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'In Flanders Fields'



Christine Mederos, of the Roxbury VFW Post 2833 Auxiliary hands out poppies during the township's Memorial Day parade and ceremony in 2019.

BY JOHN McCRAE

In Flanders fields the poppies blow Between the crosses, row on row, That mark our place; and in the sky The larks, still bravely singing, fly Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, Loved and were loved, and now we lie, In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

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THE ORIGINS OF MEMORIAL DAY

By MEGAN WILLMES

U.S. ARMY MUSEUM EDUCATION SPECIALIST

On May 31, 1864, Union and Confederate armies exchanged the first shots in the bloody two-week Battle of Cold Harbor that saw more than 17,000 combatants killed, wounded, or captured. "I saw no live man lying on this ground. The wounded must have suffered horribly before death relieved them, lying there exposed to the blazing southern sun o' days, and being eaten alive by beetles o' nights," wrote one Union soldier after the battle concluded on June 12. Cold Harbor was one of a score of bloody battles that tore the United States apart during the Civil War.

More than 150 years later, Americans bow their heads in silence to remember fallen soldiers in a national day of mourning. Originally known as Decoration Day, this day of remembrance became Memorial Day in 1971 and is observed annually on the last Monday of May. While many Americans celebrate the day with barbeques and picnics, the original intent of the holiday, to honor fallen soldiers, has a long history. Memorial Day's origins are shrouded in uncertainty, and historians are still trying to uncover its full story.

Local communities placed flowers and decorated soldiers' graves as early as 1864, even before the Civil War concluded in 1865. The women of Boalburg, Pennsylvania, led contingents of civilians to the cemeteries at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in 1864, although these ceremonies were small, one-time events. The first evidence of public grave decoration ceremonies in the United States comes from Charleston, South Carolina in 1865. During the Civil War, the Confederate army used one of the city's racecourses as a prison for captured soldiers.

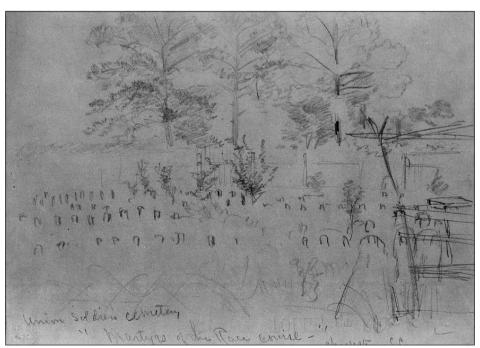
Many of those who died in captivity were buried in unmarked graves outside the racetrack pavilion. Charleston's African American population decided to rebury the dead soldiers with honors, spending ten days digging new graves and building a fence, complete with an archway reading "Martyrs of the Race Course."

On May 1, 1865, 10,000 residents, mostly African American, led a procession to the new cemetery, singing patriotic songs, decorating the graves with flowers, and holding prayers. Three white and Black Army regiments ended the day with a practice drill and a march around the graves. Charleston's celebration was eventually eclipsed by other ceremonies and was mostly forgotten, largely because its main participants were Black.



Photos courtesy of the Library of Congress

Decoration Day parade on Fifth Avenue at the soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in Riverside Park, New York City, May 30, 1917. Library of Congress



Pencil drawing of the Union soldiers cemetery, "Martyrs of the Race Course," in Charleston, South Carolina by Alfred Waud.

Decoration Day

The Civil War ended in 1865; several hundred thousand troops died in the conflict. With so many deaths, nearly every family in America felt the grief of losing a loved one. The need for a space to grieve and col-

lectively remember the devastation of the war gained national significance. The creation of the National Cemetery System in 1865 and the reburial of soldiers' remains kept the fallen at the forefront of the postwar mind.

The following year in 1866, several other towns across the country held their own ceremonies and now claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day. The New York Tribune recorded one event in Columbus, Mississippi, where women placed flowers on both Union and Confederate soldiers' gravestones from the Battle of Shiloh. Inspired by the news of honoring the fallen soldiers from both sides. American poet Francis Miles Finch wrote one of his bestknown poems, "The Blue and the Gray," the following year. At nearly the same time in Carbondale, Illinois, more than 200 Union veterans and civilians cleaned headstones at Woodlawn Cemetery. They organized a community-wide ceremony with Maj. Gen. John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic, a Union veteran's organization, delivering the leading speech. In May 1866, the town of Waterloo, New York, held its own celebrations attended by nearly the whole community and included businesses closing in observance of the ceremony.

