

Second Century

POST

AMERICAN
LEGION

May 2024

The Official Newsletter of The American Legion John W. Sheets Post 27 ★ Unit 27 ★ Squadron 27 ★ Farmington, Utah

COMMANDERS CALL



Jon Rue

Once again, spring has sprung; snow is melting, and it's getting warmer. May always brings a time of remembrance. At the end of May, Memorial Day has always seemed awkward to me, when civilians wished me a "Happy" Memorial Day. If you've been reading this newsletter for a few years, you'll recall my story about reminding each other to have a "Worthy Memorial Day". My writing skills and paraphrasing won't do my classmate's speech justice, so if you'd like to read a transcript, please let me know (and I do have his permission to share).



Additionally, during the month of May many choose to wear a Poppy flower as a token of remembrance of service members whom died in service. Most of us know the historical roots of that practice and that it originates from the poppies that bloomed after WWI in Flanders Field spanning Belgium & France, and immortalized in the poem "In Flanders Field" by John McCrae. I encourage each of you to wear a poppy during May as remembrance for our fallen soldiers. If you need one, reach out to a member of our Auxiliary, as they have a program to distribute poppies as a fund raiser.

Armed Forces Day: This day may not be highlighted on many calendars or get publicity, but for us, it is of significance and may present an opportunity to educate family members and neighbors. It is held annually on the third Saturday of May, this year on Saturday, May 18. It is a day to thank and honor current military personnel. Whenever you have a chance, please take a moment to thank and recognize those

men and women who are currently serving in the armed forces in the United States. We can also clarify for others that Veterans Day honors all those who have previously served in the military. As well as Memorial Day, when we honor those men and women who have died while serving in the United States Armed Forces.

Memorial Day: Once again your Post 27 will take a significant part in the observance of Memorial Day. Members of the Post are invited to come to participate in the placement of US flags on veterans' grave at the Kaysville and Farmington City Cemeteries. Mark your calendars for Friday, May 24. Bring a long screwdriver for starting a hole in the ground for placing the flags. We will be working in two-person teams.

This year Kaysville City has planned a ceremony at 10:00 am at the Kaysville City Cemetery on Memorial Day. Our own Kent Hansen is again the emcee, and Post 27 will conduct a 13-Fold American Flag Ceremony. We will also hold our own Memorial Day Program at 12 noon at the Farmington City Cemetery.

In closing, I'd like to thank all of you for your service, and ask that you have a "Worthy Memorial Day."

Finally, in closing, I hope to meet you at events in the near future. I am always open to suggestions and guidance, so please reach out to me by phone, text, or even e-mail.

Post 27 Family Events Calendar

May 9 – Post 27 General Meeting, 7:00 pm,
Davis County Memorial Courthouse
Auxiliary Meeting, 6:00 pm, Room 211
May 12 – Mother’s Day. *Fly the flag!*
May 18 – Armed Forces Day. *Fly the flag!*
May 24 – Put out Flags for Memorial Day. 9:00 am,
Farmington Cemetery, 4:00 pm, Kaysville Cemetery
May 27 – Memorial Day. *Fly the flag!*
Ceremonies: Kaysville Cemetery, 10:00 am;
Farmington Cemetery 12:00 pm

June 2-7 – American Legion Auxiliary Utah Girls State.
Weber State University
June 9-15 – American Legion Utah Boys State.
Weber State University
June 13 – Post 27 General Meeting, 7:00 pm,
Davis County Memorial Courthouse
Auxiliary Meeting, 6:00 pm, Room 211
June 14 – Flag Day. *Fly the flag!*
June 14 – U.S. Army Birthday *Fly the flag!*
June 21-23 – American Legion Department of Utah
Convention, Vernal

1st Vice Commander



Bob Anderson

Come on out to the Memorial Day (May 27) ceremonies at the Kaysville and Farmington cemeteries (10:00 am and 12:00 pm, respectively)! Your Post is key to these important community events, and you are key to your Post’s success in getting them done. Come make your Memorial Day memorable with us.

