Memorial Day 2023

Patriot Plaza at Sarasota National Cemetery
Free and Open to the Public, Sunrise to Sunset!

View the virtual Patriot Plaza tour experience!
Patriot Plaza at Sarasota National Cemetery

Patriot Plaza, a 2,800-seat ceremonial amphitheater, was built and donated to Sarasota National Cemetery in Florida by The Patterson Foundation. It features commissioned art that honors veterans, inspires patriotism, and embraces freedom. The space is a place of peace and reflection and exists for our community to honor veterans through ceremonies and events for generations to come. Sarasota National Cemetery, like all 155 national cemeteries managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, is a place where all active duty or honorably discharged veterans can be buried. Some spouses and dependent children of eligible veterans can also be buried there.

Detailed eligibility requirements can be found at www.cem.va.gov.

Memorial Day

Memorial Day honors American service members who died in service to our country, while Veterans Day honors all American veterans, living and dead, who have served honorably during war and peacetime.

History of Memorial Day

Memorial Day has been celebrated in the United States since 1868. It was originally called Decoration Day and was used to honor those who died in the Civil War. It was called Decoration Day because people would recognize this day by decorating the graves of the soldiers who died in the war. Our country grew older and fought in more wars. Decoration Day was changed to Memorial Day to honor all veterans who died in service to the United States.
• General John A. Logan, who was a senator before he was in the Army, declared May 30 to be Decoration Day in 1868. Legend says he chose this date because there were no Civil War battles fought on that date in history.

• While Decoration Day/Memorial Day has been celebrated since 1868, it became a federal holiday in 1971.

• About 20 different places claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day, but in 1966, Congress and President Johnson declared Waterloo, New York to be the official birthplace of Memorial Day.

• We see a lot of flags on Memorial Day, but you might also see people wearing red poppies. In 1915, a Canadian surgeon, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, who had fought in northern France and Belgium during World War I, wrote a poem called, “In Flanders Field.” He talked about the poppies that covered the ground where battles were fought. In 1918, a teacher from Georgia, Moina Michael, read his poem and was inspired to write her own poem called, “We Shall Keep The Faith.” She campaigned for the poppy to be worn to honor those who have died in war.

DID YOU KNOW?

Memorial Day has its own unique flag etiquette. At sunrise, anyone flying a flag should raise the flag briskly to full-staff, then slowly lower the flag to half-staff. This is to honor the men and women who have fallen in the line of duty. At noon, the flag should be briskly raised to full-staff. This is to salute all of those who have served.
Color in the poppies.
You could even cut them out and wear them on Memorial Day.

Take a picture of you and your poppy, email it along with your name to be entered into a drawing for a prize! Send to: connect@gradelevelreadingsuncoast.net
Why do we celebrate Flag Day on June 14th every year? It is the anniversary of when the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution adopting our flag on June 14, 1777!

If you have a flag at your house, make sure you put it up on Flag Day. Walk around your neighborhood and see if other people are displaying their flags.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you hang the U.S. flag with other flags, like a state flag, on the same pole, the United States flag has to be the highest flag displayed.

The first flag of the United States had 13 stars and 13 stripes to signify the original 13 colonies. Today’s flag still has the 13 stripes, but contains 50 stars - one star for each of the states.
How should you display the American flag?

• Outside, the flag should be displayed from sunrise to sunset, only in good weather. It can be displayed at night, but it has to be illuminated.

• If it is hung on a wall horizontally, the union (the blue field with stars) should be at the top left when you are looking at it. If it is hanging vertically then the union should also be at the top left when you are looking at it. The flag shouldn’t be touching anything below it.

• When it is hung with other flags, the American flag should be in the center and the highest. This is a picture from the Pike’s Peak National Cemetery in Colorado. The other flags are the different branches of the armed services and also the POW-MIA flag.

• When the flag is displayed while people are marching, for example in parades or at sporting events, the American flag will be the furthest flag to the left when you are looking at the color guard.

Fun FACT When you are wearing a flag pin you should wear it on your left - close to your heart!
Take a picture of you and your word scramble, email it along with your name to be entered into a drawing for a prize! Send to: connect@gradelevelreadingsuncoast.net
Office hours: Monday to Friday 8:00am–4:30pm  
Closed federal holidays

Visitation Hours: Open daily from sunrise to sunset

- Sarasota National Cemetery is located at 9810 State Road 72 in Sarasota
- Admission is free
- Please no pets or picnics
- Burials occur on weekdays so please be respectful of those attending services

To learn more about Patriot Plaza at Sarasota National Cemetery, visit:
thepattersonfoundation.org/patriot-plaza

Twitter: #PatriotPlaza  
#ForAllAges

Family Engagement Events

Join THIS BOOK IS COOL! host, Beth Duda and various artists for interactive family events sponsored by the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and The Patterson Foundation. Families will have Fun and Explore thoughts and feelings, Share ideas, and Create your own work of art.

These family presentations are designed for adults and children PreK through Grade 3. Events will start early June. All are welcome! ***Registration is required***

Join in the creative fun! Use your mobile device camera app on the QR code to learn more and to register!

Generously funded by