to a park or the beach. But the holiday is much more than that. It has the word "memorial" in it for a reason.

Many of you may not know that I am a retired military officer, having served with the U.S. Army. One of my assignments was as the Chief of Casualty Notification Office for 15 states during the Vietnam War. It was my job to notify the next of kin that their loved ones had died, been captured, were missing in action, or were seriously wounded. I was also responsible for providing survivor assistance and returning the service member home for internment. Many Casualty Notification Officers say it is the worst duty they've ever had to do in their lives. However, I can also tell you, it's the most honorable duty one can perform. And so, Memorial Day holds special significance for me. As we go about attending the various events scheduled for Memorial Day weekend, I ask you to pause and take time to remember the reason for the observances. They are not merely opportunities to gather with friends and family; their meaning is far greater. They present an opportunity for us to reflect, with reverence and gratitude, upon those who have lost their lives serving our country.

Here are some ways you can honor the men and women who serve our country:

- Attend various events scheduled at the Naval and Military Park during Armed Forces Week, May 4<sup>th</sup> through May 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Attend the Armed Forces Tribute Day at the Buffalo Bisons game on May 17. The event will feature special tributes before and during the game.
- Attend a dedication hosted by the American Legion and VFW Post on Memorial Day at 7:45 am at the Brounshidle Post. They will proceed to Falling Cemetery, Kenney Field Veteran's Memorial, Elmlawn, and Mt. Olivet, arrive at the Municipal Building by 9:00 and conclude back at the Brounshidle Post by 9:30.
- Attend the Volunteer Firemen's memorial service in front of the Aquatic and Fitness Center on Memorial Day at 8:30.
- Participate in a National Moment of Remembrance at 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day.
- Attend our annual parade which begins at 11:00 am on Memorial Day and proceeds down Delaware Avenue from south of Sheridan to Lincoln Blvd. to Elmwood.

On Memorial Day, let us pause to remember that freedom isn't free and to pay tribute to those Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice. They have ensured that we continue to enjoy the many blessings of liberty and freedom for years to come.