

TO HONOR AND REMEMBER

MEMORIAL DAY 2020

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The highest honor

By **Kasie Strickland**
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PICKENS COUNTY — Since its creation in 1861, the Medal of Honor has been presented to more than 3,520 of the nation's sailors, Marines, soldiers, airmen and Coast Guardsmen.

The honor is bestowed on a select few: Those who have distinguished themselves with unquestionable valor in action at the risk of their own life against an enemy of the United States.

In Pickens County, despite a relatively small population, there are four such recipients.

William A. McWhorter

On Dec. 5, 1944, Pfc. William A. McWhorter, a machine gunner from Liberty, found himself in the Philippines fending off an advancement of enemy troops. When a live grenade was thrown into the trench he and his assistant was occupying, McWhorter picked up the device and held it to his chest, turning away from his compatriot and using his own body as a shield from the blast.

Nine months later, on Sept. 27, 1945, McWhorter was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. He was 25 years old.

Today, McWhorter is buried in West View Cemetery. A monument to his honor sits in front of the Magistrate's Office on Main Street in McWhorter's hometown of Liberty.

"He displayed gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty," McWhorter's citation reads. "... (his) outstanding heroism and supreme sacrifice in shielding a comrade reflect the highest traditions of the military service."

Furman Leon Smith

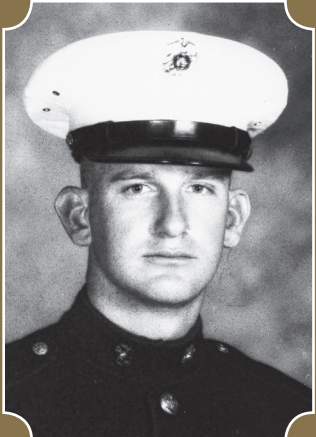
Pvt. Furman Leon Smith joined the Army in July 1943. As part of Company L, 3rd Battalion, 135th Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division, Pvt. Smith was deployed along with his fellow soldiers to Italy. According to the U.S. Army, his group was on maneuvers when they were suddenly attacked by a force of 80 Germans.



Private First Class William A. McWhorter was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for acts of valor during WWII. He died in the Philippines after using his body to shield others from a grenade on Dec. 5, 1944.



Private Furman Leon Smith refused to leave wounded comrades behind and faced 80 attacking Germans alone during WWII. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in January of 1945.



Lance Corporal James Donnie Howe was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor after throwing himself on a grenade and saving the other members of his group during the Vietnam War. He died a hero on May 6, 1970.



Private First Class Charles Heyward Barker was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery and selflessness in protecting his fellow soldiers during the battle of Porkchop Hill during the Korean War. He was last seen in hand to hand combat with the enemy on June 4, 1953.

Courtesy photos

Smith refused to leave his wounded squad leader, and instead, placed the leader and another wounded man in a shell crater for protection and faced the approaching enemy ... alone.

"Against overwhelming odds, he stood his ground until shot down and killed, rifle in hand," Pvt. Smith's citation reads. At the age of 19, he was returned home and laid to rest in Central's Pleasant Hill Cemetery. Eight months later, on Jan. 24, 1945, Pvt. Smith was posthumously honored with the Medal of Honor.

James Donnie Howe

After being discharged from the Marine Corps Reserve in 1968, Six Mile native James Donnie Howe turned right around and enlisted in the regular Marine Corps the following day. He was promoted to Private First Class in June 1969 before being deployed to Vietnam where he served as a rifleman and later a radio operator with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division. By late December, Howe had been promoted again, reaching the rank of lance corporal.

Five months later, Howe and two other Marines were holding a defensive position on a sandy beach area fronted by bamboo thickets when, under the cover of darkness, the enemy suddenly launched a grenade attack. When one of the explosives landed in their midst, Howe immediately shouted a warning to the others before throwing himself on the grenade, absorbing the blast himself and thereby saving his fellow Marines.

Along with Howe's Medal of Honor, which was awarded posthumously on Sept. 9, 1971, his medals and decorations include a Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal and the Vietnam Service Medal with one bronze star.

Howe's remains were returned to his family and he was laid to rest by his parents, siblings and fiancée

in Liberty's Memorial Gardens. A monument sits in front of Liberty Fire Station #2, forever attesting to his heroism and bravery.

Charles Heyward Barker

Charles Heyward Barker was born in Pickens County in 1935 and joined the Army at the age of 17 in 1952. As a Private with Company K of the 17th Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, Barker was deployed to Korea. During the Battle of Porkchop Hill, Barker and his companions surprised and engaged an enemy group digging emplacements into the slope while on a combat patrol.

