

***By Jan Schultz, The Imperial Republican News Editor***

Hard to believe, but Memorial Day is nearly here.

It's somewhat of a contrasting holiday—one that signals the start of summer so many of us look forward to, yet a somber reminder of those who have died, most notably the men and women who have served our country in military service.

I was an impressionable teen growing up during the height of the Vietnam War. While I remember the likes of Jane Fonda, their protests and disrespect of our soldiers, I also grew up with a WWII Marine veteran as a father.

I'm glad his lessons and example stuck, rather than the words of the protesters.

Any of us who have known veterans from WWII and earlier know they didn't talk about their war experiences much. It was expected of them, they believed, so their service wasn't anything out of the ordinary.

Of course, improved technology allows today's wars and conflicts to come right into our living rooms, allowing those of us who have never served to see some of what it involves.

It's frightening, to say the least, and should make us so appreciative of the service of our military personnel and veterans.

Some of our military do not return, and that is the reason for Memorial Day observed the last Monday in May.

First observed in May 1868, Memorial Day is now celebrated in nearly every U.S. state the last Monday of May, although some southern states continue to have other separate days honoring the Confederate war dead.

While you are barbecuing or boating at the lake Monday, don't forget why we have the holiday in the first place.

It is because of those who have fought for our country that we are all able to have such celebrations.