



"WE PLEDGE TO NEVER FORGET & FOREVER HONOR OUR HEROES"



156TH ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

*West Virginia's National Cemeteries
May 28 & 29, 2023*

West Virginia's Official Memorial Day Parade



Taylor County
Post #12
American Legion



Memorial City
Post #3081
VFW



West Virginia
Division of
Veterans Assistance



Disabled
American
Veterans

**West Virginia Memorial Day Committee, Inc.
City of Grafton Taylor County Commission**



Brooke Russell, Parade Marshal

Brooke Russell was born in Grafton, WV on May 13, 1945, to Troxell Olin Mason Sr. and Ruth Lucille Bolyard Mason. She was raised up in the service living in the Philippine Islands, England, Japan and then Germany with her first husband.

On August 1, 1961, Brooke and her family returned to Grafton after her father's retirement from the service with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers as Lt. Col with 22 1/2 years of service. Brooke went on to graduate from Grafton High School with the class of 1964. In October 1965 she graduated from Davis Memorial Hospital School of Practical Nursing in Elkins, WV and became licensed as an LPN in West Virginia, Texas, Kentucky and Michigan.

In May of 1985 Brooke returned to Grafton with her daughter Michelle. As a volunteer with the Taylor County EMS Brooke became a Licensed Emergency Technician. She worked at Grafton City Hospital then transferred to the Clarksburg VAMC in 1990. Ms. Russell retired from the Louis A. Johnson VAMC in Clarksburg in 2008 after 42 years as an LPN. She serviced in the Woman's Army Corp during the Vietnam Era as Sp5 at William Beaumont General Hospital in El Paso, Texas.

Brooke is proud to be a member of the following organizations: American Legion Taylor County Post #12 PUFL 34 years, 40&8 Voiture Locale #279 17 years, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #0874 Life Member, American Legion Auxiliary Unit #31, VFW Auxiliary Unit #3084, GFWC Woman's Club of Grafton, Taylor County Family Resources, and Taylor County Art Council. She has served with the American Legion Mountaineer Boys State Staff for eight years, and with the WV Memorial Day Committee for 34 years and is a past Vice Chairman. She is a member of the Blueville United Methodist Church.

Ms. Russell was married to John William Russell III for 14 years who she credits with getting her involved in the American Legion Post #12 and WV Memorial Day Committee.

At American Legion Post #12 Brooke has been past Chaplain, Children and Youth, 1st Vice Commander, Post Commander, and she is presently serving as Adjutant/Finance Officer. She has also been Past 2nd District Chaplain, 1st Vice Commander, and Commander. At the American Legion WV Dept level, she has been Asst. Sgt-At-Arms and Historian. Brooke is also a part of American Legion Mountaineer Boys State each summer.

Brooke has one daughter Michelle Lynne Lavery, and two grandchildren Janelle and Kamron, living in Levittown, Pa. Her siblings include Capt. Troxell Olin Mason Jr. US Army, Col. Jacqueline Mason-Swanson US Army Ret., and 1st Lt Holden Farrar Mason US Army.



Hershel Woodrow “Woody” Williams Honorary Parade Marshal

QUIET DELL, W.Va. (WV News) — Hershel “Woody” Williams, a native of Marion County’s Quiet Dell and the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II, died Wednesday morning surrounded by his family, according to information released by the Woody Williams Foundation.

Williams, a national hero and favorite son of the Mountain State, devoted his life to advocating for veterans and Gold Star Families. He was 98 years old.

“Today at 3:15 a.m., Hershel Woodrow Williams, affectionately known by many as Woody, went home to be with the Lord,” reads a statement posted Wednesday by the foundation. “Woody peacefully joined his beloved wife Ruby while surrounded by his family at the VA Medical Center which bears his name.” The VA Medical Center in Huntington is named for Williams. Details about Williams’ funeral and memorial services will be shared as that information becomes available, according to the foundation.

“Woody’s family would like to express their sincere gratitude for all of the love and support,” the post reads. “They would also like to share that Woody’s wish is that people continue to carry on his mission.” According to biographical information from the foundation, Williams enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and served in the Battle of Iwo Jima with the 21st Marines, 3rd Marine Division. During the battle, Williams displayed “valiant devotion to duty” and service above self as he “enabled his company to reach its objective.”

Williams’ actions, commitment to his fellow service members and heroism were recognized on Oct. 5, 1945, when he received the Congressional Medal of Honor from President Harry Truman at the White House.

Williams and his foundation are responsible for establishing 103 Gold Star Families Memorial Monuments across the United States with more than 72 additional monuments underway in 50 states and 1 U.S. Territory.

All correspondence and condolences may be sent to the Woody Williams Foundation via email at contact@woodywilliams.org or via mail at: Woody Williams Foundation 12123 Shelbyville Rd. Suite 100 Louisville, KY 40243.



Frank Cooley

Alternate NEC & PDC 2017-2018 West Virginia National Cemetery Speaker

Frank Cooley was born in Newhall, West Virginia and grew up in Marytown, West Virginia where he attended schools in the area, before graduating in 1965 from Welch High School.

He served his Country in the United States Army and was Honorable Discharged in 1971.

He is married to the former Angela Diana Davidson and they have two sons Leonard and James and one granddaughter Samantha. He is employed at the HC Lewis Oil Company for more than 54 years and still works when not spending time with family and the American Legion.

He and his wife Ann reside in Welch, West Virginia and they are members of the Anderson Memorial Presbyterian Church on Stewart Street in Welch. He is one of the Elders and Ann is in the Choir.

He has been active with American Legion Post 8 for more than 25 years and he is a paid up for life member. He is a former member of the Color Guard, Past Vice Commander, Past Post Commander, serves as Sgt. of Arms and Chairman of the Board of Governors.

On the District Level, he served as Sgt. of Arms, Adjutant and two six-year terms as District Commander.

On the Department Level, he served as Asst. Sgt. of Arms, Department Vice Commander, 2000-2001 and 2014-2015. Assistant Membership Chairman 2015-2016; Department Membership Chairman 2016-2017. He served as Department Commander 2017-2018.

On the National Level, he is currently the 2019-2021 (NEC) Alternate National Executive Committeeman. In Legion year 2017-2018, he received the high honor of National Department Commander of the Year. Also, under his leadership as Department Commander the Department of West Virginia was number one in the nation on membership.

He works in local high schools with boys, who are planning on attending the American Legion Mountaineer Boys State Program at Jackson Mills, where he serves as a Senior Counselor in (Randolph Cottage). He serves on State and National Committees and attended the Membership Workshop at National. He is Active with Voiture #1171 40&8 in Welch where he is a Past Chef de Gare and still serves as Correspondence. He coached midget league football in Welch for 20 years, while working with the Welch High School Football Program.

