

We Honor Those Who Served

157th Annual Memorial Day Celebrations

West Virginia's National Cemeteries
May 26th & 27th

West Virginia's Official Memorial Day Parade



Memorial City VFW
Post #3081



Taylor County
Post #12 American Legion



West Virginia
Division of Veterans
Assistance



Disabled American
Veterans



West Virginia Memorial Day Committee, Inc.
City of Grafton Taylor County Commission



Grafton's Memorial Day History

CEMETERY HISTORY: During the early years of The Civil War, the dead were buried in fields and church yards, or close to the hospitals and prison camps where they died. On July 17, 1862, President Lincoln signed legislation which authorized the creation of the first National Cemeteries. In 1865, when Samuel Swinton Burdette, Commander in Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic visited Pruntytown, he toured the battle grounds of the area and conceived the idea of having all war dead in the area reburied in a location accessible from all parts of the new West Virginia. Burdett introduced a bill in Congress to establish a National Cemetery in Northern West Virginia. The bill was approved, and the War Department ordered Major R.C. Bates to select a site. Bates decided on Grafton, because of its location and the availability of the railroad, and he contacted the heirs of Alexander Yates for approximately four acres of land between Walnut Street and the Baltimore and Ohio right of way in what was called West Grafton.

Grafton National Cemetery was established in 1867 by an Act of Congress. Work on the cemetery started in the early spring of 1867, and an observance was held to honor the dead, which is where our history began. In 1868, the cemetery was completed, and Major Bates contacted James Breedlove to exhume the bodies of 68 soldiers who had been buried on upper Maple Avenue and cart them to the new cemetery. The remaining dead were gathered from various battlefields, camps, and hospitals situated in 32 Counties of West Virginia. Within two years 1,251 bodies of both Union and Confederate Troops of the Civil War were interred in Grafton under the supervision of the U.S. Burial Corps. 664 of the gravesites are for Unknown Soldiers and are identified by numbered, 8 inch square, headstones, and burial records indicate only from what state or location the bodies were disinterred. Among those buried are white and black, women, children, 12 members of the famous Volunteer Regiment of the Army who adopted the dress and skill of Zouaves, a body of Infantry in the French service noted for their dash and valor, and Thornsberry Bailey Brown, the first union soldier killed in the Civil War. In 1987, the West Virginia National Cemetery was dedicated in Pruntytown, ensuring that Grafton remains the home of the only National Cemeteries in WV.

PARADE HISTORY: Following the small observance in 1867, in 1868, Captain Wilson aligned Veterans of Company B, 2nd, 17th West Virginians, fifer of the 5th Calvary, George Hammond, musician of the 12th Infantry, snare drummers Clinton Albright, Millard Carr, Henry Lippencott, Edward W. Walters, and bass drummer Joseph N. Shannon. The assembled procession moved down St. John Street, across the "Boardwalk", then across the railroad bridge to West Grafton, where they were joined by the citizens of Grafton, who proceeded to march out Pearl Street to the cemetery. At the cemetery, there were so many unburied bodies still lying on the ground that the procession continued past the cemetery to Handley's Grove where Reverend George Davidson, Pastor of the Baptist Church, asked the devine blessing and the Honorable Jacob B. Bristor gave the first Memorial Day Address. Thus began our parade tradition. The following year, decorating the graves began when Mayor William Mallonee issued a proclamation asking all citizens to lay aside their tasks "at bench, forge, and shops" and join the Civil War Veterans in observance of "Flower Strewing Day" on the 30th of May. He requested that those who grew flowers donate liberally to children who would call for them and place them on the graves. This is how the tradition of school children bearing flowers for the dead began. In 1882, Reno Post Number 7, Grafton Unit of the Grand Army of the Republic, was organized and they adopted the more appropriate name of "Memorial Day."

For 157 years, Graftonians have come together to honor and remember our fallen heroes. In addition to the solemn remembrance of the price they paid, we also celebrate the beautiful life their sacrifice afforded us, with music, dancing, and entertainment. Our celebration is a beautiful mixture of tears, respect, gratitude, and joy. It is our sincerest hope that this tradition will carry on for generations to come, proving that while some may not see the true meaning of this sacred day, Grafton will never forget.

Willis Nestor

157th Memorial Day Parade Grand Marshall



Willis Nestor was born at home in the Lucritia area of Grafton, WV on March 10, 1932, the son of Lorn and Onda Nestor. His Family moved to a farm in Knottsville in 1939. His siblings included 1 brother and 7 sisters. He grew up after the end of the depression and learned at a young age the value of hard work.

