

Area villages and towns plan Memorial Day services May 25, 2015

CHENANGO COUNTY — Communities all around greater Chenango County will host their annual Memorial Day celebrations, a tradition that follows the federal holiday that originated after the American Civil War to commemorate the Union and Confederate soldiers who died in the war.

Originally dubbed “Decoration Day,” the first instance of the somber day of reflection was organized by teachers, missionaries black freedmen of Charleston at a May Day ceremony in 1865, which was covered by the New York Tribune and other national papers.

Nearly 10,000 people, mostly freedmen, gathered on May 1 to commemorate the war dead. Involved were about 3,000 school children, newly enrolled in freedmen's schools, as well as mutual aid societies, Union troops, black ministers and white northern missionaries.

Here is a list of some local communities as they continue to honor the lives of those who paid for our freedom and liberties with their lives. All events will take place on Monday, May 25; the Federal observance of Memorial Day.

- Afton Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. Parade lineup time and location 9:45 a.m., corner of Main and Pleasant Avenue, and proceed down Main Street to the bridge overlooking Susquehanna River for a short program. Following that program, the parade will continue to Foster Park for the ceremony. In the event of inclement weather the ceremony will be held at the Afton Central School auditorium. Village Mayor, Sally Muller will serve as Master of Ceremonies
- Earlville American Legion will have the Memorial Day and Ceremony on Monday, May 25. The parade will begin from the back of the Quickway in the Parking Lot at 10 a.m. and will end at the Earlville Cemetery where a ceremony will be held. It is recommended that all parade participants should arrive as least a half hour early. There will also be a chicken barbecue beginning at 10 a.m. on the front lawn of the Earlville Methodist Church which is located on North Main along the route.
- New Berlin will host the Frank H. Arnold Post 348 of the American Legion and their guest speaker Mr. Joseph McBride, Chenango County District Attorney at the Memorial Day services to be held in the village of New Berlin.
Memorial Day observances will start with a parade at 9:30 am leaving Hyde Park and proceeding south on North Main Street and entering the Milford Academy School lawn on South Main Street where the ceremonies will take place at approximately 9:50 am.
The following order of march is suggested: American Legion, Unadilla Valley Central School Band and Color Guard, Brownies, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Pittsfield Fire Department, New Berlin Fire Department and any other organization or units that want to participate.
All Veterans, no matter what branch you served in or the time frame of your service, are requested to (fall in) behind the American Legion and participate in the parade.
All those marching should have their units at Hyde Park between 9:00 and 9:20 am, the starting time.
- The Oxford Memorial Day has become the most important day of recognition of our armed forces. It's a day we remember and honor our country's heroes who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation. On this Memorial Day, many homes and businesses along the parade route will be decorated with American flags and red, white and blue flowers to honor veterans and active service personnel who have served or have given their lives. Several activities—including five memorial services and a parade—will take place in Oxford beginning at 8 a.m. Oxford American Legion's Fort Hill Post will begin the day at 8 a.m. with the wreath laying ceremony and rifle salute at St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery on West State Street.
Following that at 9 a.m., the parade will line up at the Oxford American Legion Post # 376, at 17 South

Washington Avenue. Stepping off at 9:30 a.m., the parade will be led by the Post #376 Color Guard and Rifle Squad, Legionnaires, Sons of the American Legion (SAL's), and the Auxiliary. As always, the parade will feature the Village of Oxford Fire Department and the Fire Department Explorers. In addition, the Preston Volunteer Fire Department will have one fire truck following the Oxford Fire Dept. As always, the parade will feature the Oxford Academy and Central High School's, 'Pride of the Valley,' the Blackhawk Marching Band. The band will be followed by marching Girl Scouts, the Daisy Troop, OYSP, and the Youth Center.

Along the parade route, red crepe paper poppies will be distributed by Oxford Auxiliary members and volunteers, in exchange for contributions to assist disabled and hospitalized veterans.