He is active with the Masonic Order, member of Beni Kedem Shriners, Past President of McDowell County Shrine, Charter Member of McDowell County Shrine Clown Alley, Past President having served three terms of the Mighty Welch Lions Club, served as Sight Chairman.

Also, he served on Welch City Council for 30 years and as a Volunteer Fireman for the City of Welch 26 years.



Tom Hicks
AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF WEST VIRGINIA COMMANDER
Grafton National Cemetery Speaker

I was born in Wheeling WV in October 1953. I grew up in McMichen WV. I graduated in 1972 from John Marshall High School and after spending the summer at home working as a clerk for a local grocery store, I enlisted in the US Army to become a Military Policeman. I attended Boot Camp at Fort Dix, NJ. After Boot Camp, I went to Fort Gordon Georgia for advanced individual training for the military Police. I wanted to enlist in the army as my dad was a combat wounded veteran of the Korean Conflict. He never said much about Korea other than, "I dug fox holes." After my dad was honorably discharged, he went home to Martins Ferry Ohio. He met my mom who grew up in Wheeling. They married and I was the first child with four sisters and one brother. My brother enlisted in the Navy and one of my sisters enlisted in the US Air Force. After I was discharged from the Army, I got a job working as an underground Coal Miner for Ireland Mine. I met my wife in 1976, we were married in 1977. In October 1977 my first daughter was born and in September of 1978 my youngest daughter was born. I had four years of underground work, but was laid off in November 1979. In September 1980, I was hired at "Mobay Corporation". I spent the next twenty years working for Mobay making rust or pigment that was used for coloring concrete. In 2001, Mobay/Bayer was starting to downsize. They offered an early retirement package and I took it. About six months later I went back to mining underground for McElroy Mine. I had already had four years credit towards a miner's pension and I needed ten years total to receive the pension. I ended up working in the Mines a total of 21 years. During that time, the United Mine workers of America started a "Veteran's Committeeman Program for the Support of Our Veterans". I was nominated for one of the positions and voted into being a Veteran's Committeeman that was when I started doing work for the Vet's. The best thing we did yearly was clean the Vietnam Wall. About the same time, I received in the US Mail a flier from The American Legion and I really didn't know that much about it. I did however, fill out the application and mailed it in. I received my membership card and National suggested that I transfer from post 200 to a local post. So, I chose to visit Post 3 in Moundsville. The first time in Post 3, I met men that I had worked with at least 20 years and longer. They had never even mentioned being American Legion Members. Anyhow, I was welcomed to the post, they immediately completed the transfer paperwork from Post 200 to Post 3 and they "Hooked" me. Just like they were supposed to! They asked me to attend the meetings, which I did, and they got me to participate in pretty much everything they were doing. My point in talking about how I got into doing Legion work is, I never once in all the years of working with the men who were legion members, they didn't say anything about the legion. Had they told me about it at work, I probably would have had a lot more years in the Legion. We all need to spread the word about what we do and who we are, not just at the Legion, but also where we work and send wherever we are. If we see a person who looks like they are military, don't be afraid to ask. Invite them to join, to attend the meetings and to participate in what we represent. I also am a volunteer and supporter of Helping Heroes. It is a program to help homeless veterans and their families. It is a very good program for supporting the vets and their families. I also am a member of the northern panhandle Veteran's Council. We have met with politicians discussing what kind of support we need to have for our veterans. It too is a very good organization to provide vets with different avenues to help with whatever needs a vet may have. I enjoy helping our vets with whatever they may need.

Savanna Kauffman
American Legion Dept. Auxiliary President



*My name is Savanna Kauffman. I was born and raised in Martinsburg WV. My Parents were Gary Kauffman and Lisa Faircloth. I lost my mother when I was 9 years old. I then moved in with my father, when I was 15 my father passed away. I was then raised by my Uncle Gerald and Aunt Sharon Kauffman. They joined me up with the American Legion Auxiliary Martinsburg/Berkeley Unit #14. I have been a member since 2011. I am eligible through my Grandfather Gerald Kauffman Sr. I started out as the unit Sergeant of Arms, Historian, Chaplain, Secretary, Treasurer, and President. On the District level I held Sergeant of Arms, President, and held committees. On the Department level I held Historian, 2nd Vice, 1st Vice, and President, and served on several committee's. I was the Honorary Junior Chaplain for the department. I served as Floor Page at Nationals. My Special Project is raising money to help out the VA's in Martinsburg, Beckley, Clarksburg, and Huntington Gift Shops, my goal is to raise 10,000.00. This will help them to buy Gifts for inpatients and their families. All Donations will be sent to the ALA Department of WV 2172 Grandview Road ~ Moundsville, WV 26041
Earmark Department President special project*



Brian Gano
Sons of the American Legion Detachment of WV Commander

Brian Gano was elected Detachment Commander at the WV State Convention in Huntington, WV in July 2021. He has been a member of Squadron 14 in Martinsburg, WV for the past 12 years. He joined the SAL under his father, who was a member of the United States Army until his retirement.

Brian has held numerous offices in Squadron 14 as well as in the 10th District. He has held the positions of Chaplain, Sergeant-at-Arms, Vice Commander, and Commander of each level. At the Detachment level, he has been Chaplain, Vice Commander, and is the current Commander.

Helping the veterans is one of his passions and he also donates his time helping the American Legion Family, including as a member of the American Legion Riders. He is also a counselor at American Legion Boys State.

In addition to his dedication to the SAL and the American Legion Family, Brian is the devoted husband to his wife of 23 years, Mikki. Together, they are the parents of three sons- Scotty, Dylan, and Zackery and are excited to be the grandparents of Asher. When not volunteering his time, Brian enjoys the outdoors, hunting, and fishing.



DAVID L. "ROBBIE" ROBINSON SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT (RETIRED), AMERICAN LEGION POST 12 COMMANDER

Senior Master Sergeant Retired David L. Robinson was born 4 May 1959, Grafton, WV and is the son of James and Virginia Robinson of 13 Swindler Street, Grafton, West Virginia. Sergeant Robinson has one sister and one brother. Sister, Debra K. Hoag, of Grafton who, with her husband David M. Hoag. They have two daughters and one son, Dianna, Michele, and David. His brother, Douglas J. Robinson, wife Monica and son Corey, reside in Grafton. Sergeant Robinson is a 1977 Graduate of Grafton High School. Prior to graduation, in April 1977, he enlisted in the United States Air Force under the delayed enlistment program. He reported to Lackland AFB, TX in September 1977 for Basic Military Training. Upon completion of Basic Military Training, he was assigned to Keesler AFB, MS for Technical Training as an Information Management Specialist.