Willis graduated from Grafton High School in 1950. He wanted to serve his country during the Korean War so on march 25, 1951 he enlisted in the United States Air Force as an Airman 1st Class, 20th Air Force. Willis traveled 3 days by train from WV to San Antonio, Texas for his Bootcamp. From there he was sent to Blairsville, Pennsylvania and then on to Cheyenne, Wyoming to attend mechanic and advanced welding school. In March 1952 Willis was transferred to Camp Stoneman, California. After 13 days at camp Stoneman, He was shipped to Okinawa, Japan on the ship "The Anderson". It took 18 days form California to reach Okinawa. He was stationed at a B29 Base in Okinawa. His two year stay in Okinawa consisted of construction and mechanic work as well as lots of Guard Duty.

Willis left Okinawa in March 1954 on the ship "The Mitchell". It took 17 days to return to the States. He was stationed in Missouri until he was honorably discharged on March 24, 1955.

After returning home, Willis went to work for the B&O Railroad working in many different departments. On August 2, 1958, he married Patricia Bolyard spending 56 wonderful years together. The marriage gave them 5 children and as of today Willis has 14 grandchildren, 23 great -grandchildren and 1 great-great-grandchild. Willis retired on March 10, 1994 as a brakeman conductor with over 38 years with the Railroad.

Willis is a longtime member of the Knottsville United Methodist Church. He is a lifetime member of the Taylor County VFW. He is also a member of the Grafton Masonic Lodge #15, the Scottish Rite 32nd Degree, the Osiris Shrine Club and the Taylor County Shrine Club.

Willis is most proud to be a volunteer member of the Taylor County Honor Guard. He joined the Honor Guard in 1997 and as of the end of 2023 he has participated in over 3,000 military funerals. Willis is currently the oldest member (92 years old) of the Honor Guard with a few not far behind him in age. Willis would like to encourage all veterans, young or old, to volunteer with their local Honor Guard so they can continue to render military honors to veterans and their families during funeral services.



Jessica Lynch

Parade Marshall

Jessica Lynch is a former Private First Class (PFC) in the United States Army and a Former Prisoner of War. On March 23, 2003, she was injured and captured by Iraqi Forces after her unit was ambushed in Iraq. She was rescued after nine days in captivity on April 1, 2003 by U.S. special operations forces. Jessica's rescue was the first successful rescue of an American POW since World War II.

Today, Jessica speaks to various groups around the United States about overcoming her obstacles and how perseverance helped her survive. Jessica further explains that despite the most difficult circumstances — what ever they might be — a positive outlook and determination can truly help individuals live fulfilling lives and accomplish their goals.

Jessica has a Bachelors of Arts Degree for Elementary Education K-6 and a Masters of Arts degree in Communication Studies.

Jessica has appeared on Good Morning America, Today Show, CBS Morning Show, Huckabee Show, CNN, MSNBC, David Letterman Show, Fox, Prime Time on ABC with Dianne Sawyer, E News!, CBN, and various local networks throughout the country. She has appeared on numerous magazine covers such as TIME and People. She has been named West Virginian of the Year as well as Glamour magazine Woman of the Year.

MAC WARNER

Speaker- Grafton National Cemetery

WV Secretary of State Mac Warner is serving in his second term as the state's chief elections officer.

Secretary Warner is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and a graduate of the West Virginia

University College of Law. He earned Master of Law degrees from the University of Virginia Law School and the Army's Judge Advocate General's School.

During his 23-year career in the United States Army, Secretary Warner served on four continents, deploying to military hot spots around the world. He retired at the rank of Lt. Colonel.

Following military retirement, Secretary Warner worked with the U.S. State Department in Afghanistan for five years serving as the Chief of the Organizational Capacity Building Section of the world's largest Rule of Law program.

Secretary Warner was first elected to his position in November 2016 and was re-elected in 2020. Secretary Warner's passion for transparent, fair and fraud-free elections has generated a renewed confidence in West Virginia voters. Because of his military background and keen interest in election cyber security, Secretary Warner has earned West Virginia national attention as a leader in protecting voter databases and elections systems.

As the state's chief business officer, Secretary Warner manages the licensing and registration of more than 143,000 business organizations operating in West Virginia. In 2018, he opened the first 4-agency, single-location, business and licensing center in the nation. Today, the WV One Stop Business Center is a model for other states. What used to take up to 10 days to register and open a new business in West Virginia can now take less than two hours. Secretary Warner and his wife, Debbie Law Warner, have been married for 41 years. They raised four children in Monongalia County – all of whom are serving, or have served, in the United States military. The Warner's have seven grandchildren....with one more on the way.