I bring you the return of my favorite PSA (Post 27 Service Appeal):

To continue to maintain and gain new membership, each of us needs to be advocates as to how The American Legion membership is so much more beneficial to each of us and the veterans we support. To quote the AL website, “The American Legion provides life-changing assistance and guidance for veterans, military personnel, their families and communities in thousands of ways every day around the world. Help comes in the form of personal assistance, cash grants, donated goods, disaster relief, labor, networking, volunteerism, and

advocacy.”

We all need to get the word out about some of the other reasons to join:

- Free subscription to The American Legion Magazine
- Expert advice, support, and representation for veterans and families seeking federal, state, and local benefits
- Job fairs, career events, and business workshops every year to help veterans and their families
- “Operation Comfort” - Active-duty military personnel and newly discharged veterans get help to recover and adjust to lifestyle changes
- Supports programs to better apply veterans’ military experience toward professional and vocational licenses and certification credits
- Veteran family and community support through cash grants and volunteer aid during times of financial difficulty, short-handedness at home or natural disaster

Other benefits include: financial services through “preferred provider” relationships in banking, insurance, and personal finance; Homeless Veteran Outreach with temporary housing, mentoring and job training; and many more personal benefits and national programs. See Legion.org for the details.

Remember our veterans and keep looking out for more potential Legionnaires!!



2nd Vice Commander

May 5, 1865. Decoration Day is established to be observed for the first time in the United States. The graves of fallen Civil War Veterans were decorated with flowers to remember their sacrifice. After WWI and WWII, the date was moved to May 30 and now included the gravesites of those who gave all in the World Wars. It then became known as Memorial Day.

Congress, in 1968, designated this a Federal Holiday and then moved the observance to the last Monday in May, providing the general population with a three-day weekend. For all of us, it is an important and meaningful day. We express our thanks and admiration for all those who have sacrificed everything they had for our freedom and way of life. Memorial Day will be honored with Parades, Speeches and Ceremonies at City Halls and Cemeteries, as it should be. It is also an opportunity to share time with your fellow Legionnaires and your family to celebrate all the greatness this country has to offer, and to thank those that gave all to preserve it.

June is hot on May's heels and that's when our Boys and Girls State weeks will begin. Created in 1935, this important event helps our young people learn about, and participate, in our form of government. This hands-on leadership program will help them build lifetime memories, experience campus living and adds an item to their resume that most of their peers will not have. They will launch campaigns, run for office, draft legislation, and see how a government functions and operates. In essence, they will be preparing themselves for being the next generation of leaders in this country.



Dan Woodward

Chaplain

Victory in Europe Day is the day celebrating the formal acceptance by the Allies of World War II of Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces on Tuesday, 8 May 1945; it marked the official end of World War II in Europe in the Eastern Front as Germany's unconditional surrender entered into force. Adolf Hitler had committed suicide on 30 April during the Battle of Berlin, and Germany's surrender was authorized by his successor.

Upon the defeat of Germany, celebrations erupted throughout the Western world, especially in the United Kingdom and in North America. More than one million people celebrated in the streets throughout the UK to mark the end of the European part of the war.



Steve Steed

“God bless you all. This is your victory. In our long history, we have never seen a greater day than this. Everyone, man or woman, has done their best”.

-- Winson Churchill



In the United States, the event coincided with President Harry Truman's 61st birthday. He dedicated the victory to the memory of his predecessor, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had died of a cerebral hemorrhage less than a month earlier, on 12 April. Flags remained at half-staff for the remainder of the 30-day mourning period. Truman said of dedicating the victory to Roosevelt's memory and keeping the flags at half-staff that his only wish was "that Franklin D. Roosevelt had lived to witness this day".

“The western world has been freed of the evil forces which for five years and longer have imprisoned the bodies and broken the lives of millions upon millions of freeborn men. They have violated their churches, destroyed their homes, corrupted their children and murdered their loved ones. Our armies of liberation have restored freedom to those suffering peoples, whose spirit and will the oppressor could never enslave.”

