

Putnam Veterans SITREP



AN E-MAIL SITUATION REPORT (SITREP) OF THE PUTNAM COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY

A GRATEFUL NATION



MEMORIAL DAY EVENTS IN PUTNAM

FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY, MONDAY
MAY 22, 23, 24, 25,

Putnam County Joint Veterans Council-

John Morris Memorial Watchfire Vigil, each night
6 PM-6AM May 22, 23,24 Opening Ceremony Friday 7:00 PM
Flag retirement all night

SUNDAY MAY 24, 2015:

VFW Post 1374 & Ladies Auxiliary, Carmel & American Legion Post 270-

9:00 AM Ceremony at monument on Terryhill Road, Kent
11:30 AM Ceremony at Post Home 32 Gleneida Ave, Carmel
Refreshments to follow 11:30 Ceremony

VFW Post 2362 and American Legion Post 275-

11:00 AM memorial presentation at Parrott Gun Memorial by
Cold Spring water front.

MONDAY MAY 25, 2015:

VFW Post 391, Putnam Valley-

11:00 AM Ceremony Putnam Valley Town Hall
11:45 Ceremony Lake Peekskill Monument (Chester Place)
12:30 PM Ceremony Post Home 153 Oscawanna Lake Road
Refreshments to follow 1:00 PM ceremony at Post Home
2:00PM Start of "Round of Honor". Visiting grave sites,
cemeteries, and monuments in vicinity, including Lakeland High
— School, Bill Manger Park

VFW Post 672, Brewster-

Parade from Brewster Fire House to Electrozone Field
(step off 10:30AM)
Ceremony at Electrozone Field following parade.
Light Lunch to follow at post home on Peaceable Hill Road

VFW Post 2362 and American Legion Post 275 Cold Spring-

Parade Main Street to Cold Spring Cemetery (step off 9:00 AM)
Ceremony at Cold Spring Cemetery at conclusion of parade.
Refreshments to follow at American Legion Hall.

VFW Post & Ladies Auxiliary 5491 Mahopac & American Legion Post 1080-

Parade from Clarke Place to Veterans Memorial Park on East
Lake Blvd. (step off 10:00 AM)
Ceremony to follow at Monument
American Legion Post 1080 Ceremony at noon following VFW
Ceremony at 333 Buckshollow Road
Ceremony and Refreshments to follow at VFW Post home
154 East Lake Blvd

VFW Post 9257& Ladies Auxiliary & AMVET Post 1111 Putnam Lake-

Parade from Castle Restaurant to Veterans Monument on
Haviland Road (step off 10:00 AM)
Ceremony to follow parade at monument
Refreshments to follow at Post Home at 4 Fairfield Drive

VFW Post 8013, Somers-

Annual Memorial Day Parade and Remembrance Ceremony.
Step off 10:00 AM from Somers Middle School to Ivandell Cem-
etery. Refreshments at Somers Town House following the cere-
mony.

*(Somers has been added to the list of Memorial Day events because the Somers
VFW has recently joined Putnam County Council VFW)*

SATURDAY DAY MAY 30, 2015:

Putnam County Joint Veterans Council-

7:00 PM Traditional Memorial Day at Putnam County Veterans
Memorial Park. (Possible dedication of the Purple Heart
Monument.)



Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in service of the United States of America. Over two dozen cities and towns claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day. While Waterloo N.Y. was officially declared the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon Johnson in May 1966, it's difficult to prove conclusively the origins of the day. Regardless of the exact date or location of its origins, one thing is clear – Memorial Day was borne out of the Civil War and a desire to honor our dead. It was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his General Order No. 11. "The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land," he proclaimed. The date of Decoration Day, as he called it, was chosen because it wasn't the anniversary of any particular battle. On the first Decoration Day, General James Garfield made a

speech at Arlington National Cemetery, and 5,000 participants decorated the graves of the 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried there.



The first state to officially recognize the holiday was New York in 1873. By 1890 it was recognized by all of the northern states. The South refused to

acknowledge the day, honoring their dead on separate days until after World War I (when the holiday changed from honoring just those who died fighting in the Civil War to honoring Americans who died fighting in any war). It is now observed in almost every state on the last Monday in May with Congressional passage of the National Holiday Act of 1971 (P.L. 90 – 363). This helped ensure a three day weekend for Federal holidays, though several southern states have an additional separate day for honoring the Confederate war dead: January 19th in Texas; April 26th in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi; May 10th in South Carolina; and June 3rd (Jefferson Davis' birthday) in Louisiana and Tennessee.

In 1915, inspired by the poem "In Flanders

Fields," Molina Michael conceived an idea to wear red poppies on Memorial day in honor of those who died serving the nation during war. She was the first to wear one, and sold poppies to her friends and co-workers with the money going to benefit servicemen in need. Later a Madam Guerin from France was visiting the United States and learned of this new custom started by Ms. Michael. When she returned to France she made artificial red poppies to raise money for war orphaned children and widowed women. This tradition spread to other countries. In 1921, the Franco-American Children's League sold poppies nationally to benefit war orphans of France and Belgium. The League disbanded a year later and Madam Guerin approached the VFW for help. Shortly before Memorial Day in 1922 the VFW became the first veterans' organization to nationally sell poppies. Two years later their "Buddy" Poppy program was selling artificial poppies made by disabled veterans. In 1948 the US Post



Office honored Ms. Michael for her role in founding the National Poppy movement by issuing a red 3 cent postage stamp with her likeness on it. (Concise article about Memorial Day and Poppies found on the site: http://www.usmemorialday.org/?page_id=2)



Memorial Day

And I'm proud to be an American,
where at least I know I'm free.
And I won't forget the men who died,
who gave that right to me.