KAMI ELLIOTT
Speaker-West Virginia
National Cemetery Program
2023-2024 Department Commander,
Department of West Virginia, Veterans of Foreign Wars

Born and Raised in Fairmont
Served in the Air Force From 1991 to 1997
1950 Deployed to Dhahran Air Base, Saudi Arabia
Also served a year at Osan Air Base Korea 1996-1997

BRENDA THOMPSON
VFW Auxiliary District President
& Grafton Memorial City Post 3081 Auxiliary

President Brenda is the daughter of the late John Nery, a World War II Veteran, and life member of VFW Post 573 Clarksburg. Brenda also serves the VFW Auxiliary Department of West Virginia as president of District Three and liaison to West Virginia Veterans Nursing Home. Brenda is a member of the Church of the Good Shepherd United Methodist. She is active in the community. She served on City of Grafton City Council for eight years, serving as Vice Mayor for four years. She is currently serving as as member of the Grafton Taylor County Library Board. Brenda is also a member of the Grafton Rotary Club. Brenda wants to welcome all of you to Grafton. Enjoy the Memorial Day Weekend!



SCOTT BITNER

VFW Grafton Memorial Post 3081 Commander

Scott Bitner of Grafton, West Virginia became Commander of Memorial City Post 3081 in June of 2019.

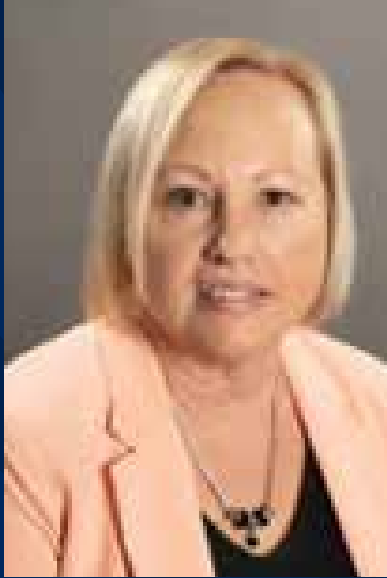
Scott joined the Navy on October 13, 1981. He graduated from the Great Lakes in November 1981, and was stationed on his first ship, the USS San Diego - AFS6. During his Naval career, he was stationed on several sea going commands, 1 shore duty, and retired from the USS EIRod -FFG55. Scott spent two & half years in Sardinia, Italy with the USS Orion. He was deployed during several conflicts including Desert Storm, Desert Shield, and Kuwait.

He earned the Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist, Navy Unit Commendation Medal, SW Asia Service Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal, Nato Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal, and several other medals and commendations.

Scott joined the VFW in 2005 and became a Life Member in 2014. He is a Life Member of the VFW National Home for Children and a Member of the American Legion Post 12 in Grafton, West Virginia. Scott is also a member of the BUMC.

Scott is originally from Summerdale, PA, but moved to Grafton after retiring from the Navy in 2001.





MARY CHIPPS

Department President 2023-2024

Hello! My name is Mary Chipps, and I am a life member at East Huntington VFW Auxiliary 9738. I became a life member in 2008 and joined under the eligibility of my husband, Butch “Tater” Chipps, a US Army Veteran. Butch and I have been together for 31 years and have three children – Jared, Zoe and Gavin. Five years ago, we were blessed with my beautiful granddaughter, Hunter, and I became a Gigi! Jared and Zoe are both life members at East Huntington Auxiliary 9738 and Gavin

has been a part of the VFW family since he was in diapers!

Over the years, I have held various positions at the Auxiliary, District and Department level. I served as President at Mountaineer Auxiliary 9097, District 8 Treasurer, Department Color Bearer, Department Chairman (Youth, Veterans and Family Support, Buddy Poppy/VFW National Home), and Trustee for several years at East Huntington Auxiliary 9738. In 2019, I was honored to be elected Department Guard and began my ascent to my current position as Department President. I have truly enjoyed every position that I have held with the VFW Auxiliary.

I attended West Virginia University where I obtained a BS and MS in Mechanical Engineering. However, I have been working in the Community Action world and advocating for low-income families in WV for the past 25 years. I am currently the Executive Director of the West Virginia Community Action Partnerships, Inc. (WVCAP) and have been in this position for 17 years. I am proud to say that WVCAP has been working for 10 years to house homeless Veterans through our Supportive Services for Veterans Families Program.

As many of you know, I am a huge college football fan and especially enjoy watching my alma mater, the WVU Mountaineers and I know together we will continue to SCORE FOR VETERANS!