The first official declaration for a day of remembrance came from General Logan in 1868. He had received a letter from an unnamed soldier earlier in the year suggesting an annual holiday to honor fallen Civil War soldiers. On May 5, 1868, Logan spoke before a crowd at a commemoration honoring local veterans and issued General Orders, No. 11. He declared May 30 as a day dedicated to "cherishing tenderly the memory of our heroic dead" and "gather[ing] around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with choicest flowers of springtime." The call reached every part of the country and the day became known as "Decoration Day." President Andrew Johnson supported the movement by granting federal workers leave to attend the ceremonies.

Following Logan's orders, Decoration Day was observed as close to the original May 30 date as possible, though each community celebrated with their own variations. States proclaimed Decoration Day a holiday at different times. New York was the first in 1873, and most northern states followed suit by 1890.

Many southern states refused to declare it an official holiday until after World War I. Instead, states such as Mississippi and Alabama honored the Confederate dead in separate ceremonies and each state observed the occasion on different dates. The Army and Navy also adopted resolutions and regulations for Decoration Day so that

ORIGINS: Symbols created to honor fallen soldiers

FROM PAGE 3

American bases across the globe could celebrate the day with proper formality.

Most cities continued to honor the original spirit of the day by decorating graves. which grew to include not just Civil War soldiers, but also those who died in World War I and II. People even honored those who gave their lives in service of others, such as the Red Cross. In 1919, the Red Cross sent volunteers to Serbia to treat the worst typhus epidemic in history. Many of the humanitarian aid workers lost their lives fighting the disease. In honor of their selfless service, their graves were included in Decoration Day ceremonies alongside the fallen soldiers and sailors. Many cities also organized parades, made speeches at the cemeteries, and waved American flags for the holiday.

Red Poppies And Taps

As Decoration Day grew in scale and importance, it spawned the creation of several symbols now associated with remembrance and Memorial Day. Two of the most famous are the red poppies and the bugle call known as "Taps." During World War I, Col. John McCrae of Canada served in

Two of the most famous

Memorial Day symbols are the red poppies and the bugle call known as 'Taps.'

Flanders, Belgium as a surgeon. He wrote a poem based on his experiences there, in particular the sight of rows upon rows of soldiers' graves covered in bright red flowers:

"In Flanders fields the poppies blow Between the crosses, row on row, That mark our place; and in the sky The larks, still bravely singing, fly.

Scarce heard amid the guns below. We are the dead. Short days ago We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow Loved, and were loved, and now we lie In Flanders fields."

The poem, "In Flanders Fields," was published in a British magazine in 1915, where it caught the attention of two women: Anna

PLEASE SEE ORIGINS, PAGE 5



Ken Hetrick, of Chatham Township, plays "Taps" on his trumpet during the 2022 Memorial Day service in Chatham Township.



ORIGINS: Taps, the 'National Song of Remembrance'

FROM PAGE 4

E. Guerin of France and Moina Michael, a Georgia native. They sold artificial flowers in order to raise money for orphans and those left penniless by World War I. By 1920, the poppy was a well-recognized symbol of remembrance in America, Canada, and Europe. Michael petitioned the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) organization for help with the nationwide sales of poppies.

The VFW agreed and even adopted the red poppy as its official flower for remembrance in 1922. Due to a shortage of artificial poppies made in France, Americans had to turn to other sources for the flowers. A factory in Pittsburgh, was founded to produce the artificial flowers and employed military veterans to make them. Thousands of veterans and service organizations continue to make red poppies for Memorial Day today and the donations are used to support the families of fallen soldiers.

The second symbol of Memorial Day is the song "Taps," perhaps more familiar from its usage at memorial services and funerals.

The Army first used bugle calls to signal troops and provide a means of communica-



"Taps" sheet music. U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs

tion across the battlefield. In 1862, Maj. Gen. Daniel Adams Butterfield worked with his brigade's bugler, Oliver Willcox Norton, to create a new version of the "Extinguish Lights" call which signaled the roll call at the end of the day. Butterfield and Norton adapted an earlier bugle call that had fallen out of use, creating the iconic 24-note melody. Butterfield used it to honor his casualties during the Peninsula Campaign in Virginia, and the call spread swiftly through the Army of the Potomac. By 1891, the U.S.

