

The Consular Post

U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL: AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

MEMORIAL DAY EDITION



Memorial Day is a big part of American life, but I appreciate Memorial Day a lot more now than I did as a boy. The big Greanias clan always picnicked on all summer holidays and most summer Sundays, so that alone did not make it special. And it didn't have the fireworks and festivities that are such a part of the 4th of July, so it was easy for a kid to overlook the day and its importance. In reminiscence – especially when you live so much of your life far from home – something like Memorial Day is easier to understand and appreciate.

The meaning of the day has been articulated by others – great statesmen and simple folk alike – far better than I ever could. On page two, the first recorded Memorial Day speech is printed in part, as delivered by Pericles of Athens, which was our Founders' inspiration as the first democratic government. If you read it aloud, it is hard not to get chills. My consular colleague Pam Hamblett read it yesterday at our Memorial Day observance at the Auckland War Memorial Museum, and believe me, it was thrilling to hear it, just as it must have been for the ancient Athenians.

But for all of us, holidays like Memorial Day harken back to home first of all. We've printed here and on the next page photos of the memorial statue in Central Park, Decatur, Illinois, built to honor the soldiers of the Civil War. That town had quite a history. At the base of the statue is a bronze plaque, commemorating a seminal event in veterans affairs in the United States: "The Grand Army of the Republic was organized on this site on April 6, 1866." For many decades thereafter, the GAR – the first-ever veterans organization of its type in the United States – was one of the strongest forces in American public and political life.

And believe me, late-arriving immigrant groups, in their fervent desire to become full-bodied Americans, certainly got into the act. To this day, the whole Greek Orthodox community of Decatur gathers on Memorial Day in the Greek Section of Fairlawn Cemetery, with their priest, to hold memorial services over the graves of all their dearly departed. And how there even got to be a "Greek Section" of the cemetery is a tale worth telling. Early in the 20th century, when the Wabash Railroad was headquartered in Decatur, Sam Malleos, a recent immigrant from Greece, was a foreman on the rail gangs. Word got back to the villages of his part of Greece that Sam was hiring, so lots of young men came, but intent to work only long enough to save enough to start their own businesses. One tragic night about 1920, a fire swept through a bunk car of the workers, and several of these boys were killed. The Decatur Greek community didn't have a church yet, but brought a priest from Chicago for the funerals, and bought a whole section of Fairlawn Cemetery for its people. To this day, any member of the church gets a free burial plot. All my family – lots of folk named Greanias, but also Balamos and Assimakopoulos and Marisios and others – lie there together, remembered in hearts always, but especially on Memorial Day.

One more vignette. In the 1960s and 1970s, the benches of Central Park underneath the Civil War statue were filled with the retired immigrants I knew, who were somehow there re-creating the village squares from their own mountain homes, talking and reminiscing. George Jules – "Mr. George" to me – was my favorite among them. Here he is. He had no children, but brought a niece from Greece to the United States for her own new start. He was a World War II vet of the U.S. Army. Along with countless others veterans, he should be remembered, for as long as we can. Like everyone we can recall in our minds and hearts, may his memory be eternal! - *Nick Greanias, United States Consul.*



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OUR CONTACT INFO AT U.S. CITIZEN SERVICES

Private Bag 92022
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Auckland 1010

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Fax: +64-9-366-0870

Email: aucklandacs@state.gov

Web: <http://newzealand.usembassy.gov>

EMERGENCY SERVICE for American citizen emergencies only: Mon – Fri, 7.30am – 4pm call +64-9-303-2724 extn: 2900. Afterhours call +64-4-462-6000 (You will be asked to leave a message for the duty officer to return your call).

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How to Celebrate Memorial Day

1. Take time wherever you may be to pause for one minute at 3:00 p.m. local time on Memorial Day. This is the National Moment of Remembrance established by Congress
2. Explain to children the importance of Memorial Day and the significance of pausing to reflect on those who died in service to their country
3. Call a friend or family of a Veteran who Sacrificed to say, "Thank you..."