Upon completion of technical training, he was assigned to the 6940th Electronic Security Wing, Ft Meade, MD, from November 1977 through September 1983. Then he moved overseas to Det 25 1945th Communication Group, Radio Relay Location, Federal Republic of Germany from September 1983 to April 1988. Returning to the States, he was assigned to the 42d Bombardment Wing, Loring AFB ME, where during Desert Shield and Desert Storm he supported two deployed operating locations. In May 1991, he was handpicked for a special duty assignment with Headquarters Air Force Element/Program Resource Office at Bolling AFB, Washington DC. In January 1998 he was requested, by name, to fill another special duty assignment with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and worked in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Office of the Deputy to the Under Secretary of Defense Policy Support, Special Advisory Staff at the Pentagon. Sergeant Robinson retired from the United States Air Force on 1 July 2001 at Bolling Air Force Base Washington DC, with honors. He is a graduate of Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Professional Military Education (PME) Courses, NCO PME I March 1980 and NCO PME II October 1981. He is also a graduate of the Electronic Security Command NCO Leadership School, March 1983, and the Military Airlift Command (East) NCO Academy, September 1989, where he won the Speech Award. He is also a graduate of the United States Air Force Senior NCO Academy, October 1997. Sergeant Robinson holds an Associates Degree in Information Management from the Community College of the Air Force. He continued to serve as the Veterans Affairs Officer, for the West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance, Martinsburg Field Office, Martinsburg WV. On September 1, 2019, he retired from state service and move to his hometown Grafton, WV

Sergeant Robinson's honors and decorations include: Airman of the Month in August 1979; promoted to Senior Airman Below-the-Zone, March 1980; NCO of the Quarter, July-September 1982; Named Professional Performer by the Electronic Security Command and Air Force Communications Command Inspector General teams, NCO of the Quarter for all four quarters, 1984; NCO of the Year, 1984. NCO of the Quarter, September-December and of the year 1985; NCO of the Year for European Communication Division, 1984; 42d Bombardment Wing NCO of the Quarter, April-June 1990; Air Force District of Washington Information Manager of the Quarter, July-September 1991. Sergeant Robinson proudly wears seventeen awards and decorations; The Defense Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal with two oak leaf cluster, Joint Unit Meritorious Service award, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with four oak leaf clusters, Air Force Organization Excellence Award with one oak leaf cluster, Air Force Good Conduct Medal with one silver and one oak leaf clusters, National Defense Service Medal, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, Air Force Overseas Long Tour Ribbon, Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon with four oak leaf clusters, NCO Professional Military Education Graduate Ribbon with two oak leaf cluster, Air Force Small Arms Marksmanship Ribbon and the Air Force Training Ribbon. He also wears the United States Air Force Master Information Managers badge and the Office of the Secretary of Defense badge.

David L. Robinson (ROBBIE) is very active in the American Legion. He served as and Americanism Officer, Children and youth Officer, Service Officer, 1st Vice Commander and Post Commander of The American Legion Post 14, Martinsburg West Virginia. He served the 10th District as Service Officer, Americanism Officer, Children & Youth Officer, Oratorical Chairman and Mountaineer Boys State Representative. At the Department level he has served as the Department Service or Asst Service for the past 12 years, he also served as the Department Asst Sgt-at Arms. He is currently the American Legion Mountaineer Boys State Director. At Post 12 in Grafton, WV he has served as Chaplain, and is the current Post Commander. He has been named The Legionnaire of the Year, a Ben I. Golden award, and the Distinguished Service Award Recipient. Serves as a volunteer for the Family Resource Network in Taylor County representing American Legion Post 12. He is also an active member of the West Virginia Memorial Day Committee representing the American Legion.

Sergeant Robinson is married to the former Jo A. Howard of Glen Burnie, MD. They were married in the Glen Burnie United Methodist Church on 15 October 1982. Jo has a Bachelor of Arts degree in American Studies from the University of Maryland. She has a Masters Degree from Coppella University in Organizational Management. She served 15 years as a Department of the Air Force Civilian in the Family Support Center at two bases and the Pentagon as a Transition/Relocation assistance specialist. She was employed by the Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, at the National Conservation Training Center, as a training specialist, in Shepherdstown, WV. She then moved to The Mather Training Center in Harpers Ferry, WV as a Training Manager for the Department of Interior until her retirement in 2017.



Dr. Corrina Boggess

2022-2023 Department Commander of West Virginia Veterans of Foreign Wars

Dr. Boggess currently serves as the 2022-2023 Department Commander, Department of West Virginia, Veterans of Foreign Wars. She is a member of VFW Post #8363 in Chesapeake, WV. She also serves as a member of the Veterans Council for the Governor of West Virginia.

She served over 28 years in the US Army and retired as a Colonel. Her qualifying position for membership in the VFW was serving as the Battalion Commander of the 376th Personnel Services Battalion in Northern Iraq (2004-2005).

Her military awards include the Army Distinguished Service Medal by the Secretary of the Army; the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Unit Commendation, Iraqi Campaign medal with a Campaign Star; seven Meritorious Service Medals, two Army Commendation Medals, and two Army Achievement Medals; and the Distinguished West Virginian awarded by Governor Bob Wise for actions taken while stationed at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.

In Memory

Lt. Col. Troxell Olin Mason Sr., Ret. Army
Capt. Troxell Olin Mason Jr., Army
Col. Jacqueline Mason Swanson, Ret. Army

Submitted by
SP5 Brooke Lynn Mason-Russell Army

In loving memory
James R. Fawcett, US Navy
Past State Commander VFW &
Taylor County Color Guard Member

Minnie E. Fawcett, Past Dept.
President VFW Auxiliary

Robert M. "Pee Wee" Patterson, US Navy

Ronald & Sara Fawcett & Family
George & Barb Watkins & Family



**Dina Hduson,
2022-2023 Department of
West Virginia VFW Auxiliary President**

I am Dina Hudson, 2022-2023 Department of West Virginia VFW Auxiliary President. I was born and raised in Fairmont, spending most of my childhood at nearby Rock Lake.

I have been married to Dan for nearly thirty-three years. We have two children, our son Tyler Hudson and his fiancé Sara Hall and our daughter Greta Hudson. I am an auxiliary member to the Woody Williams VFW Post 7048 in Fairmont.

After graduating from East Fairmont High School, I attended Fairmont State College where I received my bachelor's degree in English and Secondary Education. I completed my master's degree in Online Learning and will eventually graduate with my doctorate in Organizational Leadership when time permits.

My days are filled with teenagers as I have been teaching high school English for nearly thirty years. In my spare time, which doesn't actually exist, my hobbies include cooking, scuba diving, and binge watching my favorite TV shows. On Sundays, you will usually find me in the kitchen attempting to perfect a new homemade pasta dish.

I have been truly blessed to have received this opportunity to lead the state auxiliary. It has been both challenging and rewarding, but most of all, it has been an adventure. An adventure I will cherish for the rest of my life, as many of you played a part in creating my wonderful memories.