Army Infantry Drill Regulations required "Taps" to be played at military funerals. It is still used at U.S. Army bases to signal lights out every evening and, in 2012, Congress declared "Taps" as the "National Song of Remembrance."

National Holiday Act

In 1968, Congress passed the National Holiday Act declaring Decoration Day a national holiday. The act changed both the date and the name of the holiday, turning

it into the Memorial Day celebrated today. In order to give federal workers a three-day weekend, Congress shifted the day to the last Monday in May.

In 2000, Congress passed another act adding a "National Moment of Remembrance" to Memorial Day ceremonies. The act asked each American "to voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a moment of remembrance and respect, pausing from

PLEASE SEE ORIGINS, PAGE 6



ORIGINS: Remember those who sacrificed their lives

FROM PAGE 5

whatever they are doing for a moment of silence or listening to 'Taps'." Observed at 3 p.m. local time, the National Moment is a minute of silence in honor of America's fallen soldiers.

Nowhere is Memorial Day celebrated with more solemnity than at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington. In honor of Memorial Day, soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) place flags exactly one boot-length away from each tombstone at Arlington and the U.S. soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. It takes the soldiers almost five hours to decorate the 228,000 headstones.

The tradition, known as "Flags-In," has been observed since the Old Guard was designated as the Army's ceremonial unit in 1948.

From the graves of the Civil War to the bugle calls at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Memorial Day has its origins in the American desire to remember its heroes. More than 150 years have passed since the first flowers lay on the graves of soldiers at Cold Harbor, Shiloh, and

From the graves of the Civil War to the bugle calls at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Memorial Day has its origins in the American desire to remember its heroes.

Charleston, sparking a long tradition of honoring those who gave their lives for their country. This Memorial Day, take time to reflect and remember those service members who sacrificed their lives for their country.

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Photos courtesy of the Library of Congress

Grave of American Red Cross volunteer Capt. Harold V. Aupperle decorated by fellow Red Cross workers, circa 1920.



Girls and boys pose with flowers they collected for Decoration Day on May 28, 1899.

Thank You to all that served and their family and friends

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POST 7858



Members of the Bernardsville Fire Company march during the borough's 2023 Memorial Day parade. grand marshal of last year's Madison Memorial Day Parade and festivities.



Photo by Charlie Zavalick Florham Park resident and U.S. Navy veteran Joseph Noonan was the







The 15th
NJ Infantry
Regiment
Company A
fired a salute
for those who
died while
serving in
the country's
armed forces,
at the Califon
Memorial
Day Parade in
2017.

Photo by Paul Hamilton

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9 Facts You Probably Don't KNOW ABOUT MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day signifies the unofficial start of summer. Community pools open for the season. Patio furniture is hosed down. News of summer sales blast through the media. Across the country there are parades, backyard barbecues and picnics. But Memorial Day is so much more than hot dogs, beer and mattress sales.

The following are nine facts you may not know about how and why we observe Memorial Day.

1. Originally known as Decoration Day

Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day. It was established on May 5, 1868, by Gen. John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic to honor the fallen soldiers of the Civil War. It was designated to fall on May 30, when flowers are in bloom. Fellow soldiers and family would decorate the graves of their comrades with flowers and flags. Some families would even hold Today, most of us have parties in our backyards rather than at cemeteries, but the true meaning of this day cannot be forgotten.

2. The symbolism of the red poppy

In 1915, during World War I, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae was overcome with sorrow when he saw red poppies blooming all over Europe. Seeing a cluster of poppies blanketing Flanders Field in Belgium inspired McCrae to write the famous poem "In Flanders Fields." This moving poem is written from the point of view of those buried beneath the soil. Overcome with emotion after reading McCrae's poem, teacher and YMCA overseas secretary Moina Michael started the tradition of wearing a silk or paper poppy in honor of fallen American soldiers. Because of Moina, the red poppy became the symbol of remembrance in 1920. To this day, you can purchase a

picnics on the graves of their beloved ones. red poppy through various organizations. country's war heroes. Your donation will help veterans programs throughout the nation.