The Funeral Oration of Pericles

from Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War

The Ancient Athenians had the tradition – much as we do now with Memorial Day – of holding an annual public commemoration for the souls and memories of the soldiers who had died fighting for their city-state of Athens.

It was the 27-year Peloponnesian War that brought, too soon, an end to the Golden Age of Athens, a 50-year period when democracy had been perfected, a unique sense of civic purpose established, and monuments like the Parthenon built for the ages. In 430 B.C., at the end of the first year of that horrific war, Pericles rose to deliver his famed **Funeral Oration**, where he described eloquently for his fellow citizens the civic virtue that their fallen comrades had died to defend.

Here are some short passages from that immortal speech, given us by Thucydides, the first ever – and still perhaps best – objective historian:

"...Our constitution is named a democracy, because it is in the hands not of the few but of the many. But our laws secure equal justice for all in their private disputes, and our public opinion welcomes and honors talent in every branch of achievement, not for any sectional reason but on grounds of excellence alone..."

...Fix your eyes on the greatness of Athens as you have it before you day by day, fall in love with her, and when you feel her great, remember that this greatness was won by men with courage, with knowledge of their duty, and with a sense of honor in action..."

...So they gave their bodies to the commonwealth and received, each for his own memory, praise that will never die, and with it the grandest of all sepulchers, not that in which their mortal bones are laid, but a home in the minds of men, where their glory remains fresh to stir to speech or action as the occasion comes by. For the whole earth is the sepulcher of famous men; and their story is not graven only on stone over their native earth, but lives on far away, without visible symbol, woven into the stuff of other men's lives. For you now it remains to rival what they have done and, knowing the secret of happiness to be freedom and the secret of freedom a brave heart, not idly to stand aside from the enemy's onset..."

...But the bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding go out to meet it..."



"...gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with the choicest flowers of springtime...let us in this solemn presence renew our pledges to aid and assist those whom they have left among us as sacred charges upon the Nation's gratitude, —the soldier's and sailor's widow and orphan," —General John Logan, General Order No. 11, 5 May 1868.

MEMORIAL DAY EDITION

Honor the past, support the future.

PLEASE re-register every year in your last state of residence to receive your absentee ballot.

In order to assist American Citizens to register to vote, there will be an open day for Voter Registration at the US Consulate in Auckland, Citigroup Building, 23 Customs Street East, Auckland. This will take place on June 30, 2010 between 8.00am and 11.00am. Consulate staff will be here to assist you.

For American Citizens unable to come to Auckland the following links are available to assist you to re register, and of course all of the Consulate staff are available to assist you either email: VOTEauckland@state.gov or phone 09-303-2724 extn: 2800.

We encourage you to visit the newly redesigned Federal Voting Assistance Program website at www.fvap.gov, the official U.S. government website for overseas voters. The updated website features an automated Voter Registration and Ballot Delivery tool that will greatly improve the vote-by-mail process.

Visit www.fvap.gov and click "Get Started" to be directed to an online Federal Postcard Application and instructions for your state

Voter Registration & Requesting an Absentee Ballot

Voters who have not yet registered to vote and requested an absentee ballot should do so now using the FVAP website. You may also pick up a hard copy of the Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) from the U.S. Consulate General, Auckland.

You should also complete a new Federal Postcard Application if you have moved or changed your name since the last time you voted.

Voting

Your local voting officials should mail your absentee ballot 30 to 45 days before the November 4 general election. Return your voted ballot as early as possible. Be aware of your state's ballot receipt deadline, as well as any postmarking requirements.

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U.S. Embassy Wellington has launched its social media/real-time websites – [Facebook Page](#), [YouTube Channel](#), [Vimeo \(video\) Page](#), [Flickr Page](#), an [Ambassador's Blog](#), and a more focused [Twitter page](#). We hope to start podcasting soon and create a page on iTunes for our podcasts and videos. So now you have a wide range of resources to use to stay in the loop with the latest news, photos and videos from the U.S. Mission to New Zealand and Samoa.