**Richard Colosky
Cemetery Director**



Richard Colosky was named Director of West Virginia National Cemetery effective February 13, 2022. In this role, he is responsible for all burial, maintenance, and administrative operations at the facility.

Prior to this assignment, Mr. Colosky served as the Assistant Director of Dayton National Cemetery Complex, at Marion National Cemetery beginning in August 2021. Also Mr. Colosky served as the Maintenance and Operations Supervisor at Dayton National Cemetery beginning in June 2019. In 2019 Mr. Colosky also received his bachelor's degree at Southern New Hampshire University in Business Studies and Accounting.

Mr. Colosky joined the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) in January 2017 as a Caretaker for Fort Custer National Cemetery. In August 2017 Mr. Colosky was selected as an Engineering Equipment Operator at Dayton National Cemetery. Mr. Colosky also served as an Engineering Equipment Operator Work Leader in 2018 at Dayton National Cemetery.

Mr. Colosky served for 10 years as a supervisor for two different private landscaping companies and has 15 years serving in the private sector as an Engineering Equipment Operator for various types of construction and operations projects.

Mr. Colosky is a veteran of the United States Army, where he completed four years of active service at the rank of Sergeant and served most of this time as squad leader for the caisson platoon that performed full honors at Arlington National Cemetery.



Scott Bitner
VFW Grafton Memorial Post 3081 Commander

Scott Bitner of Grafton, West Virginia became Commander of Memorial City Post 3081 in June of 2019.

Scott joined the Navy on October 13, 1981, he graduated from the Great Lakes in November 1981 and was stationed on his first ship, the USS San Diego – AFS6. During his Naval career, he was stationed on several sea going commands, 1 shore duty, and retired from the USS Elrod – FFG55. Scott spent two & half years in Sardinia, Italy with the USS Orion. He was deployed during several conflicts including Desert Storm, Desert Shield, and Kuwait.

He earned the Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist, Navy Unit Commendation Medal, SW Asia Service Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal, Nato Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal, and several other medals and commendations.

Scott joined the VFW in 2005 and became a Life Member in 2014. He is a Life Member of the VFW National Home for Children and a Member of the American Legion Post 12 in Grafton, West Virginia. Scott is also a member of the BUMC.

Scott is originally from Summerdale, PA, but moved to Grafton after retiring from the Navy in 2001.

Brenda Thompson
VFW Auxiliary District President &
Grafton Memorial City Post 3081 Auxiliary President



Brenda is the daughter of the late John Nery a World War II Veteran and life member of VFW Post 573 Clarksburg.

Brenda also serves the VFW Auxiliary Department of West Virginia as president of District Three and liaison to West Virginia Veterans Nursing Home.

Brenda is a member of the Church of the Good Shepherd United Methodist. She is active in the community. She served on City of Grafton City Council for eight years. Serving as Vice Mayor for four years. She is currently serving as a member of the Grafton Taylor County Library Board. Brenda is also a member of the Grafton Rotary Club.

Brenda wants to welcome all of you to Grafton. Enjoy the Memorial Day Weekend!



Kimberly Joe Hodge Theme Winner 2023

Kimberly Joe Hodge is the ten-year-old daughter of Matt Hodge and Kristin Cutright- Hodge and Chad Givens of Grafton. Kimberly attends Anna Jarvis Elementary School where she serves as an event writer for the school newspaper "Scoop News" and is a student council representative for her fourth-grade class.

Kimberly's hobbies are creating art projects, dancing, cheerleading, and attending gymnastics classes.

Kimberly enjoys walking her two dogs Jax and Riley, and spending time with her siblings Kierra, Noah, Landon, and Caleb. Kimberly also enjoys attending church at Maple Run Church in Grafton. When Kimberly was told she won the Memorial Day Theme Contest she jumped up and down with excitement and ran to hug her mom. Kimberly said, "I pledge to never forget and to forever honor our heroes." "Every day, every veteran and fallen hero deserves to be remembered for the sacrifices they made to give us the rights we have today." We all have veterans in our families or know a veteran, or, we may have loved ones who are currently serving.

My great grandpas, my uncle and my Dad Matt Hodge served in various branches of the military. My dad served from 1993 - 2001 in the United States Army. My dad's active duty was from 1997 to 2001. I am proud to live in a community that honors and recognizes our fallen soldiers as well as recognizes the soldiers who are currently serving. Kimberly attended her first Memorial Day Parade at 5-months old and plans to always attend the Memorial Day parade.



**Cruz Jacquez
Grade 6**

The Grafton National Cemetery in Grafton, West Virginia opened on June 14th in 1868. This cemetery contains more than 2,100 interments, with 1,252 Union soldiers. There is also 613 soldiers that fought in the Civil War buried here in Grafton. The dead buried here that is now closed to new interments represent more than 30 West Virginia counties and 24 states. Now, this cemetery has limited free space for any new burials.

The three-acre site is roughly a square, and it consists of three terraces descending from the main entrance along Walnut Street. A central walkway and staircase leads from the entrance that runs the length of the cemetery. This divides the grounds of the cemetery in half evenly. At the middle section of the Grafton National Cemetery along the central axis between sections C and D, is the flagpole. A big three-foot tall stone wall surrounds this amazing cemetery.

Most likely the most famous veteran that is buried here is Private Thornesberry Bailey Brown, which is believed to be the first Union casualty of the whole Civil War. He served under Captain George R Latham and was a part of the "Grafton Guards", which was in the service Company B, 2nd Virginia Infantry. On May 22nd, 1861, near president-day Grafton, a Confederate soldier ordered brown to halt. He did not want to halt so he refused and shot the soldier in his ear. Then the Confederate soldier returned fire, and he shot Brown in the heart leading to his death.

In Grafton, West Virginia we have the longest standing Memorial Day parade in the nation. "Flower Strewing Day" is a locally known tradition is a special Memorial Day service at the Grafton National Cemetery. Very historically each year the Memorial Day parade begins in downtown Grafton and wind is its way all the way down towards the cemetery that is across town. The children in this huge parade walk in it a long distance and at the end of the parade they go to the cemetery and spread flowers around to all the gravestones there. The quote "We pledge to never forget and forever honor our heroes" describes this day perfectly.



Jerra Halbritter
11th Grade

As the sun rises over the eastern wall of the cemetery, an eery silence settles over the 2100 graves in Grafton's National Cemetery on Walnut Street. It is the resting place for 613 Civil War soldiers, along with many unknown soldiers. Most days there is a serene peacefulness lingering over the sites. You may hear birds chirping, feel a breeze on your face, and see our nation's flag billowing overhead. The three foot stone walls stand proudly around the 3 acres of fallen soldiers, as if protecting our fallen heroes. The National Cemetery is often a quiet landmark amid Grafton. Until Memorial Day that is.

