What’s at stake:  We live in “a country that seems at once happy to whine about “Big Government” and slam civilian public servants as “government bureaucrats” – all while telling pollsters it holds the biggest appendage of “Big Government” – aka the military – in great esteem. Thanks to such a martial culture, few ever stop to wonder why our politics so often distinguishes between civilian and military public service, and then insinuates that one is to be denigrated and the other venerated.”  David Sirota

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Service
MONDAY, MAY 27, 2013 06:45 AM CDT
Memorial Day should also honor fallen police, firefighters and teachers
There are many ways to serve your country. Holiday should also include first responders, and others who died for us

DAVID SIROTA  Follow
I am the grandson of a veteran, and so among other things, Memorial Day brings up early childhood memories of my dad’s dad telling me about his public service in the military. While he gave me kid-friendly versions of his recollections, I was just old enough to vaguely understand his allusions to the injuries, casualties, lost friends and the trauma he likely experienced while serving overseas in World War II. Those allusions to the downsides of war – downsides that are too often glossed over in our sanitized recollections of World War II – gradually informed the way I came to see Memorial Day as a sacred moment to honor those who lost their lives in service to America.

In recent years, though, I have found our national celebration of Memorial Day lacking because while I am indeed the grandson of a soldier, I am also the son, son-in-law, nephew and friend of many other kinds of public servants. Through their civilian work, I have come to understand public service as something much more than only military service. Trouble is, while there may be a few lower profile days meant to honor their service, these public servants are not included as part of the high-profile Memorial Day – even though they should be.

Remember: Memorial Day is not supposed to be a national excuse to have a barbecue in celebration of the kickoff of summer – it is supposed to be about honoring those who lost their lives while serving in the armed forces. A holiday of such significance – including a designated off day for many workers – is more than warranted. Regardless of the judgments we might make about whether particular wars are just, smart or necessary, these men and women who lost their lives carrying out the war decisions of our country do deserve to be honored for their sacrifice.

However, it doesn’t insult my grandfather or his fallen brothers in arms to point out that the narrowness of the holiday is both painfully outdated and unduly exclusionary – the latter in a way that buttresses pernicious ideological judgments about different kinds of public service.

On the first point about Memorial Day’s scope being outdated – let’s remember that in so many ways, our government is telling us that we are now in a permanent state of war (officially deemed “persistent conflict”), one demanding that, as the
saying goes, we see “the whole world as a battlefield.” If that is true, then it logically follows that soldiers are not the only ones defending our national security – nor losing their lives – on the figurative frontlines. On the contrary, if this is truly a boundary-less war against all kinds of threats, then it stands to reason that our national security is being protected not just by soldiers, but also by police officers, firefighters, first responders, teachers and myriad other public servants.

The best way to appreciate that truism is to take a look at all the civilian public servants who have lost their lives defending the country.

If you do that, you will inevitably run across details of the 412 emergency workers (13 percent of the total fatalities) who died at the World Trade Center on 9/11. You will also probably find names like Stephen Tyrone Johns, Timothy Brenton, Michael Chiapperini and Tomasz Kaczowka. And you may even stumble upon the aggregate statistics showing that in the last decade alone, 1,539 police officers were killed in the line of duty; since 1977, there have been 4,325 on-duty firefighters fatalities; and that, according to The Foundation for First Responders and Firefighters, “Several hundred first responders die in the line of duty every year.”

These are exactly the kind of public servants who, along with fallen soldiers, should be remembered on Memorial Day, but who aren’t.

One argument against including them is the fact that not all of these public servants are killed trying to protect what America selectively sanctifies as “national security.” For instance, some of these public servants are first responders who die running into fertilizer plant explosions. Some of them are public school teachers who die trying to protect kids from being gunned down by mass shooters. Some of them are police officers killed while trying to keep the peace at public events. Despite the fact that these kind of heroic life-risking efforts are the definition of working to secure the country from danger (ie. “national security”), they are simply not seen as “defending America” or “serving our country” or protecting “national security” in the same way martial action is – and so they aren’t part of Memorial Day.

