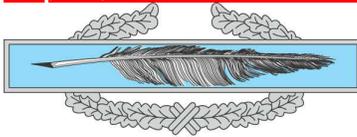


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# PUTNAM VETERAN'S REGISTER

*An E-mail Newsletter of the Putnam County Veterans Service Agency*

## Special Memorial Day Issue



### Memorial Day Events in Putnam

#### Sunday May 27, 2012:

##### **VFW Post 1374, Carmel-**

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 28, 2012:

##### **VFW Post 391, Putnam Valley-**

11:00 AM Ceremony Putnam Valley Town Hall  
1200 Noon Ceremony Lake Peekskill Monument (Chester Place)  
1:00 PM Ceremony Post Home 153 Oscawanna Lake Road  
Refreshments to follow 1:00 PM ceremony at Post Home

##### **VFW Post 672, Brewster-**

Parade from Brewster Fare House to Electrozone Field (step off 10:30 AM)  
11:00 AM Ceremony at Electrozone Field  
Flag Raising Ceremony at Post Home Following Ceremony at 262 Peaceable Hill Road  
Refreshments to follow at post home

**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 (location to be announced)

##### **VFW Post 5491 Mahopac-**

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 following VFW Ceremony at 333 Buckshollow Road  
Refreshments to follow at Post home 154 East Lake Blvd

##### **VFW Post 9257, 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 on 4 Fairfield Drive

#### Wednesday may 30, 2012:

##### **Putnam County Joint Veterans Council-**

7:00 PM Traditional Memorial Day at Putnam County Veterans Memorial Park



## THE HISTORY OF MEMORIAL DAY

This timeline highlights key events and Memorial Day traditions.

**May 1868** General John Logan proclaimed the first Memorial Day at Arlington National Cemetery.

**1873** New York was the first state to officially recognize the holiday.

**1890** Northern states celebrated Memorial Day while the South held their own day of remembrance.

**1913** Veterans of the United States and Confederate armies gathered in Gettysburg to commemorate the fifty-year anniversary.

**1915** Moina Michael wrote:  
*We cherish too, the Poppy red  
 That grows on fields where valor led,  
 It seems to signal to the skies  
 That blood of heroes never dies.*  
 The poem inspired "red poppy" charities and many individuals to wear red poppies on Memorial Day.

**1917** The Song "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon" was first patented by George A. Norton.

**1924** 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.

**1948** Congress passed the Uniform Holidays Bill, moving Memorial Day to the 4th Monday in May to create a 3 day weekend.

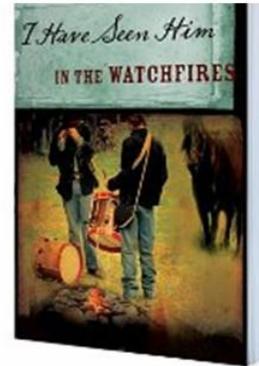
**1949** The Movie "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon" brought new fame to the song of the same name.

**1970's** The symbol became popularly known with the song "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree" recorded by Tony Orlando and Dawn.

Here are some interesting facts about Memorial Day—some you may know, some you may not!

- \* Memorial Day was first observed on May 30, 1868.
- \* Memorial Day was originally called "Decoration Day."
- \* Memorial Day was originally created to honor Union soldiers who'd died while fighting in the Civil War. Because of this, southern states did not observe Memorial Day until after World War I, when the holiday was expanded to include soldiers from all wars.
- \* The red poppy is a traditional symbol of Memorial Day (many veterans wear them to commemorate the day).
  - The poppy was inspired by (World War I-era) John McCrae poem "In Flanders Fields": (see next page for poem)
  - In 1924, an artificial poppy factory was created in Pittsburgh, PA, and employed veterans who needed work.
- \* Memorial Day observance peaked in the first part of the 20th century, when aged Civil War veterans attended parades in towns across America.
- \* Memorial Day observances were at an all-time low in the 1960's, then experienced a resurgence in the 1980's.
- \* On the Thursday before Memorial Day, soldiers from the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard) place small American flags at each of the more than 260,000 gravestones at Arlington National Cemetery. They patrol the cemetery 24 hours a day during the weekend to ensure that each flag remains standing.
- \* This tradition, called "Flags In", has been in place since 1948.
- \* In 2004, Washington D.C. held its first Memorial Day parade in over 60 years. This coincided with the dedication of the National World War II Memorial.
- \* Memorial Day traditionally marks the start of summer, while Labor Day traditionally marks the end.
- \* "Memorial Day" did not become the holiday's official name until 1967, when federal law declared it.
- \* In 1968, Memorial Day was moved from its traditional May 30 date to the last Monday in May in order to ensure a three-day weekend.

Happy Memorial Day to everyone...and thank you to all the troops and families that sacrifice so much for us.