As they laid down base fire, the patrol leader maneuvered the remainder of the platoon to a vantage point on higher ground.

According to the Army, Barker then moved to an open area and began firing his rifle and hurling grenades toward the hostiles' positions. As enemy action increased, ammunition became critical in supply and as a result, his platoon was ordered to withdraw. Instead of falling back, Barker elected to stay and cover his platoon mates as they made their way back to friendly lines. He was last seen in close hand to hand combat with the enemy.

Barker was initially classified as missing in action before being declared dead one year later. Although his remains were never returned home to South Carolina, his name is inscribed in the Courts of the Missing on the Honolulu Memorial within the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

Along with being posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in June 1955 for his actions on Pork Chop Hill, Barker was also promoted to private first class. Barker's memory is further honored by the citizens of Pickens County with a memorial at the newly named Charles Hayward Barker Pickens Rural Fire Station #1.

Reach Kasie Strickland at 864-855-0355.



Courtesy photos
Both Veterans Day and Memorial Day commemorate the sacrifices of the thousands of American service members — but many Americans today don't realize Memorial Day and Veteran's Day are distinctly different observances.

It's not about the BBQ ...

Kasie Strickland
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PICKENS COUNTY — Two national holidays — Memorial Day and Veterans Day — recognize and pay respect to the service of Americans who served in the U.S. military.

But do you know the difference between the two? As it turns out, a lot of Americans don't.

Very briefly, Memorial Day honors American service members who died in service to their country or as a result of injuries incurred during battle while Veterans Day pays tribute to *all* American veterans — living or dead — but especially gives thanks to *living* veterans who served their country honorably during peacetime or war.

While Memorial Day is also commonly viewed as the unofficial start of Summer, Veteran's Day is Nov. 11.

As the older of the two holidays, Memorial Day dates its origins back to the Civil War where according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, over 600,000 soldiers were killed in action.

The massive death toll affected almost every community — in every state — of the United States and people searched for a way to honor their lost loved ones.

As the war came to an end, mourners in both Northern and Southern states began placing flags and flowers on the graves of the fallen soldiers.

Memorial Day history and origins

By Kasie Strickland
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PICKENS COUNTY — Memorial Day is an American holiday, observed on the last Monday of May, honoring the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Memorial Day 2020 occurs on Monday, May 25.

Originally known as Decoration Day, it originated in the years following the Civil War and became an official federal holiday in 1971. Many Americans observe Memorial Day by visiting cemeteries or memorials, holding family gatherings and participating in parades. Unofficially, it marks the beginning of the summer season.

But it wasn't always that way ...

EARLY OBSERVANCES

The Civil War, which ended in the spring of 1865, claimed more lives than any conflict in U.S. history and required the establishment of the country's first national cemeteries.

By the late 1860s, Americans in various towns and cities had begun holding spring-time tributes to these countless fallen soldiers, decorating their graves with flowers and reciting prayers.

It is unclear where exactly this tradition originated; numerous different communities



Courtesy photo
For decades, Memorial Day was observed on May 30.

may have independently initiated the memorial gatherings. Nevertheless, in 1966 the federal government declared Waterloo, N.Y., the "official" birthplace of Memorial Day.

Waterloo — which first celebrated the day on May 5, 1866 — was chosen because it hosted an annual, community-wide event, during which businesses closed and residents decorated the graves of soldiers with flowers and flags.

DECORATION DAY

On May 5, 1868, General John A. Logan, leader of an organization for Northern Civil War veterans, called for a nationwide day

of remembrance later that month. "The 30th 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," he proclaimed.

The date of Decoration Day, as he called it, was chosen because it wasn't the anniversary of any particular battle.

On the first Decoration Day, General James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, and 5,000 participants decorated the graves of the 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried there.

Many Northern states held similar commemorative events and reprised the tradition in subsequent years; by 1890 each one had made Decoration Day an official state holiday. Southern states, on the other hand, continued to honor their dead on separate days until after World War I.

A BIT OF BACKSTORY

Memorial Day, as Decoration Day gradually came to be known, originally honored only those lost while fighting in the Civil War. But during World War I the United States found itself embroiled in another major conflict, and the holiday evolved

to commemorate American military personnel who died in all wars.

For decades, Memorial Day continued to be observed on May 30, the date Logan had selected for the first Decoration Day. But in 1968 Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which established Memorial Day as the last Monday in May in order to create a three-day weekend for federal employees; the change went into effect in 1971. The same law also declared Memorial Day a federal holiday.

MODERN TRADITIONS

Cities and towns across the United States

host Memorial Day parades each year, often incorporating military personnel and members of veterans' organizations. Some of the largest parades take place in Chicago, New York and Washington, D.C.