That gets to the latter point about today’s holiday being unnecessarily exclusionary. In excluding the memories of those civilian public servants killed in the line of duty, Memorial Day seems to be contributing to a larger value judgment about different kinds of public service. Specifically, whether deliberately or inadvertently, it seems to be suggesting that martial service should be automatically held in higher regard than any other kind of public service. In other words, the Orwellian message seems to be: some public servants are more equal than others.

This, no doubt, is hardly surprising in a country where such a subjective value judgment is the unquestioned assumption undergirding our political discourse. Show me a Republican politician, and I’ll show you a person who is probably happy to block aid to first responders and to slam police and firefighters unions – all while pledging undying fealty to soldiers. Similarly, show me the typical Democratic politician, and I’ll show you a person who is probably thrilled to portray teachers as leeches all while praising our men and women in the armed forces.

In both cases, politicians are reflecting a country that seems at once happy to whine about “Big Government” and slam civilian public servants as “government bureaucrats” – all while telling pollsters it holds the biggest appendage of “Big Government” – aka the military – in great esteem. Thanks to such a martial culture, few ever stop to wonder why our politics so often distinguishes between civilian and military public service, and then insinuates that one is to be denigrated and the other venerated.

Of course, both sets of public servants deserve America’s honor and respect, but only one set of public servants really gets it from our country. That’s an enormous political and cultural problem that ends up destructively distorting so much of our country’s public policies. However, it can start to be fixed with modest steps – like, say, officially expanding the Memorial Day holiday to include all public servants – martial and civilian – killed in the line of duty.

It sounds small, and for those who see Memorial Day as nothing more than the beginning of summer, perhaps it will mean nothing. But to those of who take the holiday seriously – and especially to those of us with familial connections to both martial and civilian public service – it would send a powerful message that there are many honorable ways to serve one’s country, and that losing one’s life in one form of national service is no less worthy of remembrance than losing it in any other form of service.

David Sirota is a senior writer for the International Business Times and the best-selling author of the books "Hostile Takeover," “The Uprising" and "Back to Our Future." E-mail him at ds@davidsirota.com, follow him on Twitter @davidsirota or visit his website at www.davidsirota.com.
Misconduct

Lying Under Oath

**Why Police Officers Lie Under Oath**

[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

Perversely, the criminal justice system gives officers an incentive to perjure themselves.

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**Excessive Force, US Police Violence**

**In 2013 British Police Fired Guns 3 Times**

*Public Radio International, Reader Supported News, August 24, 2014*

Excerpt: "In 2012, 409 people were shot and killed by American police in what were termed justifiable shootings. In that same year, British police officers fired their weapons just once. No one was killed."

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**ON THE GOD'S POLITICS BLOG**

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**Ferguson and America's Love Affair With Violence**

*by Derek Flood*

Before opening her private praxis as a psychotherapist, my wife worked with institutionalized mental patients. ... Because of laws passed that focused on protecting patients rights and dignity, the days of strapping mentally ill patients to a gurney or pumping them full of sedatives and throwing them in a rubber room are increasingly becoming a thing of the past, and were non-existent where she worked. So the staff learned other ways to keep safe and deescalate volatile
situations. Given that, I have to ask: If my tiny wife can handle an angry 6-foot paranoid schizophrenic man, shouldn’t cops be able to learn to do the same?

**Militarization**

**Why Is Homeland Security So Busy Arming Cops to Fight Americans?**

Timm writes: "For three weeks and counting, America has raged against the appalling behavior of the local police in Ferguson, Missouri, and for good reason: automatic rifles pointed at protesters, tank-like armored trucks blocking marches, the teargassing and arresting of reporters, tactics unfit even for war zones - it was all enough to make you wonder whether this was America at all."

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**Ferguson Exposes the Reality of Militarized, Racist Policing**

*Kevin Zeese and Margaret Flowers, Op-Ed, NationofChange, July 18, 2014*

A bright light needs to be shined on the policies, practices and weaponry that are being used. It's time for police to serve the people.

[Read the full story](#) | [Discuss](#) | [Share](#)

rifles/M4 pointed at the crowd, K-9 dogs.

