

The Nation's Memorial and One Family of Memories

Our Nation's Memorial Day 2003 is charged with emotions. We just concluded a short campaign in a long, long war with new loss of life and injury. The fighting looked enough like a whole war to call it so. So, in the hyperbole of our times among a citizenry with little knowledge of history, I read, hear and view a lot about feelings this Memorial Day. We should indeed grieve. And we should know what to remember. Memories transcend emotion. Clear memories recall why Americans go to war. Never forget 'Why'.

My family has memories of our Nation's wars. My paternal line parallels U.S. history neatly. I am the 8th generation Bowden American. I probably should be 9th, but some men had children late in life. Every generation lived in a wartime. Five generations served in the Army. Everyone, male and female, knows that our blood tax of citizenship has been paid in full, and is ready to be made again.

John Bowden (1st American) came to Virginia in 1752 as a transported criminal. Holding no love for the crown, all five sons served in the Revolution. My ancestor (2) and a brother were in the Continental Line. His son (3) was named for another brother who died in the war. His son (4) went to West Tennessee when it was frontier. His older sons (5) fought for Independence like great-grandpa (Lesson for descendants: NEVER lose a war). His son's (6) younger cousins served in WWI. His son (7) served in WWII and Vietnam. I (8) was Vietnam Era and Cold Warrior service. Consider why they served.

Two generations in eight took up arms in this country against a more powerful, established authority to fight for freedom. The whole family was seared twice by the fire of rebellion, civil war, for independence on our soil. My great-grandmother was about 10 years old when a Yankee shot a pistol by her ear, making her deaf for life, trying, unsuccessfully, to scare her into telling where her brother – a partisan ranger – was hiding. They risked everything fighting for their individual rights. They thirsted for freedom as much as they panted like the doe for living water of the Lord.

Three generations fell into ranks and served overseas against foreign enemies and threats. Theirs was an obligation to answer a call to duty. They were National Guard, Reserves and Regulars. Freedom was a derivative of defending national interests. American power kept the hot WWI and WWII and the long cold WWIII at some distance from home in The South. The official opening of WWIV – the War against Islamist Terrorism or WW-T - on 9/11 brought war back to our home front.

My 'people' can recall uncles and cousins, friends, neighbors and comrades who died in military service since our American Revolution. Our Nation's Memorial Day mourns our dead and Veterans Day honors our service members. We remember the 'why' for our service was our personal freedom at home and our collective defense abroad. WW-T may call more generations to fight both foreign and domestic enemies.

The 'why' for this war just heating up is not the sentimental, sloppy, generic 'freedom' dished out by the administration and the politically correct media. WW-T could last a century or more – or until Islam has a Reformation and an Enlightenment or enough freedom of religion and speech that a critical mass of Muslims convert to Christianity and want to war no more with us. Until then, at least 10% of Islam will be Islamists and want to kill Americans as the Great Satan. This is a war of ideas, not mushy multiculturalism, or some abstract terror network. Many cultures based on

several civilizations united by one religion – Islam – produce a significant radical element of totalitarianism – Islamo-Facism – as brutal and evil as the Nazis, Imperial Japan, and the Communists. Their idea is to defeat and subjugate the United States and to exterminate its ally, Israel. Their big idea – whether it is Wahabi Sunni or Persian Shi'ite – is the unity of state and mosque and every aspect of human life under their interpretation of the Koran. It's going to be our culture and our civilization or theirs.

You are either for us or against us in every country - and in our own Nation. About a third of our citizens don't have the stomach for this kind of war. They hate our history and want to impose a new culture, one of their own creation, on America. For thirty years these Liberals have won the upper hand in one institution after another in a bloodless Culture War. Actually, the social cost of their ideas can be measured in blood as well as treasure for more drugs, crime and social pathologies. Soon enough the Liberals must choose our American Civilization or by their appeasements support the Islamists.

The Liberals may take resistance to future expeditions like Iraq and Afghanistan to a level of violence. Election fraud may empower Democrats to never control immigration and kill our Republic – even if Republicans actually grew the backbone to defend our borders, language and culture. Already, the Rule of Law is in jeopardy in liberal courts and legislatures. Perhaps, a future Liberal government will abuse the powers of the Patriot Act and 'Hate' statutes to impose their Neo-Pagan culture. The police and military powers of the state will be used against Christians – as they are in Canada and the UK today – and worse. Then, the political fight against domestic enemies for individual freedoms – especially speech, religion and to bear arms - may take a terrible turn.

If I am blessed with grandchildren, they should be of military age in the 2020s-40s. Will the 10th generation of Bowden Americans be the 3rd to fight for their own liberty? Let's pray on my parents' grave in Arlington Cemetery that WW-T will not push our domestic enemies to shove us into another rebellion for our rights. We will have enough foreign enemies here on our soil to defeat. And, I pray future Bowdens have the will of their clan to fight when the 'why' is right.

James Atticus Bowden