HERB CHURCHMAN
Sons of the American Legion
Detachment of WV Commander

My name is Herb Churchman, I was raised in Rowlesburg, Preston County West Virginia. I joined the Merchant Marines in 1972. I then attended the University of Miami Florida for two years. For three years I worked in the circulation department at a newspaper in the suburbs of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1980 I learned the wallpaper and painting trade.

Fifteen years later I joined the Painters Union. My career abruptly ended six years later with a fall of twenty feet, requiring five surgeries and a year in rehab. Forced into retirement I moved to Hampshire County, West Virginia. In 2013, I joined the Capon Bridge, American Legion Post 137. In 2017 I became the SAL Historian. In 2018 I was elected Adjutant and have held this office for five years to date. Membership has grown from approximately 100 to over 200 members, so far. In 2020, I was elected to SAL WV State Historian, then became SAL WV State Vice Commander for two years. In 2020, I held the District 10 Vice Commander for one year, then elected District 10 Commander for three years. I've since stepped down to serve as SAL WV Detachment Commander. None of my positions would have been possible without the many talented officers I've been involved with at every level of the American Legion. By staying positive, working together and communicating with all groups in our Legion family, we can support one another and increase awareness for our veterans here, across the country, as well as abroad.

MATT SAMPSON

American Legion Department Commander

Matt Sampson is a retired Army officer. A native of Iowa, he graduated and was commissioned from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He served a 20-year career in the Army with tours of duty stateside and overseas, including a 15-month deployment to Iraq. His final assignment was Professor of Military Science at WVU Army ROTC in Morgantown. Matt has been a volunteer at Mountaineer Boys State since 2010, first as a Counselor, then a Senior Counselor and now as Assistant Director. He is a quadruple member of the Mountaineer Post 174 Legion Family: Legion, Auxiliary, Sons, and Legion Riders. Matt is a 2021 graduate of the National American Legion College. He and his wife, who is also an Army veteran and a dual member of the Legion and Auxiliary, reside in Morgantown. They are the parents of a son and a daughter who are members of the Sons of the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, respectively. Matt's father is a Navy veteran and 57-year member of the Legion. Additionally, both of Matt's brothers retired from military careers.





DEBBIE MICHAEL

*American Legion Dept. Auxiliary President
2023-2024*

Department President Debbie Michael was born in Berkeley Springs, WV on July 2, 1950. She was raised in Fulton County, PA, where she lived until she was fifteen years old. At that time, her father retired, and they moved to Berkeley Springs, where she still lives. Debbie graduated from Berkeley Springs High School as a member of the Class of "68". After high school, she attended West Virginia College of Beauty Culture, graduating in 1969. She worked as a hair stylist for twenty-eight years. After closing her shop, she managed a VFW, owned a bar, and worked as a chef's assistant. Her love for the military and her eligibility began when she was five years old, when her brother Charles Bohrer enlisted in the US Air Force serving for twenty-five years and was a Vietnam veteran. Since joining the American Legion Auxiliary in 1976, Debbie has served the unit as President, Vice Presidents, Secretary, and Chaplain, and numerous chairman positions. She has served in the District as President, Vice President, Chaplain, and District Committee Chairmen. Debbie on the Department level served as Department First and Second Vice Presidents. She has also served on two committees as chairman. Debbie's deceased husband of forty-seven years, "Kat" was a Past Detachment Commander of the SAL. She has two sons, two stepsons, thirteen grandchildren and one great-grandson. Her son, daughter-in-law, and two grandsons are all currently serving in the military (Marines & Air Force). Her family is all members of The American Legion, Auxiliary, and the SAL. Debbie is currently working for The American Legion Berkeley Springs Post. In her spare time (which isn't much) she loves to spend time with her grandchildren and working on crafts. After family, her love is the military and veterans. Through her American Legion Family, she can volunteer and help veterans and their families.