The last Monday of May, Grafton and its citizens observe Memorial Day, which originated shortly following the years of the Civil War. It has become an annual tradition in Grafton, which is also the site of the Memorial Day parade. For the past 155 years, the parade has been a celebration of remembering and honoring those fallen soldiers who have given their lives protecting our nation's freedom. Students, children, and adults march to the parade's final destination of the National Cemetery on Walnut Street.

It is on this day that the cemetery is buzzing with the voices of children and adults paying respect to the fallen heroes. Fellow veterans and military members also gather to honor the history represented at the cemetery. Flowers are placed along the headstones, flags dance in the breeze. It is this moment that people come together to show respect and carry on a tradition so important to the people of Grafton. A ceremony occurs as songs can be heard, heads are bowed in silence as prayers are said, and military members can be seen saluting the flag and fallen comrades. There are also gatherings and programs honoring our fallen military members at the National Cemetery in Pruntytown. This is the location for continued burial needs of fallen military members. This location opened in 1987.

It has been an honor being raised in Grafton, where the community values keeping Memorial Day an annual tradition. It is here in Grafton that we start our school days with the Pledge of Allegiance. We applaud as military members march past. We continue the tradition of the Memorial Day parade. It is here that "we pledge to never forget and forever honor our heroes."

WEST VIRGINIA MEMORIAL DAY COMMITTEE CHURCH SERVICE

Location: International Mother's Day Shrine, Downtown Grafton, West Virginia

Sunday May 28, 2023 – 10:00 AM Pastor Dave Arnold

Hosted by The American Legion Taylor County Post 12

BRUNCH: *Program continues with a Brunch at the VFW Building at 11:30. This is for the church attendees, speakers for the weekend and special guests.*

WEST VIRGINIA NATIONAL CEMETERY PROGRAM

Location: West Virginia National Cemetery Pruntytown, West Virginia

Thirty-Six Annual Memorial Day Weekend Program

Sunday May 28, 2023 – 1:00 PM

Master of Ceremony Dr. John Stalling

Invocation The American Legion Department of West Virginia 2nd District

Chaplain Tony Setley

National Anthem Taylor County Middle School Band

Welcome by Master of Ceremony, Dr. John Stallings

Welcome by National Cemetery Director, Rick Colosky

West Virginia National Cemetery Essay Contest Winner, Cruz Jacquez, 6th Grade,

Taylor County Middle School-1st Place Middle School Division

Introduction of Speaker by Master of Ceremony

Memorial Address Frank Cooley, American Legion Department of West Virginia

Alternate National Executive Committeeman

Musical Selection Taylor County Middle School Choir

Presentation of Wreath (Speaker and Essay Winner)

Memorial Salute Taylor County Honor Guard

Taps and Echo by Taylor County Middle School

Benediction The American Legion Department of West Virginia 2nd Dist

Chaplain Tony Setley

Closing Remarks by Master of Ceremonies



GRAFTON NATIONAL CEMETERY PROGRAM

Monday May 29, 2023 – Parade begins 10:00 AM at International Mother Day Shine

Memorial Service at Grafton National Cemetery Starting at 12:00 PM (Noon)

at end of parade.

Location: Grafton National Cemetery Grafton, West Virginia

Master of Ceremony Mr. John Stalling

Invocation The American Legion Department of West Virginia 2nd District

Chaplain Tony Setley

National Anthem Grafton High School Band

Welcome by Master of Ceremony

Grafton National Cemetery Essay Contest Winner, Jerra Halbritter, 11th Grade, Grafton

High School 1st Place High School Division

Introduction of Speaker by Master of Ceremony

Memorial Address Tom Hicks American Legion Department of West Virginia Commander

Musical Selection Grafton High School Entertainers Ed 52

Presentation of Wreaths Speaker and Essay Winner

Memorial Salute Taylor County Honor Guard

Taps and Echo Grafton High School Band

Benediction The American Legion Department of West Virginia 2nd Dist

Chaplain Tony Setley

Closing Remarks by Master of Ceremonies



**156th Annual
West Virginia Memorial Day Parade
Monday May 29, 2023**

**Line Up Begins at 9:00 a.m. - Parade Begins 10:00 a.m.
(Vehicular traffic closed to parade route at 8:30 a.m.)**

Flag raising at the International Mother's Day Shrine - 9:00 a.m.

**Performed by the Taylor County Honor Guard accompanied
By the 249th Army National Guard Band**

Parade Co-Chairman: Scott Willis Parade Co-Chairman: Chad Royce

*Grafton City Police – Coleman Durrett, Chief
Taylor County Sheriff's Department – Terry A. Austin, Sheriff
West Virginia State Police
FBI Police
The Taylor County Honor Guard
VFW Post 3081 Float
Band – 249th Army National Guard Band – Morgantown
Grafton Fire Department
Grafton Volunteer Fire Department
Taylor County Emergency Squad
West Virginia Memorial Day Banner*

Division I

*Division I Banner
Military Order of the Purple Heart – Chapter 724 – Bob Carr, Commander
Riderless Horse – Lainie Rush
Muffled Drum
Caisson and Escort – Rocky Point Farm/WV Memorial Day Committee, Inc
Horses – American & WV State Flags, Robin & Scarlet Sharp
Car - Parade Marshal – Brooke Russell
Car - Honorary Parade Marshal – Hershel “Woody” Williams
363rd Military Police Co.
Elizabeth Ludington Hagans – Col. John Evans Chapter DAR
Float – American Legion Taylor County Post #12 –
Commander, David L “Robbie” Robinson
Float – American Legion Department of West Virginia – Commander, Tom Hicks
Float - American Legion Mountaineer Boys State –
Director, David L “Robbie” Robinson
American Legion Riders
Car – VFW Auxiliary National Anthem Singing Contest 1st Place – Quinn Lambert
VFW Poppy King and Queen – Nicholas Garvin and Raegen Wentz
VFW Loyalty Day Queen – Lilian Roy
Band – West Virginia Highlanders of Davis and Elkins College – Bruce Dillon
Car - Speaker – Grafton National Cemetery Program – Frank Cooley,
American Legion Department of WV
Car – Becky White, USAF Veteran
Float – US Army Corps of Engineers, Tygart Lake
Float – GFWC Woman's Club of Grafton
Truck - Tygart Lake State Park Foundation*