– President Harry S. Truman, V-E Day Proclamation

The conflict began in 1939, when Germany and the Soviet Union invaded Poland. Among the dead were about 6 million Jews who were murdered by Nazi Germany. Some 250,000 U.S. troops were also killed in the fighting in the European theater. May God permit us to never forget the sacrifice made by so many.

HISTORIAN

“Remembering Max” by Justin “Jerry” Martin

Over the last 42 years, I have been asked many times, “How can you be so close to guys you served with for only a year of your life?” For all combat veterans, I imagine the response is similar: “Unless you were there, you wouldn’t understand.”

For United States Marines, the term “brotherhood” means more than just the men you served with—it has a meaning that is defined by a legacy of over 230 years of service to our nation. “Brotherhood” evolved into a code of conduct and commitment to each other, mostly unwritten and unspoken, but ingrained in every recruit and officer candidate from their first day of training. It is sealed in the hardships endured by every generation of Marines that has come before and is expected of every generation that comes after. It is the basis for the silent bond that exists between all Marines.

I was inducted into that Brotherhood in the fall of 1967 and would meet the “brothers” with whom I would share the most memorable year of my life in May 1968. I was introduced as the new lieutenant and second platoon commander, and this was sufficient for acceptance into my new family. Two of us were joining the platoon as replacements that day: me and **Pfc. Muriel Stanley Groomes**—“Max,” as he preferred to be called.



Our platoon and their rifle company had only days before been battered by a numerically superior North Vietnamese infantry regiment for 48 hours of vicious assaults reminiscent of World War II and Korean War battles. A total of 57 Marines were killed or wounded in what became known as the battle for Foxtrot Ridge in the Khe Sanh area of I Corps Republic of Vietnam. It was into this Brotherhood of survivors that Max Groomes and I were thrust for our tour in-country.

Besides being new guys in the platoon, Max and I both came from the same area of the country: Max from Hampstead, Md., and me from Manassas, Va. There was only three years difference in our ages—he was 19 and I was 22—yet he referred to me respectfully as “Lieutenant” or “The Old Man” (with a smile) when I later became the company commander. I referred to him as “Little Brother” because our interpreter had told me that the Vietnamese word for an enlisted man was “anh em,” which means “little brother.” It was appropriate; I was the big brother responsible for taking care of and watching out for him and my other men.

However, Max was not the typical Marine. He was small in frame and, others later said, too kind and gentle in nature to be in combat. My recollections of Max are of a Marine who was always willing to do more than what was expected of him. On patrol, even when suffering from both

malaria and active dysentery, he willingly shouldered another Marine’s heavy machine gun when that Marine complained of not being able to make it. Max willingly shared the contents of his packages from home and gave away his rations of beer and cigarettes. He often volunteered to carry the platoon radio when others balked at the task, even though he realized this made him more of an enemy target than his job as a rifleman did. He was selfless in nature, always willing to do his job without complaint and usually with a shy smile. Seldom did he speak of home except an occasional mention of older brothers, a fondness for Maryland seafood and a desire to get back to “the world,” our slang term for the United States. He was the quietest member of our small portion of the Brotherhood. There was no pretense or false bravado about him. Max listened more than he talked. His actions were more memorable than his conversations. He was just a damn good Marine.

As a combat leader, I learned to steel my emotions to the news of casualties in our unit. However, shortly after I left the rifle company and was awaiting reassignment, I was notified that one of my men had been killed in action. I ran to the landing zone to check on the casualties evacuated to the battalion aid station, and there was Max, his shattered remains wrapped in a poncho and guarded by the sergeant who had been wounded with him. Both men had absorbed the blast of a command-detonated claymore mine. One Marine had



Kent Hansen

lived; the other had died. Max had volunteered to carry the radio that day. Typical of Max, he had helped someone else and then made the ultimate sacrifice.

Muriel Stanley Groomes is an unsung American patriot. His name is but one of the many listed on what Vietnam veterans call our “hallowed ground”—the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. His service and sacrifice are anonymous, except for the posthumous Purple Heart awarded in his memory to his next of kin. His courage and life are remembered only by those who knew him. His death was not heroic, but was selfless, like Max himself.

