

June Uplifters

MEMORIAL DAY

SOURCE: <http://www.usmemorialday.org>

Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his General Order #11 and was first observed on 30 May 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. 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 celebrated in almost every State on the last Monday in May (passed by Congress with the National Holiday Act, P.L. 90 - 363, in 1971 to ensure a three day weekend for Federal holidays), though several southern states have an additional separate day for honoring the Confederate war dead: January 19 in Texas, April 26 in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi; May 10 in South Carolina; and June 3 (Jefferson Davis' birthday) in Louisiana and Tennessee.

In 1915, inspired by the poem "In Flanders Fields," Moina Michael replied with her own poem:

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.

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This is truly amazing! Be sure to click on NEXT PAGE at the bottom of each page ... there are 4 pages. This lady found a humming bird nest and got pictures all the way from the egg to leaving the nest. Took 24 days from birth to flight. Very neat and good pictures. Enjoy!!!

<http://community-2.webtv.net/hotmail.com/verle33/HummingBirdNest/>

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WW II MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON DC

The Good Fight

Carter County Answers the Call to Send Its WWII Veterans to the Memorial

By David Montgomery Washington Post Staff Writer Saturday, May 8, 2004; Page C01

Calling Frank Capra. We have a story for him. It's about the day Carter County in rural eastern Kentucky came to Washington. It's about yesterday, at the National World War II Memorial.

Unplug your cynicism, get out your hankies, close your eyes. Picture some ideal America of unambiguous wars abroad and neighbors sacrificing to help each other at home. An America where our best "Friends" aren't television characters, and the nation does not need to apologize. Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio?

A while back, the people of Carter County resolved to raise enough money to send every World War II veteran in the county on a free trip to see the memorial. Never mind that there's not a lot of disposable income in the rolling foothills of the Appalachians. No matter that those folks had *already* raised \$5,000 to help get the memorial built.

People pitched in any way they could. Retired teacher Bee Pope gave up her annual trip to Las Vegas and donated \$500. The children of Prichard Elementary had a "penny war" -- the classroom collecting the most pennies would win pizza -- and raised \$2,100. Seventh-graders at East Carter County Middle School recycled soda cans and raised \$600. Banjo picker and cabinetmaker Tony Collier donated the proceeds from a bluegrass festival, about \$5,000, and he refinished a vintage M-1 rifle that was raffled off for about \$2,200. Families who lost loved ones asked that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the veterans fund. There were bake sales, radio campaigns, surprise checks in the mail.

Farming, construction, teaching the children, burying the dead are some of the careers available in Carter County, population 26,889. There's a new food processing plant coming. Grayson, the county seat and largest city, has 3,877 residents. The mean household income is \$26,427. Nearly one in five residents lives below the poverty line. But Carter County raised \$50,000 to send its veterans to Washington.

The 438-mile journey began Thursday morning. What a send-off -- they told us about it. It began in the parking lot of a Holiday Inn in Grayson. Four generations of Carter County people boarded four buses and accompanying cars -- 66 veterans and 184 friends, spouses, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, 250 passengers in all. The cargo holds were stacked with wheelchairs as well as luggage. (A few Mason jars of east Kentucky moonshine came along. Clear as water. Souvenirs for their hosts.) A state senator said a prayer and a high school band played the national anthem.

The caravan began a slow and wonderful procession through and out of Grayson. People thronged the sidewalks waving flags and cheering the veterans on their journey. The buses motored past schools and businesses that had raised money for the trip. The children came out waving flags and cheering. Police cars with lights flashing escorted the buses to the West Virginia border, about 40 miles from Grayson. The display made the veterans and their families on the buses cry.

A church in Covington, Va., opened its doors to give them lunch. And for the trip home tomorrow, city officials in Staunton, Va., promised a lunch at a VFW Post catered by Wal-Mart. Such are acts of kindness from strangers who have been hearing the saga of Carter County sending its veterans to Washington.

"We never asked for a penny, we just told our story," says Mike Malone, a retired funeral director and one of the organizers of Carter County Citizens for Veterans Association, which led the crusade to make the trip happen. "I'm glad we live where we live. . . . It's a small, poor town, but it has really good people in it, and they believe in what we're doing."