3. Changes made after World War I

After WWI, Memorial Day was expanded to honor all soldiers who have died in American wars. In 1971, the date became known as Memorial Day. The holiday moved to the last Monday in May by the 1968 Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which was passed to create a three-day weekend for federal employees. To this day, veterans groups are worried, rightfully so, that Americans associate the holiday with the first long weekend of summer and not for its intended purpose to honor the fallen soldiers.

4. Flags at half staff

Our nation's flag is raised to half staff from sunrise until noon and then lifted to full staff to signify hope and to honor all our

5. The birthplace of Memorial Day

In 1966, President Johnson proclaimed Waterloo, New York as the birthplace of Memorial Day. But as so often happens, there is controversy over this matter. As many as 25 towns claim to be the birthplace: most are located in the South, where the majority of the war dead are buried.

6. Laying wreaths at Arlington National

Each year a small American flag is placed on every grave. The president or vice president lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Thus was born the tradition of local businesses placing miniature flags throughout neighborhoods across America.

PLEASE SEE FACTS, PAGE 11



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May we never forget that freedom isn't free

FACTS

FROM PAGE 10

7. The tradition of the Indianapolis 500

For car racing fans, Memorial Day also includes watching the Indy 500. The first full year of racing at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway started in 1910. Decoration Day was chosen because farmers took a break in late May after baling hay.

8. Thank a veteran

While Memorial Day is a day to honor those soldiers who have died for our country, it's also a wonderful day to thank all veterans. A simple "Thank you for your service" goes a long way in making a veteran feel appreciated. If you don't know a veteran, you can always write a letter to one.

9. A moment of silence

In December 2000, the U.S. Congress passed the National Moment of Remembrance Act. At 3 p.m. local time, Americans are asked to take a minute of silence to remember those who have died in military service. So, wherever you are, put down your drink, set aside your plate of food and take time to honor those soldiers who have given their lives. Because of them, we continue to enjoy these celebrations with family and friends.

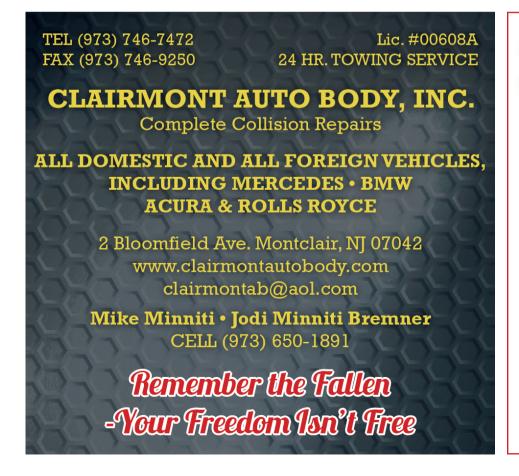
Editor's note: This article was contributed by Janie Emaus. Emaus is the author of several books. Her essays, stories and articles have been published in numerous magazines, anthologies and online publications. She lives in Southern California with her husband, a veteran of the Vietnam War. More about her work can be found at www.janieemaus.com. This article was first published in the new AARP Experience Counts newsletter.



Dan Handy, commander of American Legion James Caldwell Post 185, sells poppies to raise money at the West Essex Memorial Day Parade in 2022.

SYMBOLISM OF THE RED POPPY

In 1915 during WWI, Lt. Col. John McCrae was overcome with sorrow when he saw red poppies blooming all over Europe. Seeing a cluster blanketing Flanders Field in Belgium inspired him to write the famous poem "In Flanders Fields." The poem is written from the point of view of those buried beneath the soil. Today poppies are used as a symbol to remember those who died in military service and as remembrance and hope for a peaceful future.





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* * * * * * MEMORIAL DAY

REMEMBER AND HONOR



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MEMORIAL DAY

REMEMBER AND HONOR



FREDERICK F. CRAFFERTY, SR. US Army - Corporal, Basking Ridge



FREDERICK F. CRAFFERTY JR.
US Army - SP5, Basking Ridge



GEORGE E. LAREUSS Conway, Korean War - Machinist Mate II
Warren



Veterans from Heath Village in Washington Township celebrated Memorial Day last year by participating in the Hackettstown Memorial Day Parade. The bus load of marchers included, in front, Patricia Cristo and David Walter; second row, from left: Frank Reitz, Octavia Brown, Maria Moch and John Watkins; third row, from left: Despina Samaras and Claudia Thomas; and, standing in the back, from left: Edgar Pittenger, Carol Lou Doherty-Pittenger, Dottie Crossett and Mary Jane Purdy.