CLIFFORD SHINGLETON

*Director of the American Legion Riders,
West Virginia Chapter*



Clifford Shingleton, raised in Shinnston, West Virginia is the oldest son of Fred and Janet Shingleton. He is a Graduate of Lincoln High School in 1984. He joined the United States Air Force soon after and was assigned to the 554 Medical Services Squadron at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas Nevada. There he served as a medical services corpsman and shift leader in the Emergency Room for 13 years. During this time at Nellis he met his beautiful wife Robin from Cass West Virginia and had 2 Children Jayne and Charles. While stationed at Nellis Air Force Base he attended Independent Duty Medical Services School and was qualified for special medical assignments. The Family then transferred to Germany where he took charge of the Gastroenterology and Endoscopy center. During this tour Cliff completed many special duty assignments to places like Albania, Tunisia, Nigeria and Cairo, Egypt. The family enjoyed German culture and people, traveling to see all the amazing sights of Europe. From Germany, the family moved to San Antonio, Texas. Cliff was assigned to the 37th Training Wing in San Antonio as a Master Sergeant where he oversaw the medical Care of over 6000 Basic Military Trainees through 7 Satellite Clinics. In 2006 the Family made its last military move to Sumter South Carolina and Shaw Air Force Base. Here Cliff was to serve as Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of the 20th Aerospace Medical Services. Cliff Retired from the Air Force in 2009 and moved with the Family back to Shinnston West Virginia. Since Retirement he has completed his Nursing Degree and works as an RN at United Hospital Center. His second career after retirement has been with the American Legion Serving as a post officer in Shinnston Post 31 as well as District and Department Offices in the 7 years since joining. He is now the Department of West Virginia's Riders Director, where he assists and set up new Motorcycle programs for the American Legion around the State of West Virginia. He is the current Facilitator for a VA Sponsored Program called Together with Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention initiative in North Central West Virginia.



SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT (RETIRED) DAVID L. "ROBBIE" ROBINSON *American Legion Post 12 Commander*

Senior Master Sergeant, Retired, David L. Robinson was born May 4th, 1959 in Grafton, WV and is the son of James and Virginia Robinson. Sergeant Robinson has one sister, Debra K. Hoag, and husband David M. Hoag, and one brother, Douglas J. Robinson, and wife Monica of Grafton. Sergeant Robinson is a 1977 Graduate of Grafton High School. Prior to graduation, in April 1977, he enlisted in the United States Air Force under the delayed enlistment program. He reported to Lackland AFB, TX in September 1977 for Basic Military Training. Upon completion of Basic Military Training, he was assigned to Keesler AFB, MS for Technical Training as an Information Management Specialist. He was then assigned to the 6940th Electronic Security Wing, Ft Meade, MD., then he moved overseas to 1945th Communication Group, Radio Relay Location, Federal Republic of Germany. Returning

to the States, he was assigned to the 42nd Bombardment Wing, Loring AFB ME. He was then handpicked for a special duty assignment with Headquarters Air Force Element/Program Resource Office at Bolling AFB, Washington DC. He was requested, by name, to fill another special duty assignment with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and worked in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the Pentagon. Sergeant Robinson retired from the United States Air Force on July 1st 2001 at Bolling Air Force Base Washington DC, with honors. He is a graduate of Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Professional Military Education (PME) Courses, I & II. A graduate of the Electronic Security Command NCO Leadership School, the Military Airlift Command (East) NCO Academy, winning the Speech Award, and he graduated from the USAF Senior NCO Academy. Sergeant Robinson holds an Associate Degree in information management from the Community College of the Air Force. He served as the Veterans Affairs Officer, for the West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance, Martinsburg Field Office, Martinsburg WV. On September 1, 2019, he retired from state service and moved to his hometown Grafton, WV. Sergeant Robinson's honors and decorations include Airman of the Month, NCO of the Quarter, and NCO of the Year. His was awarded The Defense Meritorious Service Medal w/oak leaf cluster, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal w/two oak leaf clusters, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal w/two oak leaf cluster, Joint Unit Meritorious Service award, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award w/four oak leaf clusters, Air Force Organization Excellence Award w/oak leaf cluster, Air Force Good Conduct Medal w/silver and oak leaf clusters, National Defense Service Medal, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, Air Force Overseas Long Tour Ribbon, Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon w/four oak leaf clusters, NCO Professional Military Education Graduate Ribbon w two oak leaf cluster, Air Force Small Arms Marksmanship Ribbon, and the Air Force Training Ribbon. He also wears the United States Air Force Master Information Managers badge and the Office of the Secretary of Defense badge. David L. Robinson (ROBBIE) is very active in the American Legion. He served in numerous positions at all levels of the American Legion. He is currently the Department Assistant Service Officer, and is Director of The American Legion Mountaineer Boys State. He is currently Commander of The American Legion Taylor County Post 12, Grafton, West Virginia, and an active member of the West Virginia Memorial Day Committee, representing the American Legion. Sergeant Robinson is married to the former Jo A. Howard of Glen Burnie, MD. They were married on October 15 th 1982. Jo has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Maryland and a Masters degree from Cappella University. She served 15 years as a Department of the Air Force Civilian at two bases and the Pentagon as a Transition/Relocation assistance specialist. She was employed by the Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, at the National Conservation Training Center. She is retired from Federal Service.