~Lee Greenwood

As a Veteran I won't forget and, I am certain that if you are reading this article that you also will not forget. Most of us remember every day and wonder why it seems to be so hard for most of the population to just stop for one day to remember.

For many, Memorial Day is just another three day weekend. A weekend filled with bargains at the malls, opening the pools and neighborhood cookouts. Forgotten is why we are able to do as we wish, buy what we want and celebrate with family and friends.

As I said in our May issue last year, "That is why we, the Veterans, need to get out in force, to parade through the towns and villages, to make speeches, to place Flags on graves, to place wreaths in front of monuments and memorials, to fire the guns in salute and to render a hand salute as we listen to the mournful playing of

"Taps". We, the Veterans, must set the example to our friends and neighbors. We must show them that before they have their picnic, open the pool for the season, go to the beach or go shopping to get the special Memorial Day



Weekend Deal, they must remember that Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen; both men and women have paid with their lives so that we may enjoy all that we have today."

Lead by example and attend at least one Memorial Day event, for we must NEVER FORGET.

Art



So says the VA... DR. KILDARE by Ken Bald

PLEASE GIVE YOUR VA CLINIC AT LEAST 24-HOURS NOTICE IF YOU HAVE TO BREAK YOUR MEDICAL APPOINTMENT. THIS WILL ALLOW VA TO SCHEDULE ANOTHER VETERAN.

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Have you hugged a Veteran today?

garyvarvel.com



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CAMPUS
110 OLD ROUTE 6,
BLDG. 3
CARMEL, NY 10512
PHONE (845)808-1620
FAX (845)808-1940

KARL ROHDE,
DIRECTOR
ART HANLEY,
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Viewing Memorial Day

“There are those who speak about you who say, ‘he lost an arm, he lost a leg, she lost her sight. I object. You gave your arm. You gave your leg. You gave your sight. As gifts to your nation. That we might live in freedom. Thank you. And to your families. Families of the fallen and families of the wounded. You sacrificed in ways that those of us who have not walked in your shoes can only imagine.”

Gen. Peter M. Pace

Each year Memorial Day seems to change what it means to me. Well not actually change but something gets added to what I carry. It as if my rucksack is bursting at the seams, that there is not another feeling, mood or memory can be added. But it all seems to fit. Over the years I have written or spoken about patriotism, love of the American Flag, how I viewed soldiers as a youth, my personal experience in war or my intense dislike for those who do not share my love of this country. I have packed all those subjects into my understanding of Memorial Day. It always was and always will be very personal and not actually open for interpretation of those who heard the speech or read the article. This time the change is profound but still ... well you will see.

That long and convoluted prelude was because of an incredible journey that I made with my wife Irene, who is currently the NY VFW Ladies Auxiliary State President. Part of her duties is to visit every VA facility in New York State. There are 12 VA Medical Centers and one domiciliary. It was my honor to accompany her on most of these visits. While each Medical Center was impressive and unique the last two visits on April 22, 2015 impacted us the most. The visits where to the two Medical Centers that are part of what is called VA NY Harbor Healthcare System.

One in the Bronx and one in Manhattan. At the Bronx facility we were taken to the 9th floor where the ReWalk program is housed. There were no Veterans there that day but we were able to talk to a few of the VA people who work on that floor. Irene and I were overwhelmed with what this program does. Not only does it enable paraplegic Veterans to walk it helps with a host of other problems that paraplegics suffer from. In the words of the manufacturer: “The ReWalk™ robotic exo-



Gene Lauren, an Army veteran who suffered a spinal cord injury as a result of a ladder fall, practices walking up stairs by wearing a ReWalk exoskeleton.

skeleton is the most widely used,



Physical Therapist Dr. Leif Nelson (left), Army Veteran John Crouch, and Prosthetist Neil Carbone assess Crouch's new prosthetic

most studied and first available for personal ownership. The powered hip and knee motion enables those with lower limb disabilities, including paraplegia as a result of spinal cord injury (SCI), to perform self-initiated standing, walking and turning. ReWalk provides the social, psychological and physiologic benefits of ambulation with a natural gait at functional walking speed. Batteries power all-day use in a rehabilitation clinic or provide the independence of personal use at home, at work and in the community.”

Then at the Manhattan Campus we

were taken on a three part tour. That enabled us to see a total picture. First we went to the prosthesis lab. Where skilled technicians design limbs that are both functional and individualized. From there we moved to the world class High Tech Gait Lab. The only one of its kind in the VA system. Veterans with newly crafted legs move through a series of tests that electronically monitor to a computer the gait of the Veteran. The signals sent compute any information that may require the technicians to tweak the limb. Our last stop was to Occupational Therapy where the now properly fitted Veteran goes to painstakingly on the Veterans part and lovingly on the therapists part learn to re-enter society.