This year's three American Legion Boys' State delegates will be there: Kevin Davis, Corey Marshman and Garrett Sylstra. They will say the Pledge of Allegiance and the Gettysburg Address. The American Legion Auxiliary Girls' State delegate, Samantha Mack, will also say a few words.

Plan your after-the-parade lunch with some BBQ chicken cooked by the SAL. This Legion fundraiser will be ready starting at 9 a.m., at the Post 376 Legion, on the Route 12 side.

Following the Riverview Cemetery ceremony, Legion members will visit the NYS Veterans' Home residents. The color guard, selected clergy and guest speakers will hold a memorial service at 11 a.m. in the recreation room. The Home's Director of Activities, Heeyoun Cho, will be hosting the program.

Lastly, (around noon) the color guard will go to the Warn Ten Broeck Cemetery (seven miles south of Oxford), to place a wreath and to salute the deceased.

- Norwich MEMORIAL DAY will be hosted by Lt. Warren E. Eaton, DSC- American Legion Post 189, Norwich.

10:30 AM Parade participants line up outside VFW on East Main St.

11:00 AM Parade Starts.

11:15 AM Parade arrives at West Side Park for start of Veteran Program.

PROGRAM: Master of Ceremonies: Frank Revoir, Past Commander, Post 189

Invocation: Pastor Ken Fallon, Post 189-Sons of the American Legion

National Anthem: NHS Madrigal Chorus-Mary Williams, Director

Guests: Introduction of any special guest(s)

Speakers: Frank Revoir, Past Commander, American Legion Post 189

A Tribute to Veterans of All Wars; Guest Speaker introduction:

Tribute to Gold Star Mothers – Mary Lou McAvoy-Post 189 Aux President

Memorial Wreath Presentations:

Prior to the start of the Program, a wreath, in honor of World War I Veterans, representing both the American Legion and VFW Posts, will be placed in front of the World War I Monument, located in the East Side Park, directly across the street. Following the Program, the American Legion will conduct a memorial service at Mt. Hope Cemetery, for veterans buried there. The VFW will also conduct a memorial service at St. Paul's Cemetery, for veterans buried there, including Christie Rock, for whom the VFW Post is named. In memory of Veterans Lost at Sea, a floating wreath will be placed in the Canasawacta Creek. The wreaths, which will now be presented in memory of deceased veterans, will be placed by personnel from veteran and civic organizations, in front of this World War II Monument.

- South New Berlin Harold McIntyre American Legion #1289 will host a memorial program beginning at 11 a.m. at the South New Berlin Fire House. The parade will line up at the fire house at about 11:45 a.m. and proceed south on State Highway 8 stopping at the American Legion Post located at the four corners then proceed south to the Riverside cemetery.

Parade Marshals Dan Fairchild and Sandra Izard will officiate, and Chief Petty Officer Samuel "Mike" Gainfort, USN (Ret.) will serve as master of ceremonies.

Guest speaker will be Alan Widmark, SFC, USA (Retired). Sam Loeffler, Unadilla Valley Central School (UVCS) Student, will read President Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address"

A ceremonial wreath will be placed at each stop along the parade route. Invocation and Benediction will be provided by Rev. Romeyn Kipp, Pastor Holmesville Baptist Church and Robert Decker, Lay Minister

First Baptist Church, South New Berlin for the Memorial Day Program. Music for the program and parade will be provided for by the UVCS Band (led by Gregory Maistros) with vocal music selections by Elizabeth McConkey accompanied by Michael Moore on key board. A short service, military honors, taps, and final prayers (by Mr. David Dibbell) will be held at the Riverside Cemetery concluding the program. Area adults and children are invited to meet at the library to decorate their bikes and ride in the parade. Chicken Barbecue halves will be available at the Fire House and an Old Home Day Ham Dinner at the First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall today immediately following. Transportation will be provided for by the Rolling Antiquers Car Club of Norwich and a School Bus by the UVCS to observe the services at the Riverside Cemetery. In addition, area floats are invited.