RICHARD COLOSKY

Director of West Virginia National Cemetery

Richard Colosky was named Director of West Virginia National Cemetery effective February 13, 2022. In this role, he is responsible for all burial, maintenance, and administrative operations at the facility. Prior to this assignment, Mr. Colosky served as the Assistant Director of Dayton National Cemetery Complex, at Marion National Cemetery beginning in August 2021. Also Mr. Colosky served as the Maintenance and Operations Supervisor at Dayton National Cemetery beginning in June 2019. In 2019 Mr. Colosky also received his bachelor's degree at Southern New Hampshire University in Business Studies and Accounting.

Mr. Colosky joined the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) in January 2017 as a Caretaker for Fort Custer National Cemetery. In August 2017 Mr. Colosky was selected as an Engineering Equipment Operator at Dayton National Cemetery. Mr. Colosky also served as an Engineering Equipment Operator Work Leader in 2018 at Dayton National Cemetery.

Mr. Colosky served for 10 years as a supervisor for two different private landscaping companies and has 15 years serving in the private sector as an Engineering Equipment Operator for various types of construction and operations projects.

Mr. Colosky is a veteran of the United States Army, where he completed four years of active service at the rank of Sergeant and served most of this time as squad leader for the caisson platoon that performed full honors at Arlington National Cemetery.



BROOX TIMOTHY MEWSHAW

Parade Theme Winner

Broox Timothy Mewshaw, 10 years old, is the son of Matt and Angela Mewshaw of Thornton, WV. Broox enjoys playing basketball and baseball. He also enjoys riding his dirt bike and spending time with friends. Broox is a member of the Taylor County 4H Knottsville Allstars and Taylor County Junior Livestock Program. He enjoys raising and showing hogs, and participates in the Taylor County Fair Livestock Show and Sale. Broox is proud to “honor those who served” and participate in Memorial Day festivities.



RYLEE KNIGHT

*National Cemetery Essay Winner
Middle School Division*



When you think of Memorial Day, you might think of pool parties, barbecues and parades, but Memorial Day is so much more than that. Soldiers gave everything just so we could live freely. They deserve every ounce of respect there is. Memorial Day is important because we need to honor all American veterans who gave their lives in sacrifice to our country. These soldiers gave up everything in their own lives to fight for ours. These men and women made the

ultimate sacrifice to fight for our nation. This shows how there is so much more to Memorial Day than pool parties, barbecues, and parades.

On May 30, 1868 in Waterloo, New York Memorial Day was born. General John A. Logan made this a federal holiday to commemorate the sacrifices of soldiers. It used to be called Decoration Day. From 1868 to 1970, Memorial Day was celebrated on May 30, but now it is on the last Monday in May.

Grafton takes pride in having two national cemeteries. A national cemetery is a cemetery for people who have served in the armed forces. The two national cemeteries are the West Virginia National Cemetery and Grafton National Cemetery. Individuals take pride in not only decorating gravestones on Memorial Day but for other holidays as well.

There are many different ways to celebrate Memorial Day. Most Americans visit cemeteries, have barbecues, and watch or participate in the parade. Students are also encouraged to walk in the parade with their teachers as well. The majority of Americans have barbecues on Memorial Day because they think it resembles the start of summer, but the real reason for Memorial Day is to honor fallen soldiers and the sacrifice they made for all of us.

Memorial Day is and always will be an extremely important and honorary day for all who willingly fought for our nation. These soldiers knew what they had to do to make our country a better place to live in now. President Harry Truman once said, "Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices. Because of these sacrifices the dawn of justice and freedom throughout the world slowly casts its gleam across the horizon." This is why we honor those who served.



JADEN YOUNG

National Cemetery Essay Contest Winner High School Division

Located in Taylor County, in the small town of Grafton, is a special place that holds a key part of the town. Sitting proudly on Walnut Street is The Grafton National Cemetery, while just a couple of miles away in Pruntytown is the West Virginia National Cemetery.

Both cemeteries are a way to show respect to Soldiers and Veterans who were laid to rest there. Not only do the Cemeteries serve as a final resting place for Soldiers but also it is a place for their families to also be at peace. The Grafton National Cemetery, which was established during

the Civil War as a place to honor the soldiers that were lost in the battle. The Grafton National Cemetery was the first ever National Cemetery to be founded and built in the United States. Originally, the Cemetery was made to bury Union Soldiers who lost their lives in battle. Now the Cemetery has been formed into one to honor soldiers from battles fought over the years. Meanwhile, the West Virginia National Cemetery was established in 1987. It serves as a place to honor and bury those who have fought for our country and a place for eligible family members to be buried by their loved ones.