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Above: Ken and Mary Jane Kantor, the parents of Matthew G. Kantor, who gave the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan, place a wreath at Central School's Korean and Afghanistan war memorial during Long Hill's Memorial Day ceremony in 2023. Right: Matthew Kantor's "Hometown Hero" banner hangs on a post across from his memorial at Matthew G. Kantor Memorial Park in Gillette.





What Is The Difference Between Veterans Day And Memorial Day?

Editor's note: The following article is contributed by Tim Ott, publisher at A&E Television Networks.

The federal holidays of Veterans Day and Memorial Day are both designed to celebrate members of the U.S. military, but there are a few key differences. Memorial Day, which took shape after the Civil War, is considered a day to honor those who were killed in or as a result of participating in battle. Veterans Day, which materialized at the end of World War I, is a day to honor all service men and women, but especially those who remain with us to share their experiences. Memorial Day began as "Decoration Day," a designated time to decorate the gravestones of many of the roughly 620,000 people killed in the Civil War.

It is unclear when and where this act of commemoration first took place: around 25 communities have been tied to son signed into law the Uniform Holiday

the origin of Memorial Day, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, with one such event reportedly held as far back as October 1864 in Boalsburg, Pennsylvania. In 1868, the head of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of Union veterans, established May 30 as Decoration Day, encouraging Americans to decorate the graves of the war dead with flowers.

New York became the first state to designate Decoration Day a legal holiday in 1873, and by 1890, every other former Union state had followed suit. By the conclusion of World War I, the focus shifted from honoring those killed on Civil War battlefields to all men and women who had died while fighting for the United States. In the years that followed, the holiday became more widely known as Memorial Day.

In 1968, President Lyndon B. John-

Bill, which packaged several federal holidays into the tail end of three-day weekends with the hope of stimulating travel and commerce. As a result, Memorial Dav has been celebrated on the fourth Monday of May since 1971. Unofficially, it marks the beginning of the summer season.

Famous Memorial Day Quotes

"We do not know one promise these men made, one pledge they gave, one word they spoke; but we do know they summed up and perfected, by one supreme act, the highest virtues of men and citizens. For love of country they accepted death, and thus resolved all doubts, and made immortal their patriotism and their virtue." — James Garfield

"Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices." — Harry S. Truman

Memorial Day Traditions

With schools and businesses closed for the holiday, many communities feature parades for service men and women as part of annual Memorial Day celebrations. Some people wear poppies as a symbol of the lives lost in service.

National commemoration of the holiday at Arlington National Cemetery reflects the holiday's earliest tradition: gravestones of the interred are decorated with American flags, while a wreath is placed at the Tomb of the Unknown Solider. Per the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, flags are to be flown at half-staff from sunrise until noon, and then raised to the top of the staff until sunset.

PLEASE SEE HOLIDAYS, PAGE 17





HOLIDAYS: The holidays arose for different reasons

FROM PAGE 16

In 2000, President Bill Clinton signed the National Moment of Remembrance Act, which encourages Americans to pause their Memorial Day activities at 3 p.m. local time to reflect on those who died while serving the country.

History of Veterans Day

Although World War I formally ended with signing of the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919, it was the cessation of fighting between the Allied forces and Germany at 11 a.m. on Nov. 11, 1918, that came to symbolize the end of the Great War.

President Woodrow Wilson subsequently proclaimed the first "Armistice Day" on Nov. 11, 1919, an occasion to be commemorated with parades and the temporary suspension of businesses at 11 a.m. By that time, the governors of six states had already declared the day a legal holiday.

Congress formally recognized the annual Nov. 11 observance in 1926, and in 1938, Armistice Day became a legal U.S. holiday, dedicated to the promise of world peace.

Toward the end of the following decade,

celebration of peace was shifting toward a recognition of the sacrifices made by the 16-plus million Americans who had participated in World War II. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the first official "National Veterans Day" event took place in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1947.