Congress Will Review the Transfer of Military Weapons to Police Forces After Ferguson

Hayes Brown, News Investigation, NationofChange, July 18, 2014

The matter of Ferguson and arm transfers must be discussed. A review by Congress can’t be silenced or one-sided—this is a serious problem.

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Citing Unsettling Ferguson Images, Davis Police Department to Return Armored Vehicle

Veronica Rocha, Los Angeles Times, Reader Supported News, August 30, 2014

Rocha writes: “Davis, Calif., city officials have directed the police department to return a surplus U.S. military armored vehicle to the federal government after residents, citing images seen during protests in Ferguson, Mo., expressed fears of militarization.”

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Filming and Archiving Smart Phone Video

Democracy Now, A DAILY INDEPENDENT GLOBAL NEWS HOUR

with Amy Goodman & Juan González

AUGUST 28, 2014

Part 2: Yvonne Ng on the "Activists' Guide to Archiving Video"

MP3 PODCAST

PRINTER-FRIENDLY

We continue our conversation with Yvonne Ng, senior archivist for WITNESS, a group that trains and supports people using video in their fight for human rights. She has been giving advice for the growing number of people filming protests, human rights violations and police abuse with their smartphones and video cameras — particularly with respect to how to properly preserve such video. She co-authored their resource, "Activists’ Guide to Archiving Video."

Watch Part 1, 'After Police Abuses Caught on Video, a New Guide Teaches How to Best Archive and Distribute Footage'
AMY GOODMAN: This is Democracy Now!, democracynow.org, The War and Peace Report. I'm Amy Goodman, with Juan González.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: Well, we continue our conversation on the growing number of people filming police abuse on their smartphones and with video cameras. Yvonne Ng is the senior archivist for WITNESS, which trains and supports people using video in their fight for human rights. She co-authored their "Activists' Guide to Archiving Video," which is available in English and Spanish and Arabic, after hearing from activists that this was a skill set that they were largely missing.

Welcome to Democracy Now!

YVONNE NG: Thank you for having me.

AMY GOODMAN: So, before we talk about archiving, how people should actually film when they want to document something?

YVONNE NG: Yeah, so, a few tips that I can share is, well, first of all, be prepared. So bring extra memory cards and extra batteries with you. So, if you’re filming an incident and you’re afraid that footage might be confiscated from you, you want to swap out those cards and preferably work in pairs or in teams, so you can hand off those cards to somebody else. The second thing is to, when you’re filming, document landmarks that are notable or street signs, and this makes it easier for people to verify and identify your video later on. So we’ve seen this, for example, in Syria, where activists are using mosques as ways to identify where certain undocumented footage is taking place and so that they can map where things are happening.

MORE

http://www.democracynow.org/blog/2014/8/28/pt_2_yvonne_ng_on_the

COMPARE POLICE:

Which countries have unarmed police forces?: Off Topic Forum ...

www.dpreview.com/forums/post/50601024

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Jan 5, 2013 - Which countries have unarmed police forces aside from UK and Japan? ... In 1995, when I first found out that regular police force in Japan don't ...

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Sep 19, 2012 - The deaths of two female police constables have brought into focus the unarmed status of most British police. Why does Britain hold firm ...

Professor says United Kingdom has unarmed police force ...

www.politifact.com/.../university-rhode-island-professor-s...

May 31, 2013 - He wrote that having armed police can lead, out of fear, to shooting ... “The UK has an unarmed police force and a firearm fatality rate that is 40 ...

Crime and policing in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

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Find details of how to contact the police in emergency or non-emergency situations.

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Explore and compare crime and outcomes of crime in your neighbourhood.

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See how your force is performing and how its performance compares to other areas.

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Discover more information about your area and the team responsible for policing it.

● Your police and crime commissioner
Find out about your force’s police and crime commissioner, and details of how you can contact them.

● Information & advice
Practical information about reporting incidents, how the police work, and how to help cut crime.

● Crime prevention advice
Find out how to help reduce crime and avoid becoming a victim of crime.

● Apps and websites
Browse third-party apps which use the data powering this website.
Contact Arkansas Congressional Delegation

Arkansas is represented in Congress by two senators and four representatives. Here is how to reach them. None of the senators or representatives publishes his e-mail address, but each can be contacted by filling in forms offered through his website.

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