156th Annual West Virginia Memorial Day Parade Monday May 29, 2023

Division II

Division II Banner

WV Secretary of State – Mac Warner

*Car – 156th Annual WV Memorial Day Parade Theme Winner –
Kimberly Joe Hodge*

Band – Grafton High School – Christopher Rucker, Director

Float – Rotary Club of Grafton – 2023 Grafton High School Honor Students

2023 Graduating Class of Grafton High School – Lori Shumaker, Principal

Car – Little Miss Bearcat – Haven Duckworth

Car - Grafton National Cemetery Essay Contest Winner – High School Division

Jerra Halbritter, 11 th Grade Grafton High School

Golder Horseshoe Winners – Grant Castle, Jacob Milinarcik, Noah Smith

Vehicles – Grafton High School Class of 1958

Vehicle – Grafton High School Class of 1968

Truck – Grafton High School Class of 1973

Truck – Grafton High School Class of 1978

Vehicle – Grafton High School Class of 1983

Anna Jarvis Elementary School – Heather Sinclair, Principal

Shelly Stead, Assistant Principal

West Taylor Elementary School – Cynthia Knotts, Principal

Flemington Elementary School – Melissa Lampinen, Principal

Vehicle – Little Miss Mistletoe – Kathryn Holley, Flemington Events and Festivals

Float – Little Feet Programs

Car – Lightning McQueen of Georgia

Truck – Billy Davis, Taylor County Tie Man

Boy Scout Troop 6 – Garrett Lewis

Truck & Trailer – Taylor County Soccer Association

Taylor County Little League

Base Invaders Softball

*Heroes 4 Higher – **Batman & ; Batmobile***

304 Jeep Club

Division III

Division III Banner

Taylor County Middle School Marching Band – Josh Chiado

Taylor County Middle School Students

Car - WV National Cemetery Essay Contest Winner – Middle School Division

Cruz Jacques, 6 th Grade Taylor County Middle School

Vehicle – Demolay #11

Vehicle – Kent Leonhardt, WV Dept of Agriculture

Vehicle – Miss WV USA – Krystian Leonard

Car – Bartlett Funeral Home

Car – All Pets Cremation

Float - 501 st Garrison Corellia

Band – Philip Barbour High School Band

Car – Shawn D. Nines, Circuit Judge

Car - Taylor County Commission

Car – Jaron Freeman, Taylor County Clerk

Car – Miss West Virginia TEEN Volunteer

Vehicle – Taylor County Senior Citizens, Inc.

Car – Taylor County Assessor, Christa Kinsey



156th Annual West Virginia Memorial Day Parade Monday May 29, 2023

Division III continued...

Car - City of Grafton
Car - Senator Randy Smith
WV Delegate Amy Summers
Truck - Senator Mike Stuart
Float - Preston County Buckwheat Festival
Band - Westbound & Down - Brian Westerman
Car - Caleb Hanna, House of Delegates 44 th District
Truck - Victor Lucas
Truck - Studio C
Truck - State Senator Ryan Weld
Truck - Congressman Alex Mooney
Car - Circuit Judge Thomas Hoxie
Band - Zona Hester
Truck - Octane Environmental - Ernie Rush
Car - State Senator Ben Queen
West Virginia University Mountaineer Mascot
Car - Miss West Virginia Volunteer
304 Jeep Club

Division IV

Division IV Banner

Band - East Fairmont High School Busy Bee Band & Honeybees - Timothy Bean
Vehicles - BIZZYBEES Handyman & Hauling
Van - Taylor County Public Library
Floats - Preston-Taylor Community Health Centers, Inc.
Baton Group - Country Beauty Twirlers
Van - Rosewood Center
Float - Ford Family Construction
Country Roots WV
Band - North Marion Husky Band - Matthew Morgan
Float - Oak Grove Baptist Church
Vehicle - Grafton Police Department - McGruff the Crime Dog
Float - Grafton City Hospital
Band - Soda Pop Gypsies
Truck - Leer Mine Complex
Float - First Baptist Church of Grafton
Float - 2 East Coast U.S.A. Queens, Miss Virginia
Baton Group - Strutters Baton and Dance Team, Inc



156th Annual West Virginia Memorial Day Parade Monday May 29, 2023

Division IV continued...

Baton Group – Strutters Baton and Dance Team, Inc
Truck & Rocket Car – Joe R. Pyle Auctions
Car – Country Roads Physical Therapy
Vehicle – Ken Ganley Kia of Bridgeport
Band – Pittsburgh Steeline
Truck – Grafton Goodwill
Horses – American Sidesaddle Association
Horse – Isaac Diaz Lopez
Float – Almost Heaven West Virginia Traffic Control
Car – Donald G. Ford Funeral Home
Band – Bobby Maynard Family Band
304 Jeep Club

Division V

Division V Banner
Bucket Truck – Pillar Innovations
Vehicle – MLK Staffing
Baton/Dance Group – Rising Starz Studio
Taylor County Shrine Club
Osiris Shrine Desert Caravan
Osiris Shrine Red Fez
Osiris Shrine Mountaineer Patrol
Osiris Shriners Curmudgeon Cruisers
Osiris Shrine
Baton Group – Mountain State Twirlers
Float – Taylor County Community Ministries
Mountain State Hare Scramble
Vehicle – J&R Customs
Floats – Taylor County Pride
Band – Samuel James & The New Impulse
Van/Float – Taylor Healthcare Center
304 Jeep Club

Division VI

Division IV Banner
This division also contains late entries not published in this program
Racing Go Karts – Kart Racers
Bicycle & Trailer – Daniel Frazier
Jeep – Michael Shipp
Truck – Freeland Trucking
Rat Rod Car – Ted Nice
Trucks – Logan Streets, Jeffery Dixon, Brandon Mitchell, Chase Exline, Devin Brown
Haddix Farms – Horses
Flemington Volunteer Fire Department
Taylor County Emergency Squad
Grafton Fire Department
West Virginia Memorial Day Committee, Inc.





Lengend	
	Division I
	Division II
	Division III
	Division IV
	Division V
	Division VI
	Horse Staging
	Cars, Baton Corps, Dance Groups, Sound Car, Floats
	Late Entries



*Disabled American Veterans Chapter 45 North Central WV
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MEMORIAL DAY
 REMEMBER AND HONOR

West Virginia Memorial Day Committee, Inc. 2023 Officers and Committees

General Chairman Doug Robinson, Service Officer, American Legion Post #12

*1st Vice-Chairman 3081 David L. "Robbie" Robinson, Commander, American Legion Taylor
County Post #12*

2nd Vice-Chairman Scott Bitner, Commander, VFW Memorial City Post

Treasurer Crystal Eifert

General Secretary Emily Brown

*Cemetery WVNC-GNC Director – Richard Colosky and WV National Cemetery/Grafton
National Cemetery Staff*

Essay Contests Christy Miller, Taylor County Superintendent of Schools

Band Committee Debbie Reed, Charlotte Olivo and Chad Royce

*Parade Committee Scott Willis – Chairman, Chad Royce – Chairman, Dave Hoag, David
Robinson, Brooke Russell, Doug Robinson, Lisa Sapp, Jeff Sapp, Debbie Reed, Charlotte
Olivo, William Keith Barker, Corey Robinson, Beth Hall, Scott Bitner, Theresa Nichols,
Aimee Setchell, Andrea Chambers, Vonda Reneman, Emily Brown, Chad N. Proudfoot,
304 Jeep Club – Josh Webb, WV Memorial Day Committee and many others!*