Please join us at the  
7th Annual John Morris Memorial Day  
Watchfires

**MAY 25,26, 27 2012**  
**6:00 PM TO 6: AM (EACH DAY)**

Join veterans of the community in standing vigil over  
Putnam County's hallowed monuments  
At  
Putnam County Veterans Memorial Park

Opening ceremony May 27th 7:00PM

Continuous Flag retirement ceremonies  
Through out the night





## The John Morris Memorial Watchfire Vigil

On the eve of Memorial Day 2005 under the shroud of darkness a coward desecrated the Putnam County Veterans Memorial. We believe that it was done to make us alter our Memorial Day Ceremonies. It did not alter anything it steeled our resolve to carry on and honor our fallen comrades. What we were concerned with was what we should do in the future to protect our monuments. At the suggestion of Chief Gerald Schramek,

### Land of the Free



### Because of the Brave

Putnam County Sheriff's Office, we decided to guard the monuments during the evening hours of the 3 days leading up to Memorial Day. Thus the vigil was started the following year.

That year we also borrowed a theme from a recent event that is run by the Rock-

## Memorial Day Thoughts

As a young child I watched from the sidelines as my father marched in the parade with the American Legion. I endured the long speeches given by old men and I covered my ears when the rifles fired their salute. When I joined the Cub Scouts, I got to join the marchers, and though I still thought the speeches were long, as a participant in the parade, I was rewarded at the end with hot dogs, soda and ice cream at the parade's end. As a teen, I understood a little better what the day meant, especially to those who had gone off to war and lost friends or those who waited at home for someone who was never to return. A funny thing happened during this time as well, those old men

who gave the too long speeches, were becoming younger. Less than a year after I graduated from High School a classmate, who had joined the Marines, was killed in action in Vietnam. Memorial Day became personal. Two years later, I was in Vietnam, losing more friends, bringing clarity to the emotions I had observed in the old men giving long speeches, years earlier. The observance of Memorial Day became a very somber event for me. I would wince when someone wished me a Happy Memorial Day, what was there to be "Happy" about? We are here to honor the dead! Also perplexing to me was someone coming up to me on Memorial Day and

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land chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA). They hold watchfires along the banks of the Hudson River. These watchfires are based on a Civil War tradition that is expressed in the Battle Hymn of the Republic by Julia War Howe.

*I have seen him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps.*

The watchfires at the Park are simply 55 gallon drums.

Now that we had fires we decided to use them for more than heat and light. We began that 1st year to retire tattered American Flags. This has been an overwhelming success. Each year we have retired over 3000 Flags with honor and dignity.

Then a few years ago a good friend and fellow veterans died

thanking me for my service. It is Memorial Day, not Veterans Day!

Today, I am one of the old men. I see the youngsters cringe and cover their ears when the rifles fire. I observe the cub scouts doing their best to not to grow bored by the speeches waiting until they can get their hot dogs, soda and ice cream. But, I have come to realize that after we have paid our respects and honored our dead, we should have a "Happy Memorial Day". We should have a family cookout or spend the day at the beach having fun. After all, that is what the brave men and women fought and died protecting, our way of life, our freedom, our pursuit of happiness.

As for people walking up to me, and thanking me for my service on Memorial Day, I now understand that for many, they just do not know what else to say and this is just their way of letting us, the veterans, know that they join with us in honoring those who never came home.

Please remember with reverence those who died protecting our great Nation, those who remain forever young, living on in our hearts. Honor them too, by having a Happy Memorial Day!

**Art Hanley,  
Deputy Director**

much to early. Marine John Morris clocked more hours at the vigils than almost any one else. With his untimely death we officially re-named the event the JOHN MORRIS MEMORIAL WATCHFIRE VIGIL.

The event is hosted by the Putnam County Joint Veterans Council (JVC). At the opening ceremony on Friday May 25th t 7:00 PM will start a special event you will all want to see.

Out of a despicable act of cowardice something truly wonderful has been created. Please stop by and visit with the only true heroes that our country has-The VETERANS OF THE ARMED FORCES!!!!!!

*Harold Rohde,*

Director



During 1923 the Veterans of Foreign Wars began the tradition of selling the paper poppies, which were assembled by disabled vets who were paid for their work to provide a form of financial assistance. The VFW trademarked the name "Buddy" as an artificial flower, which guarantees any Buddy Poppy you buy since 1924 was hand-assembled by a disabled veteran in a VA hospital.

In the World War I battlefields of Belgium, poppies grew wild amid the ravaged landscape. How could such a pretty little flower grow wild while surrounded by death and destruction? The overturned soils of battle enabled the poppy seeds to be covered, thus allowing them to grow and to forever serve as a reminder of the bloodshed during that and future war.

Many Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) distribute memorial flowers. Not all of them poppies. With all VSO's the money donated is used to help disabled and needy veterans along with their families.



## In Flanders fields

**I**N 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.