Memorial Day is a special day for all. It is a day when we honor and show respect to those who have served our country. It's significance for our country is the recognition of the people who served and put their lives on the line for us and our rights and freedoms we have as Americans. Memorial Day is very important and significant to me as my great grandfather and great grandmother both served in the Army and Army Corps during World War II. My great-grandmother served in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC). She worked in military factories making uniforms and spent many hours volunteering with The Red Cross helping soldiers contact their families before leaving overseas. My great-grandfather served overseas during World War II, as a Military Police Officer. Memorial Day is important to our family, remembering the sacrifices that our family made to help the country and to honor them by not forgetting their legacy.

We honor those who serve when we recognize their challenges and their sacrifices for our country. Veterans put their lives on the line for our country, leaving their lives behind and sometimes not even returning to their normal lives. They show bravery and dedication to their country and that is why we honor them. We honor our Veterans to show them that we appreciate their sacrifices and dedication and that their work will always remain in our hearts and we will always honor those who served.

WEST VIRGINIA NATIONAL CEMETERY PROGRAM

Location: West Virginia National Cemetery, Pruntytown, West Virginia

Sunday, May 26, 2024 1:00 PM

Master of Ceremonies: Dr. John Stallings

Invocation: Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial City
Post 3081 Chaplain, Randy Jennings

National Anthem: Taylor County Middle School Band

Welcome by Master of Ceremonies, Dr. John Stallings

Welcome by National Cemetery Director, Rick Colosky

West Virginia National Cemetery Essay Contest Winner: Rylee Knight
Taylor County Middle School – 1st Place Middle School Division

Introduction of Speaker by Master of Ceremonies

Memorial Address: Kami Elliott,
State Commander of West Virginia Veterans of Foreign Wars

Musical Selection: Taylor County Middle School Choir

Presentation of Wreaths: (Speaker and Essay Winner)

Memorial Salute: Taylor County Honor Guard

Taps and Echo: Taylor County Middle School

Benediction: Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial City
Post 3081 Chaplain, Randy Jennings

Closing Remarks: Master of Ceremonies

WEST VIRGINIA MEMORIAL DAY COMMITTEE CHURCH SERVICE

Location: International Mother's Day Shrine, Downtown Grafton, West Virginia

Sunday, May 26, 2024 10:00 AM Pastor Dave Arnold

Hosted by Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial City Post 3081



DAVID ARNOLD
Sunday Service Chaplain

David Arnold was born May 3, 1963, in Clarksburg, West Virginia. He graduated from Grafton High School in 1981. Dave served in United States Army from 1981 to 2001 before retiring in 2001. He is currently employed with United States Postal Service as a City Letter Carrier since 2002. He is President of Branch 4458 National Association of Letter Carriers. He is a certified as a Lay Speaker with UMC

and attends Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church. Dave is a member of The American Legion Taylor County Post 12 in Grafton, West Virginia. Dave is also a member of the West Virginia Memorial Day committee and serves as the Join Church Service Minister for the Committee. He has been married to his wife Yong since 1985 with three daughters and seven grandchildren. David and Yong currently reside in Thornton, West Virginia.

BRUNCH

Program continues with a Brunch at the VFW Post Home, 225 W. Main Street, Grafton, West Virginia at 11:30 AM. This is for the church attendees, speakers for the weekend, and special guests.

GRAFTON NATIONAL CEMETERY PROGRAM

Monday, May 27, 2024 - Parade begins at 10:00 AM at the
International Mother's Day Shrine

Memorial Service at Grafton National Cemetery begins at the
conclusion of the parade

Location: Grafton National Cemetery, Grafton, West Virginia

Master of Ceremonies: Dr. John Stallings

Invocation: Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial City
Post 3081 Chaplain, Randy Jennings

National Anthem: Grafton High School Band

Welcome by Master of Ceremonies

Opening Remarks and Introduction of Essay Winner: Jessica Lynch

Grafton National Cemetery Essay Contest Winner: Jaden Young
Grafton High School – 1st Place High School Division

Introduction of Speaker by Master of Ceremonies

Memorial Address: Mac Warner, West Virginia Secretary of State

Musical Selection: Grafton High School Entertainers Ed. 53

Presentation of Wreaths: (Speaker and Essay Winner)

Memorial Salute: Taylor County Honor Guard

Taps and Echo: Grafton High School Band

Benediction: Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial City
Post 3081 Chaplain, Randy Jennings Closing Remarks: Master of Ceremonies