Ambassador Huebner's Blog

<http://blogs.newzealand.usembassy.gov/>

Welcome to my Blog. I hope to use this space to share my thoughts and experiences in New Zealand and Samoa, as well as to convey a sense of the two Embassies' work here.

I look forward to hearing from you via [email](#) or through the [contacts page](#), since conversations are far more interesting than monologues.



Flickr Photo Gallery

http://www.flickr.com/photos/us_embassy_newzealand/

Flickr is a photo sharing and storing website. View and/or comment on our wide selection of photo galleries – from the Ambassador's travels to various international visitors.



Twitter

<http://twitter.com/usembassynz>

Follow the US Embassy Twitter feed for the latest embassy and consulate general news – including links to our very latest photos, and videos.



Facebook

<http://facebook.com/newzealand.usembassy>

Connect with the US Embassy's Facebook page to watch our latest videos, view our latest photos, and read interesting articles that are found only on our Facebook page. Also, start conversations/discussions, and ask questions with fellow US Embassy connections.

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ONLINE TRAVEL REGISTRATION

The Department of State recently launched an **Online Travel Registration Web Site:** <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>. As U.S. citizens you can use it to record your foreign travel and residence information. We can use this information to communicate with you, or assist you in an emergency, and we strongly recommend you register yourself and your family. Even if you've already given your information to us at the Consulate, please do re-register online and update your information. The data you provide is completely secure. It is held behind Department of State (DoS) firewalls, accessed only by cleared personnel in Embassies, Consulates, and DoS, and releasable only under provisions of the Privacy Act.

NEW APPOINTMENT SYSTEM FOR U.S. CITIZEN SERVICES AT THE CONSULATE GENERAL, AUCKLAND

On Tuesday, February 2nd we went live on an appointment system for American Citizens Services. This has proven to be successful for both visitors to the Consulate General and for the ACS section. Feedback has been positive!

The system allows you to schedule your own appointment in a time slot that suits you. The process takes just five minutes! Appointments will be needed for all passport services and Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) applications. Appointments will be available Monday – Friday 8am – 11.45am.

You can make your appointment now by visiting the ACS page on our website:

<http://newzealand.usembassy.gov/appointments2.html>

UPDATE FOR NON-U.S. CITIZENS ENTERING THE U.S.

As of April 30, 2010 ALL visa applicants are required to fill in the [online application form \(DS-160\)](#). Once completed, the information in the DS-160 will be electronically transmitted. The applicant must then print the confirmation page that includes some biographical information and a bar code confirmation number. Applicants must bring the DS-160 Confirmation Page to their interview. http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/forms/forms_4230.html

***2010 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND CLOSURES**

The Consulate General observes all U.S. and New Zealand public holidays. We're also close the last Wednesday of each month. These are the public holidays remaining in 2010 on which we'll be closed.

Mon, Feb. 15th	Presidents' Day (US)	Fri, Apr 2	Good Friday (NZ)
Mon, Apr 5	Easter Monday (NZ)	Mon, May 31	Memorial Day (US)
Mon, Jun 7	Queen's Birthday (NZ)	Mon, Jul 5	Substitute for Independence Day –Sunday July 4th (US)
Mon, Sep 6	Labor Day (US)	Mon, Oct 11	Columbus Day (US)
Mon, Oct 25	Labor Day (NZ)	Thu, Nov 11	Veterans Day (US)
Thu, Nov 25	Thanksgiving Day (US)	Fri, Dec 24	Substitute for Christmas Day (US)
Mon/Tue Dec 27/28	Substitute for Christmas and Boxing Day (NZ)	Fri, Dec 31	Substitute for New Years day 2011 (US)