Equestrian Committee Lisa Sapp, Jeff Sapp and Sam Poling

*Publicity Staff of the Mountain Statesman, Monica Brown Robinson, Corey Robinson
and Chad Royce*

*Programs Meredith Stach – Program Designer, Monica Brown Robinson, Doug Robinson,
Debbie Reed, Charlotte Olivo, Chad Royce, David Robinson, Julie Gaines Royce and Scott
Bitner*

*Ad Committee Monica Brown Robinson – Chairman, Meredith Stach and WV Memorial
Day Committee*

Equipment William Keith Barker and Chad Royce

Taylor County Board of Education Representative Christy Miller, Superintendent

Baton Corp/Dance Unit/Twirlers Judges Kelly Duckworth and Caitlin Duckworth

Floats Ann Moats and Gary Moats

Float Judges Gary Moats, Kenzie Kyle, Kelsey Kyle and Karley Kyle

*The West Virginia Memorial Day Committee would like to thank all businesses and
individuals placing ads in the program, and contributing their time and services to ensure
the continued remembrance of this sacred day.*



2023 Spirit of Grafton Celebration Schedule of Events

Friday May 26th

- 5:00-8:00 pm – Pool Party at Grafton City Pool**
- 6:00-10:00 pm – Gambill Amusements Carnival Open**
- 8:00 pm – Bachelor Boys Band on Main Stage**

Saturday May 27th

- 1:00-10:00 pm – Gambill Amusements Carnival Open**
- 3:00 pm – Thriller BMX Bike Stunt Team**
- 3:00 – 6:00 pm – Barnyard Petting Zoo on grounds of Mother's Day Shrine**
- 3:00 – 5:00 pm Westbound and Down Band on Main Stage**
- 5:00 pm – Freestyle BMX Bike Stunt Team**
- 7:00 pm – Freestyle BMX Bike Stunt Team**
- 8:00 pm – Chris Weaver Band on Main Stage**
- Fireworks will follow the concert Sponsored by Bartlett Funeral Home**

Monday, May 29th

- 10:00 am – 156th Annual Memorial Day Parade**
- 12:00 pm – 156th Annual Grafton National Cemetery Observance**
- Schedule subject to change**

Other activities

- Gambill Amusements**
- Annual Juried Art Show at Gallery 62 West**
- Food and craft vendors throughout downtown**

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State of WV

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Brandon Robert Sapp, PFC

June 19, 1983 - August 15, 2004



PFC Brandon Sapp, 21 years young, of Lake Worth, FL, was killed in Action on August 15, 2004 in Najaf, Iraq, while in service to his county with the 2-7 Cavalry, Greywolf, stationed out of Fort Hood, TX. PFC Sapp had been awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star. His ribbons included the Good Conduct Medal, AIT Ribbon, National Defense Ribbon, (2) War on Terrorism Ribbons, Combat Infantry Badge and Marksmanship Badges for Grenade and Rifle.

A Nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers.

~ John F. Kennedy ~

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Christa Kinsey
Taylor County Assessor





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*We are forever grateful to those who have defended our flag and sacrificed in the
name of freedom. May we never forget their sacrifice and patriotism.*

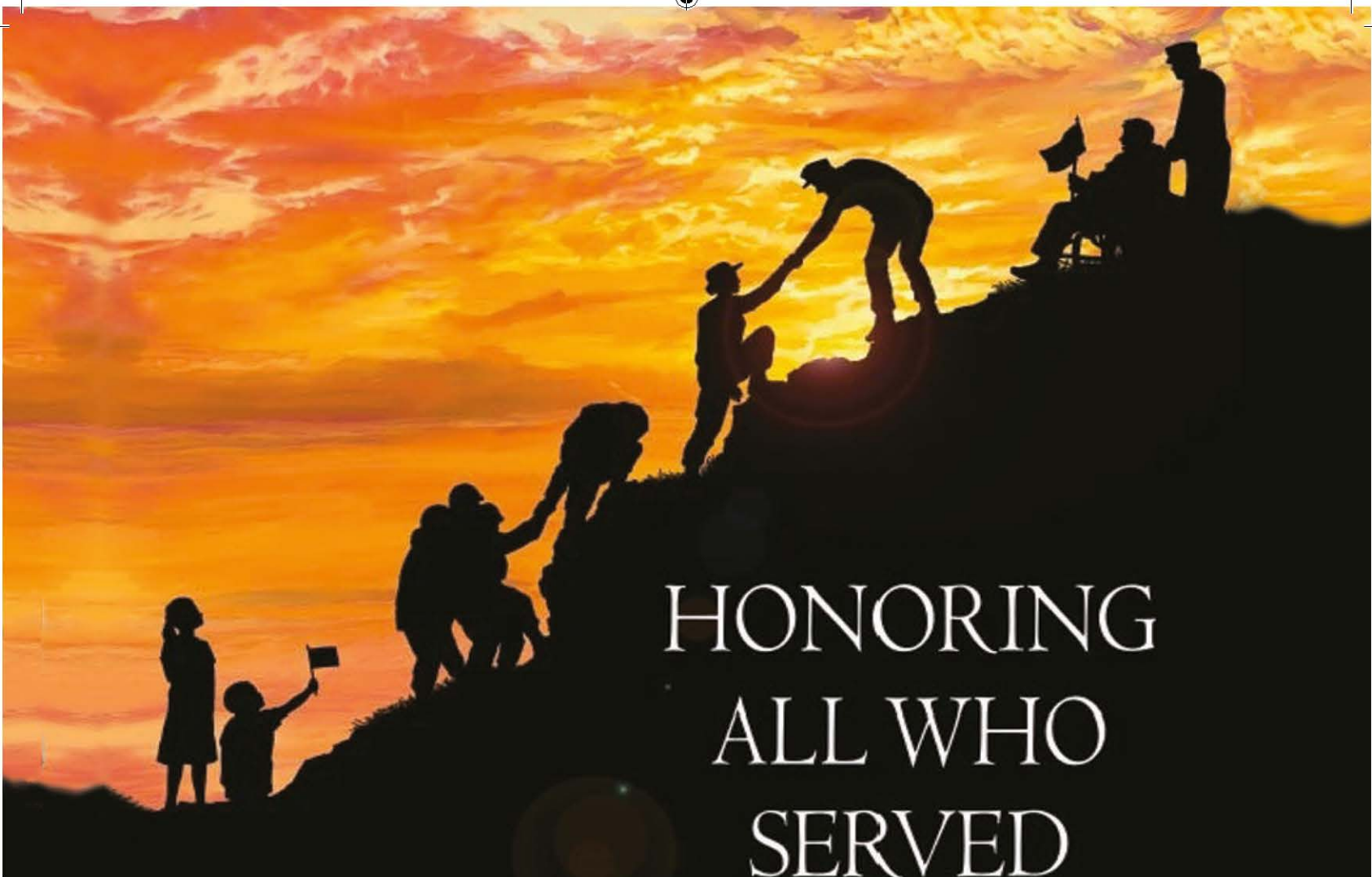
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*Pledge to Never Forget
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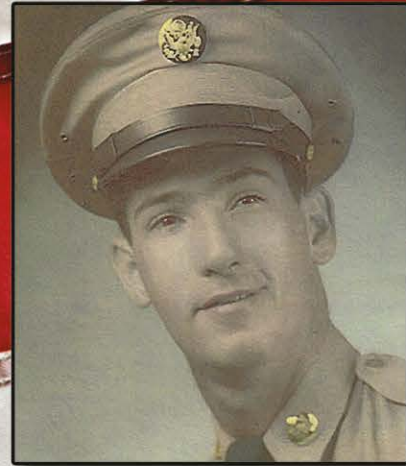
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Thank You Veterans!