The Uniform Holiday Bill of 1968 moved Veterans Day from Nov. 11 to the fourth Monday in October. However, the change was met with resistance by traditionalists who considered the date to be inseparable from the rites of observance. Following congressional hearings to discuss the issue, President Gerald Ford in 1975 reinstated the holiday's original date of Nov. 11, effective

Famous Veterans Day Quotes

"To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice

however, public sentiment toward the in the councils of the nations..." — Woodrow Wilson

> "Veterans know better than anyone else the price of freedom, for they've suffered the scars of war. We can offer them no better tribute than to protect what they have won for us." — Ronald Reagan

> "The soldier above all others prays for peace, for it is the soldier who must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war." — Douglas MacArthur

Veterans Day Traditions

As with Memorial Day, Veterans Day is a day marked by parades and other events to thank the contributions of service men and women, though its later date on the calendar often limits the participation in outdoor activities.

The official ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery also sports some similarities to the one held earlier in the year for Memorial Day. Commencing at 11 a.m. sharp, the event includes a wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknowns, before continuing inside the Memorial Amphitheater with featured speakers and the presentation of colors.



Randolph VFW Memorial Post 7333 member John Reilly Sr. salutes after placing the American flag on a veteran's grave in the Mount Freedom Cemetery on Sussex Turnpike in 2021. Post members place new flags on veterans' graves in the days leading up to Memorial Day observances.

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Students at Lakeview Elementary School in Denville sing the Star-Spangled Banner during the Morris County Annual Memorial Day Observance ceremony in 2023 at the Morris County Administration Building in Morristown.

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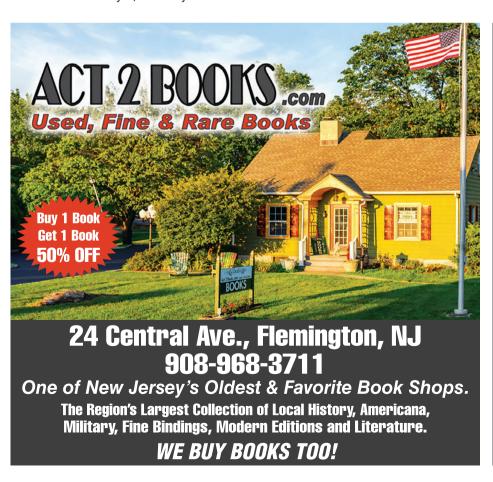
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Photo courtesy Larry Weppler

Marching in the Harding Township Memorial Day parade last year are, from left, Township Committee members Nicole Lazy, Rita Chipperson, Nic Platt, Morris County Commissioner Christine Meyer, and Mayor Tim Jones.







Attendees of the Morris Plains Memorial Day Parade pet New Jersey State Police horse Yukon on Mountain Way last year. Riding Yukon is State Police Lt. William Donahue.



Joseph Clark, a West Point graduate who served two duty tours each in Afghanistan and Iraq, was the guest speaker at Warren Township's Memorial Day service last year.



Amanda Lucid and her daughter Mikaela enjoy the sunshine during the the Bernardsville Memorial Day parade on Route 202 last year.



Members of the East Hanover Office of Emergency Management, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts attend the East Hanover Memorial Day Ceremony last year.



Lebanon Township Cub Scouts stood in formation awaiting their March down Main Street during Califon's 21st annual Memorial Day parade.



American Legion Post 342 Commander Dave Marcione leads a group of veterans from the post down Main St. during Chester's Memorial Day Parade last year.



Two of Essex Fells' fire engines were brought out of the garage of the Essex Fells Fire Department before the start of the borough's ceremony at Borough Hall last year. The engines would later make an appearance during the West Essex Memorial Day parade on Bloomfield Avenue.



Madison-Harding Girl Scouts wave American flags as they make their way down Main Street during last year's Memorial Day Parade in Madison.



Members of Watchung Hills Elks Lodge 885 march in Warren Township's 2022 Memorial Day parade.



The Hartley Dodge Memorial building served as the backdrop for Madison's 2023 Memorial Day parade and ceremony. From left are Madison sixth-grader Tara Zelensky, Janice Corte and Anne Meyer of the **Thursday Morning** Club, and Victor Schumacher of the Patriotic Celebrations Committee. Tara was the winner of this year's Memorial Day essay contest sponsored by the Thursday Morning Club.

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