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By JUDITH LYNN LEE

Staff Writer

Once again another Memorial Day has come and passed and time has marched on as time inevitably does. How did you spend yours? Did you look forward to having a three day weekend with family? Did you BBQ, see a parade,or go swimming?

If so, that’s great!

But what about the true meaning of Memorial Day… did you remember to visit the cemetery or to honor those who fought for our freedom and paid the ultimate sacrifice with their lives?

Did you long to be close to the loved ones you've lost, taking time to say a prayer, lay a flag or flowers at their final resting place? If so, then you've completed your Memorial Day.

Your Call and Post newspaper spoke with several individuals that were seen visiting their loved ones on Memorial Day. They prayed, held hands, lay flower and flags in recognition of those who've gone on before them.

The family of Matthew H. Simon, a war veteran of twenty-six years, gathered around his grave smiling and talking proud about the U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel. His wife Doris spoke fondly about how she followed her husband abroad as he served his country.

"Matthew was a strong man born to a strong mother. He had strong family values and was very committed to his country. He was wounded in Vietnam but was a great pilot who flew as a spotter," she stated.

Doris, who just retired as a registered nurse at age eighty, couldn't stop talking about the awards and achievements her hero had received. "He was a recipient of the Purple Heart and Bronze Star," she said.

Matthew unfortunately died from Cancer but not before leaving a legacy of gratitude and love to his family. "He told me to bury him here. He wanted his final resting place to reflect who he was so we try to keep it decorated that way," Doris stated.

Other family members buried along-side Matthew is his mother Carrie Simon, brother-in-law Andy Averitt, Niece Caroline Johnson, and her son David Johnson.

The family of Dury Lidge circled hand-in-hand at his grave. They were not only there because it

was Memorial Day, according to his wife Tonja, visiting the grave site is a ritual the family practices for birthdays as well.

At the grave lay Lidge's mother Tomi and two of his grand-children.

"We here so that the younger children will know who their family was. We want to always feel close to our loved ones," said Lidge's daughter Shawntaye

Lidge was not a veteran, nor has he ever fought for his country. "He was our hero, a strong family man who was instrumental in bringing the family together and who truly believed in family values," said Tonja.

Mamie L. Mitchell came to spend time with her late husband Rufus on Memorial Day. She talked and laughed about his great sense of humor as she stood over his grave. "He was hilarious… always joking and laughing," she said, smiling.

The woman who claimed to be much younger than her late husband said he was also a mentor to her.

"I was only sixteen when my parents signed for me to marry him. He started out as someone I could go to with my problems but then I began getting more attracted to him."

Mitchell finds herself at his site every time she can. "I come here on his birthday, our anniversary and of course on Memorial Day because he is and always will be my life."

She also likes keeping his memorial nice and neat with flowers because that was the life that Rufus lead. "He was into landscaping and was even employed as a landscaper. He loved flowers and keeping things beautified."

Families will always find themselves in a stereotypical Memorial Day celebration of BBQ, parades, and fun. But the good thing is they will also find themselves on Memorial Day at the cemetery, telling stories about their loved ones who have gone before them.