Americans also observe Memorial Day by visiting cemeteries and memorials. Some people wear a red poppy in remembrance of those fallen in war—a tradition that began with a World War I poem.

On a less somber note, many people take weekend trips or throw parties and barbecues on the holiday, perhaps because it unofficially marks the beginning of summer.

Reach Kasie Strickland at 864-855-0355.

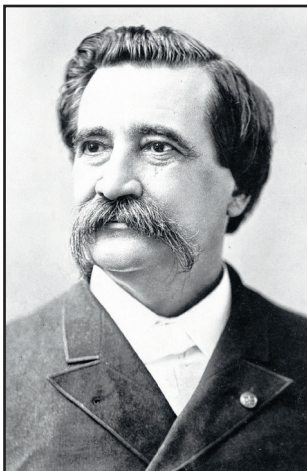
About

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On May 5, 1866, the citizens of Waterloo, N.Y., closed their shops and businesses for the day so that everyone could take part in decorating the graves of the men killed in the war. As a result, Waterloo would eventually be officially credited as the "birthplace" of Memorial Day.

Probably the most influential person in securing Memorial Day as a holiday was John A. Logan.

Logan wore many hats: He was a former Union Army General, State Senator, Congressman and U.S. Senator from Illinois. While he was serving as the head for the Union Veteran Association, Logan had an idea — why not combine all the decoration ceremonies that took place around the country into one national observance?



Courtesy photos

Probably the most influential person in securing Memorial Day as a holiday was John A. Logan.

He designated May 30 as "Decoration Day."

"Decoration Day" eventually was renamed

"Memorial Day" and was expanded to include all fallen soldiers in the US military following the losses of World War I.

Still, 11 states — including S.C. — set aside an official day to honor those who lost their lives fighting for the Confederacy, however Virginia is the only one that observes Confederate Memorial Day on the same day as Memorial Day.

Memorial Day was declared an "official" federal holiday in 1971 and is celebrated annually on the last Monday in May.

Reach Kasie Strickland at 864-855-0355.

A Tribute to Our Soldiers on Memorial Day



We honor the memories of American soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice for this country.



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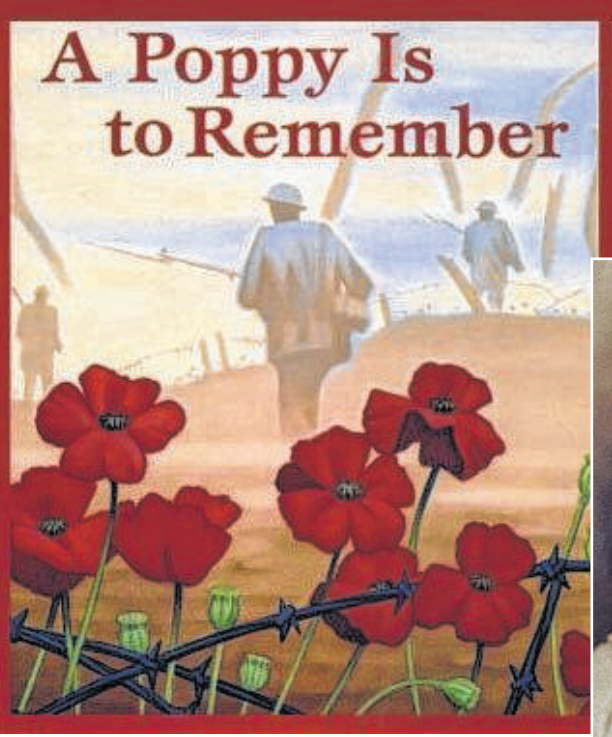
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What's the deal with the poppies?

"In Flanders Fields"

by Maj. John McCrae
May, 1915.



The poppy we are familiar with today is believed to have come from the World War I poem "In Flanders Fields," by John McCrae. But McCrae wasn't a poet by profession, he was a doctor.

Courtesy photos



Major John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

By Kasie Strickland
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PICKENS COUNTY — There are several traditions associated with Memorial Day in America, but one in particular — the red poppy — stands out.

The poppy we are familiar with today is believed to have come from the World War I poem "In Flanders Fields," by John McCrae. But McCrae wasn't a poet by profession, he was a doctor.

Major McCrae was second in command of the 1st Brigade Canadian Field Artillery stationed near Ypres, in West Flanders, Belgium according to published accounts.

During the the Second Battle of Ypres a Canadian artillery officer in the same unit named Lieutenant Alexis Helmer — a friend of McCrae's — was killed on May 2, 1915 after a German artillery shell landed near him.