Max Groomes represents just one of the thousands who stand in silent witness to the devotion to duty displayed by a generation of Americans. When those who knew him are gone, who will speak for him? I hope that, in my lifetime, a Vietnam Veterans Memorial Education Center will be built to honor those like Lance Cpl. Muriel Stanley Groomes. Semper Fidelis, Max.

MURIEL STANLEY GROOMES *is honored on Panel 39W, Row 8 of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.*

POW/MIA NEWS

PRISONER OF WAR MEDAL

Background

This medal was authorized by Congress in 1985 and signed into law by President Reagan in 1986. The medal may be awarded to any person who was a prisoner of war after April 5, 1917, (the date of the United States entry into World War I). It is estimated that 142,000 U. S. Service members were held as prisoners in WW I, WW II, Korea and Vietnam conflicts. President Reagan presented the first medals on June 24, 1988 to six former POWs – two each from WWII, Korea and Vietnam. More than 125 former POWs were presented the medal at the Utah States Capitol in 1989. Maybe 10 - 15 are still living. The suggestion for this medal was made 40 years prior by the father of a POW who wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt.



Jay Hess

Criteria

It is awarded to any person who was taken prisoner or held captive while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing armed force; or while serving with friendly forces engaged in armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party. The person's conduct, while in captivity, must have been honorable. This medal may be awarded posthumously to the surviving next of kin of the recipient.

Medal Description

The medal design, selected from 300 entrees, was by Jay C. Morris of the Institute of Heraldry. On the obverse of the medal is an American eagle, wings folded, and completely enclosed (imprisoned) by a ring and following the outline of the medal. The reverse of the medal has the inscription, “Awarded To” (with a blank area for the recipient's name) “For Honorable Service While a Prisoner of War” in three centered lines. Below this is a shield of the United States, and below, following the curvature of the medal, are the words, United States of America.



American Legion Auxiliary



Deb Hansen

Another busy month for our Unit!! We finished up the Girls State interviews, and it looks like we will have nearly 20 girls from our Unit!! Thank you **Michele Done** for being so diligent, persistent and awesome in getting extra slots so more of our NUAMES girls could attend!! We appreciate everyone (including Post member **John Decker!**) who helped with interviews!!

At our April Post Meeting, the “Post Everlasting Ceremony” was held. This is a wonderful tribute to those from our Post who have passed during the year. I was able to present one of our fleece blankets to **LaDawn Lennartz**, whose husband **Frank** was a long time, dedicated member of our Post. She was thrilled to receive the Air Force fleece blanket from our Unit!

It will be awesome to have our Flag Retirement Ceremony on April 27 at 5:00 pm! All are invited! For Memorial Day, our Unit is invited to help place flags on the veterans' graves at the Farmington and Kaysville Cemeteries on May 24. The time for Farmington is 9:00 am and Kaysville is 4:00 pm. The Memorial Day Ceremony at the Farmington Cemetery is at noon on May 27.

For our annual service report...WOW!!!

3,394 hours were volunteered in the service of veterans, active duty, youth and representing the Auxiliary! \$11,113 was donated/spent by our members in rendering that service and in support of programs benefitting youth! **Well done Unit #27!!**

See you at our next Unit meeting on May 9 at 6:00 pm in the Davis County Memorial Courthouse!!

Legion Laughs BY KENT HANSEN



Check us out on Facebook
at

**"American Legion Post
27 Farmington Utah"**



Find us on

Facebook

or the link from our Post
website at

www.post27.org



American Legion Department of Utah Training Thursdays

When: First Thursday each month thru May 2024, 6:00-7:00 pm

Added subjects as needed LAST Thursday each month

Zoom.com: Meeting ID: 895 1643 2296 Passcode: 716204

Subject of The Month

MAY 2

Legion Family Programs Working Together
(Legion/Auxiliary/Sons of the American Legion/Riders)

All Legion family members are welcome to join the Zoom training.

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UTAH DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN & MILITARY AFFAIRS:

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- In the subjects scrolling at the beginning, select the **CONTACT US** button under the subject "VA Benefits & Claims Assistance"
- A veteran can make an appointment in person or virtually from this source