What does all of this have to do with Memorial Day? There is nothing in the human experience that compares to war. No one understands the horror of war except some one who has been to war. The often used affirmation that “Freedom is Not Free” is so very true. It is not only paid by those who made the supreme sacrifice whom we honor each Memorial Day but it is paid for my those who come home paralyzed or without limbs. That may seem awkwardly obvious but what we don’t see is the host of medical miracles that comes out of the VA to help our Heroes lead almost normal lives. The advancements in the medicine that first benefit the Veterans eventually benefit the public at large. So remember those who died for our freedom but also remember those who were forever altered by War and those who help to mend them.



Karl

I Have Seen Him IN THE WATCHFIRES

**Please Join Us at the
10th annual John Morris
Memorial Watchfires**

May 22,23,24 2015

6:00 PM to 6:00 AM (Each Day)

**Join the Veterans of Putnam County
Standing Vigil Over
Putnam County's Hallowed Monuments**

at

**Putnam County Veterans Memorial Park
Opening Ceremony**

May 23, 2014 at 7:00 PM



In 1976 Marine Veteran and Baseball Player Rick Monday saved Old Glory from two idiots who were trying to burn the flag at Dodger Stadium. Rick was hailed as a hero and rightly so! Fast forward to 2015 Air Force Veteran Michelle Manhart rescues Old Glory from idiots who were walking on the flag as a protest. She get manhandled by 3 policeman and the flag is given back to those who desecrated that American Flag. I salute both Veterans and hope they will continue to protect Old Glory! Stop by for the opening ceremony where we burn a symbolic Supreme Court Justice Robe as a protest to the atrocious decision that desecrating the American Flag is free speech.

A new feature to our ongoing flag retirement will be special readings between 8-10 each evening sponsored by the PFC Dwyer Vet2Vet Program of Putnam. We encourage Veterans or Family members to share a patriotic poem or a story.



Marine Corps League



D.A.V.



American Legion



Vietnam Veterans of America

Viet Nam Veterans Remembrance Poppy



From this First Poppy in 1921 all the Memorial Flowers on this page grew.



Military Order of the Purple Heart



V.F.W.

The Story of the Poppy
The poppy flower only grows in the absence of other flowers and only in ground that has been churned. In perhaps the best known poem of World War I, when Dr. John McCrae observed poppies growing between the crosses on the soldiers' graves, it inspired him to write the poem In Flanders Fields. The poppy has since become known as "The Flower of Remembrance" and is worn in memory of our veterans.
I'm sharing this poppy in remembrance of the veterans as well as the active service members and wishing you a beautiful Memorial Day weekend.



Royal British Legion



Royal Canadian Legion



AMVETS



Catholic War Veterans of the US



Jewish War Veterans of the USA



Korean War Veterans

You're Invited!

Row of Honor Kick-Off

Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, May 16th
9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Carmel VFW Hall
Route 52, Carmel, NY

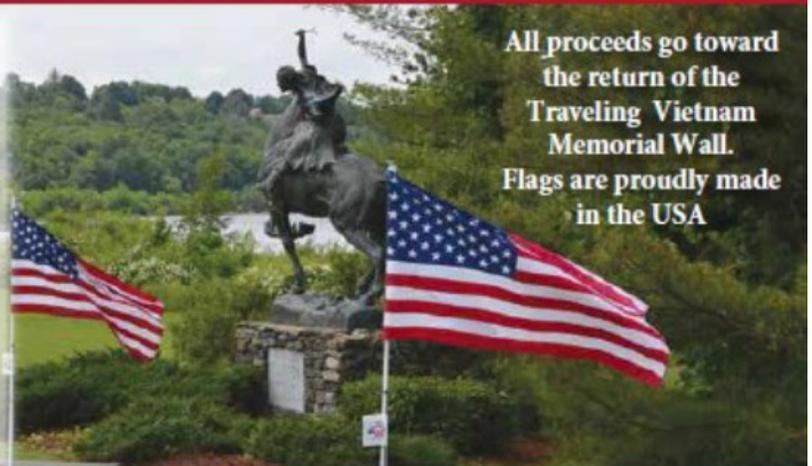
All proceeds going toward The Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall

Donation: \$8 per person / \$12 per Family
Sponsorships are Available

Order Your Flag for Putnam County's Row of Honor

The Row of Honor graces, Carmel by lining the shores of Lake Gleneida with over 100 flags. These flags are flown twice a year with your loved ones names attached on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. This historic observance has drawn national attention to Putnam County.

\$100 each. Please make checks payable to Joint Veterans Council c/o PC Veterans Services, Donald B. Smith Government Campus, 110 Old Route 6, Bldg. 3, Carmel, NY 10512



All proceeds go toward the return of the Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall. Flags are proudly made in the USA

Contact Veterans Services to RSVP for the Breakfast and to order your flag at 845-808-1620 or go to www.PutnamCountyNY.gov/ROH