With the chaplain away — and as the brigade doctor — it fell to McCrae to conduct the burial service for Helmer.

Although there are a few different accounts of how the poem ultimately came to be, it is generally believed that later that evening, after his friend's burial, McCrae wrote the first draft of what was to become "In Flanders Fields."

Some varying stories claim McCrae wrote the poem sitting sitting on an ambulance the next day while

looking at Helmer's grave. It is said red poppies were springing up all around the fresh graves.

Another story states McCrae wrote the poem in twenty minutes in an attempt to compose himself following Helmer's death.

A third account, this one given by his commanding officer, states that McCrae told him he drafted the poem partly to pass the time between the arrival of two groups of wounded at the first aid post.

No matter how it came to be, "In Flanders Fields" was written, and the significance of red poppy was born. Or, it would be shortly after ...

TIME magazine reported that while reading Ladies' Home Journal, an overseas war secretary named Moira Michael came across the poem.

"Moved, she vowed always to wear a silk poppy

in honor of the American soldiers who gave up their lives for their country," the article reads. "She started selling them to friends and co-workers and campaigned for the red flowers to become an official memorial emblem. The American Legion embraced the symbol in 1921, and the tradition has spread to more than 50 other countries, including England, France and Australia."

Reach Kasie Strickland at 864-855-0355.

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Franklin Hudson Bob Akin
Ellis Wilson Cameron Hudson
Ernest Stephens Buddy Hudson
Clarence Stephens Richard Bridges

Hero - a person admired for courage, achievements and noble qualities
This Memorial Day, we salute the heroes of our Armed Forces past and present for their courage and dedication to our country.
KING ASPHALT

Things to do with your family from home on Memorial Day

Staff report

PICKENS COUNTY — Memorial Day traditionally marks the beginning of summer and, while we know the real reason behind it, the military community follows this tradition too. There's a long weekend, time with friends and celebrations — though they may be a bit different.



Make a batch of plain cookies or plain cake and divide it up. Then, let each person add their special touch.

Watch something online. This year, many events are going online-only, like the National Memorial Day Concert and a prerecorded "The National Memorial Day Parade: America Stands Tall" video instead of a parade. Check out all the events here.

Play a game. Family time can be done in so many different ways. Try playing a game or doing a puzzle. We're big fans of Ticket to Ride, Trekking and Rummikub. We look forward to spending screen-free time together as a family and learning new things.

Explain what it means to you. Encourage each member of your family to think about and explain what Memorial Day means to them. This is a great way for children to begin to recognize some of the things their service member parent has experienced. And a good opportunity for family bonding.

Listen to music. You can find music of all varieties on almost any device. Some patriotic music may be in store for that weekend or maybe a dance party.

Visit a cemetery. Skip the well-known cemeteries and venture off the beaten path to an old, often forgotten cemetery. Like the one way back near Bonnie Blink on Fort Huachuca, Arizona, or the super older settler cemetery right outside of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.

Send a care package. Chances are you haven't seen your extended family for a while and that summer vacation may not be happening this year. Spend time over the long weekend to put together a care package for grandparents or other relatives.

Camp in the backyard. Set up camp in the backyard and enjoy a night looking up at the stars. Cook hotdogs on the fire and enjoy gooey s'mores. It's the best of both worlds, as you can easily run inside for a shower or a hot cup of coffee in the morning.

Set up an outdoor movie. A movie

This year is no exception, as most of us are planning to be home, much like we've been all the weekends recently, but honoring the fallen and observing Memorial Day. But there are still plenty of things you can do with your family from home on Memorial Day. Here are our suggestions.

Eat good food. Go all out and plan a fun or elaborate menu. Try something new or cook your favorites. Grill pizza, smoke some pork or make a delicious pasta salad.

Workout together. The Murph Hero WOD may be a little intense for your family unless you've been training for it, but start the day with exercise of some kind. There are plenty of workouts available online, from running with Wear Blue: Run to Remember and ideas on Team RWB's website.

Make a new dessert. Host a family bake-off and let everyone express them-



Courtesy photo
Memorial Day may look a little different this year, but there's always ways to remember the fallen.

outside would be a great way to enjoy an early summer evening. Look at this way to project a movie in your backyard without purchasing something expensive.

Cherish your time together this

Memorial Day weekend. Remember your friends who don't have their service members home with them. Mourn for those who will never have them home again. And celebrate the lives of those lost in service for our country.

We celebrate, remember and honor the heroes who paid the ultimate price for our freedom

HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY

Pickens County Council

Veterans Garden of Honor at Robinson Memorial Gardens

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