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I watched the flag pass by one day
it fluttered in the breeze;
A young Marine saluted it and then he
stood at ease.

I thought how many men like him had
fallen through the years;
Of how many died on foreign soil and
how many mother' tears.

I heard the sound of taps one night
when everything was still;
I listened to the bugler play
and felt a sudden chill.
I thought of all the children,
of the mothers and wives;
Of fathers, sons and husbands with
interrupted lives.

I thought about a graveyard at
the bottom of the sea.
Of unmarked graves at Arlington.
No, freedom isn't free.

**WE PLEDGE TO NEVER FORGET &
FOREVER HONOR OUR HEROES**

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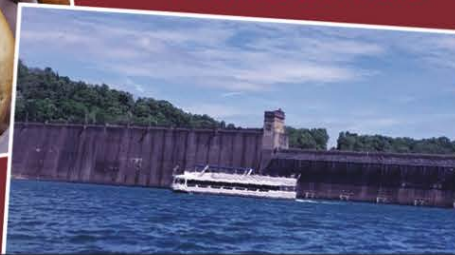


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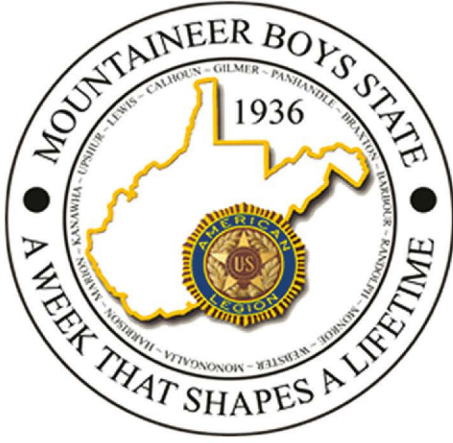
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THE AMERICAN LEGION MOUNTAINEER BOYS STATE

400
CITIZENS

1
STATE

13
CABINS

7
DAYS

WHO: West Virginia High School Juniors

What: The American Legion Mountaineer Boys State

When: June 12, 2022 - June 18, 2022

Where: WVU Jackson's Mill

Why: Teach GOOD GOVERNMENT through participation

How: Contact your local American Legion Post or High School Counselor

[HTTP://WVBOYSSTATE.ORG](http://wvboysstate.org)

ALMBS is a leadership action program where qualified high school students take part in a practical government exercise. It is designed to develop a working knowledge of the structure of state government and to impress upon the citizen the fact that our government is just what we make it.

The goal of ALMBS is to teach good government through participation by becoming a mythical state government and operating it as such. It is an objective citizenship training program which strives to inculcate individual responsibility to the community, state, and nation.

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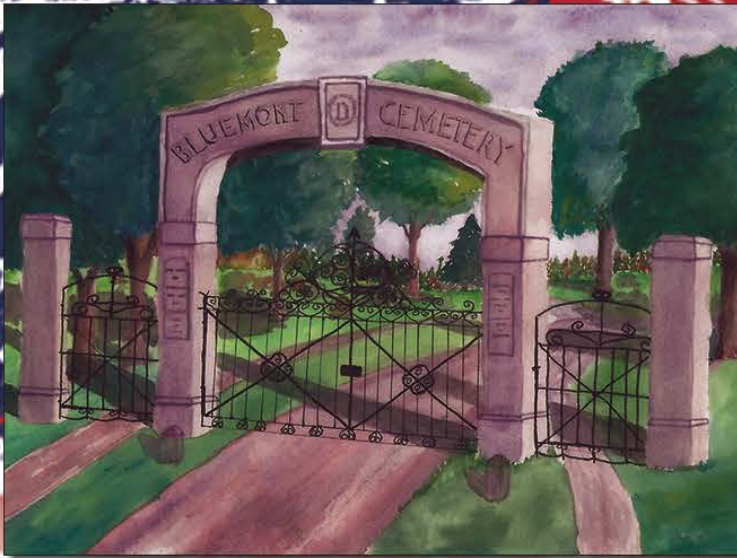
The background of the page is a close-up of the American flag, showing the blue field with white stars and the red and white stripes. The text is overlaid on this background.

Taylor County Commission

*Memorial Day is a day
to remember and honor
all the brave heroes who
served to hold our flag
high.*

Tony Velti, President
Orville Wright, Commissioner
Sam Gerkin, Commissioner
Jaron Freeman, Co Clerk

214 West Main Street
Grafton, WV 26354
304-265-1401



Bluemont Cemetery

Grafton Municipal Cemetery – 151 Bluemont Street – Grafton, West Virginia

First Documented Interment 1842 – First Municipal interment 1866

Owned and Operated by the City of Grafton since 1866

*Remembering and Honoring the Veterans and the Conflicts in which they served for the
Freedom of our Country who
are at rest in Bluemont Cemetery*

*War of 1812 ~ American Civil War ~ World War I ~ Korean War
Mexican War ~ Spanish-American ~ War World War II ~ Vietnam War*

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Councilman-Patricia A. Henderson*

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City Clerk-Larry M Richman

Public Works Director-Jason R. Setler

Bluemont Cemetery Caretaker-

Albert "Butch" Charleton

Police Chief- Coleman Y Durrett

Acting Fire Operations Chief-Ryan D. Roberts

Building Inspector-R Wayne Beall

Code Officer-Glenn H Bartlett II

Sanitary Sewer Director-Samuel J Jones

City Attorney-Mullens & Mullens, PLLC

City Judge-Robert C Gorey Jr