

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 24, 2018

FROM: THE CHARLESTOWN MEMORIAL DAY COMMITTEE, INC.

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20<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CHARLESTOWN MEMORIAL DAY PARADE AND OBSERVANCES

The Charlestown Memorial Day Committee, Inc. announces the 20th annual Charlestown Memorial Day Parade and Observances will be held on Sunday, May 27, rain or shine, produced and directed by the Committee and the Charlestown Chamber of Commerce.

The events are held to give honor to our fallen military heroes. The parade will step off at 1:00 p.m., proceeding south along Old Post Road, from Ridgewood Drive to King Tom Drive, passing through the business district and the village of Cross Mills. Staff Sargent James L. O'Brien, U.S. Air Force, Ret., a veteran of the Korean War, will be this year's Grand Marshal. Veterans are invited to march in the parade.

Memorial observances will be held during two parade stops, at the cemetery at Cross' Mills Baptist Church and at the brook near Town Dock Road; and also, immediately following the parade, at the Charlestown Naval Airfield Memorial at Ninigret Park. The three observances honor those who died in the service of our Country, on land, at sea, and in the air, respectively.

At the conclusion of the parade and observances, a free concert, featuring the Wakefield Concert Band, and a brief speaking program will be held at the pavilion at Ninigret Park, where refreshments will be provided. The keynote speaker will be Col. William Babcock, U.S. Army, Ret., president of the Narragansett Bay Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America. Col. Babcock is a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, awarded the silver star.

The Charlestown Memorial Day Committee, Inc. is an all-volunteer, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. To donate or volunteer, or for more information, email us at [memorial.day.02813@gmail.com](mailto:memorial.day.02813@gmail.com), or call parade chair Heather Paliotta at 364-3878.

CHARLESTOWN'S OBSERVANCE OF 150<sup>th</sup> MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day was first observed nationally in 1868 as Decoration Day, established by General John Logan, the commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R., an organization of Union veterans of the Civil War.) His General Orders, No. 11, stated, "The 30<sup>th</sup> day 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.”

Today, 150 years later, flags again commemorate the empty graves of our Civil War soldiers whose bodies never returned home, their names preserved in stone: W.H. Burton, William H. Carpenter, B.F. Hawkes, Samuel Hazard, Reuben A. Healey, Welcome H. Kenyon, Halsey Stevens, William Taylor. In the same cemetery, beside the Cross’ Mills Baptist Church, lie nine Charlestown veterans of the American Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the French & Indian War.

The Charlestown Memorial Day Committee honors all who have made the ultimate sacrifice in all of our nation’s wars, in an annual Parade and Observances. The Gold Star Memorial float recognizes local World War II casualties, and the POW/MIA recognizes those who never returned from war, recorded as Prisoners of War or Missing in Action.

The Committee also maintains several educational programs of remembrance.

The Rhode Island flags on display in the Fallen Heroes Flag Garden at the Charlestown Post Office, and the companion exhibit found inside, honor the twenty-nine Rhode Island military heroes who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our freedoms since September 11, 2001. The exhibit will be available for viewing during regular hours through Flag Day, June 14.

A perpetual Prayer Journal of remembrance maintains the names of those who were lost while training at the Charlestown Naval Auxiliary Air Field during World War II, as well as all those who have been enrolled by local residents. In addition, the wartime military service of Charlestown residents is recognized in a series of Honor Rolls for each national conflict since World War I. At any time, enrollments for the Prayer Journal and nominations for the Honor Rolls can be sent to the Committee at P.O. Box 74, Charlestown, RI 02813.

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