"People may call us hillbillies and rednecks, but we stick together," says Willis Johnson, a retired history teacher making the trip with his two brothers and his mother, Lahoma Johnson, a former Wave.

Malone's father, Fred, now deceased, was a World War II veteran, and seven of his uncles served. "I was born right after the war," he says. "Anytime there was a family get-together, the subject was World War II. . . . I was a boy. I wish I had taken notes and had a tape recorder. It shapes the way you look at things."

Open your eyes. You're on one of the buses inching through rush-hour traffic in Arlington yesterday morning. The Carter County contingent spent the night in a hotel before the final leg of the journey to the memorial.

Sitting next to you on the blue bus is Dub Newland, a jaunty 79-year-old, who tells of firing torpedoes from a PT boat in both the English Channel and the Pacific. He says he considered it a free trip around the world, "otherwise I might have got scared." He spies a fellow passenger, Mander Bailey. "Hello, Mander, I haven't seen you since we graduated in '42."

Prichard High sent a lot of boys directly to war. The vets say people in Carter County were volunteering so fast you had to get on a waiting list. Newland waited months before the Navy could process him.

About 1,200 residents enlisted, more than 10 percent of the population back then. By 2000, there were only 392 WWII vets left, according to the Census Bureau. In the last four years, many of those have died, and organizers of the trip consider the turnout of 66 to be excellent. It would have been 67, but Frank P. Rice of the Army Air Forces in the South Pacific died of a heart attack a couple months ago. His son, Johnnie, is aboard in his stead.

Now the blue bus passes the Pentagon. "Can you see where it was hurt?" Newland asks. No, the visitors from Carter County can't tell which side got hit by the jetliner on Sept. 11, 2001.

Over the Memorial Bridge, past the bleached cathedral of the Lincoln Memorial, then the black knife-blade-to-the-soul of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The quiet chatter on the bus subsides. The passengers don't know what to expect from the World War II memorial. They can barely imagine it.

Barbara Roe, another of the organizers, holds a microphone at the front of the bus. She describes how, while the memorial was being built, one of the Carter County people gave a Citizens for Veterans Association pin to someone involved in the project, who threw it into the foundation. "There is a piece of Carter County ingrained in the concrete," Roe says.

The buses park near the memorial. The veterans disembark stiffly. Some sit down in wheelchairs pushed by volunteers from Carter County. Sen. Jim Bunning (R-Ky.) is waiting to say hello.

The memorial is almost too big to grasp. They slowly fan out, looking for sections commemorating the theaters where they served, the battles they fought.

Words fail some of the vets. "It's wonderful," says Marcus Suttles, one of seven survivors of a company of 80 in the Battle of the Bulge. "I don't know the words to express it. We took pictures of it."

"This is beautiful," says Newland. "I didn't think there was space in Washington where they could get up and do this because this is really good."

"I think it's great -- the workmanship all looks perfect," says James Thornbury, who served in the Navy in the South Pacific.

"Oh, it's nice," says Mackie Stewart, who was a Marine at Iwo Jima. "Everything about it, I reckon."

They blink back tears during taps.

They are sounded by Kyle Stewart, 19, grandson of Mackie. Kyle and his twin, Kenton, are part of the four-man Junior ROTC color guard from Carter County. Out of approximately 635 students at East Carter High, about 110 are cadets, says retired Col. Ralph Newman, the senior Army instructor at the high school. Most do not go on to military careers. The point of JROTC, Newman says, is to motivate young people to be "better Americans."

But the Stewart twins do plan military careers. After having taken part in about 200 veterans' funerals in Carter County in the last few years, they are headed for Marine basic training at Parris Island in November. They picked the Marines because "my papaw was in the Marines," Kyle says. Their father, Twain, was in the Army.

When Mackie Stewart came home to Carter County from Iwo Jima, he went to work in coal mines, sawmills and construction sites. Now there are fewer opportunities. Kyle says he'd be stuck in a fast-food job. The Marines, he says, are "a good career move." He likes a quote he heard somewhere: "The worst thing in the world is a Marine and his rifle."

This son of Carter County also says he can't wait to get through basic training, so he can get to Iraq if there's still work to be done. "I want to do all I can to help," he says.