2024 SPIRIT OF GRAFTON CELEBRATION SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday May 24th

5:00-8:00 pm - Pool Party at Grafton City Pool

6:00-10:00 pm - Gambill Amusements Carnival Open

8:00 pm - Rick K Road Trip on Stage

Saturday May 25th

12:00 - 6:00 pm - Optimus Prime Truck

1:00-10:00 pm - Gambill Amusements Carnival Open

2:00 pm - Freestyle Connection BMX Bike Stunt Team

3:00 pm - Great Lakes Timber Show

3:00- 6:00 pm - Barnyard Petting Zoo on grounds of Mother's Day Shrine

4:00 pm - Freestyle Connection BMX Bike Stunt Team

5:00 pm - Great Lakes Timber Show

6:00 pm - Freestyle Connection BMX Bike Stunt Team

6:30 pm - Great Lakes Timber Show

8:00 pm - Davisson Brothers Band on Stage

Fireworks will follow the concert

Monday, May 27th

10:00 am - 157th Annual Memorial Day Parade

12:00 pm - 157th Annual Grafton National Cemetery Observance

Schedule subject to change

Other activities

Gambill Amusements

***Annual Juried Art Show at Gallery 62 West
Food and craft vendors throughout downtown***

No alcohol, pets, skateboards, or bicycles permitted
Sponsored by Bartlett Funeral Home,
State of WV, City of Grafton, Taylor County Commission.
Gambill Amusement \$10 arm band all day ride

157TH ANNUAL WEST VIRGINIA MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

Monday May 27, 2024

Line Up Begins at 9:00 a.m. - Parade Begins 10:00 a.m.
(Vehicular traffic closed to parade route at 8:30 a.m.)

Flag raising at the International Mother's Day Shrine - 9:00 a.m.
Performed by the Taylor County Honor Guard accompanied
By the 249th Army National Guard Band

Parade Co-Chairman: Scott Willis Parade Co-Chairman: Chad Royce

Grafton City Police – Coleman Durrett, Chief
Taylor County Sheriff's Department
West Virginia State Police
FBI Police
FBI Police Honor Guard
VFW Post 3081 Float
Band – 249th Army National Guard Band – Morgantown
Grafton Fire Department
Grafton Volunteer Fire Department
Taylor County Emergency Squad
West Virginia Memorial Day Banner

Division I

Division I Banner

Military Order of the Purple Heart – Chapter 724 – Bob Carr, Commander
Riderless Horse
Muffled Drum
Caisson and Escort – Rocky Point Farm/WV Memorial Day Committee, Inc
Horses – American & WV State Flags, Robin & Scarlet Sharp
Car – 157th Annual WV Memorial Day Parade Grand Marshal – Willis Nestor
Honor Court – Taylor County Schools Students
363rd Military Police Co.
Float – American Legion Taylor County Post #12 – Commander, David L “Robbie” Robinson
Float – American Legion Department of West Virginia – Commanders Float
Float - American Legion Mountaineer Boys State – Director, David L “Robbie” Robinson
Car – VFW Loyalty Day Queen – Madison Blair
Car – VFW Poppy King and Queen – Elliott Blair and Camryn Roy
Float/Motorcycles – West Virginia Patriot Guard Riders
Band – West Virginia Highlanders of Davis and Elkins College
Car - Honorary Parade Marshal – Jessica Lynch
Car/Truck & Trailer - WV All Airborne Chapter, 82nd ABN DIV
Car - Speaker – Grafton National Cemetery Program – Mac Warner, WV Secretary of State
Car – Ms. Veteran Star Mountain State
Float – GFWC Woman's Club of Grafton
Float – US Army Corps of Engineers, Tygart Lake
Truck - Tygart Lake State Park Foundation

**157TH ANNUAL
WEST VIRGINIA MEMORIAL DAY PARADE
Monday May 27, 2024**

Division II

Division II Banner

- Car – 157th Annual WV Memorial Day Parade Theme Winner – Broox Mewshaw
Band – Grafton High School – Christopher Rucker, Director
Float – Rotary Club of Grafton – 2024 Grafton High School Honor Students
2024 Graduating Class of Grafton High School – Lori Shumaker, Principal
Car – Little Miss Bearcat – Harper Myers
Car - Grafton National Cemetery Essay Contest Winner – High School Division
Grafton High School
Flemington Little Mr./Ms. Mistletoe
Float – Grafton High School Class of 1974
Truck & Trailer – Grafton High School Class of 1984
Grafton High School Class of 1989
West Taylor Elementary School – Cynthia Knotts, Principal
Flemington Elementary School – Gynger Dolan, Principal
Anna Jarvis Elementary School – Heather Sinclair, Principal Shelly Stead, Assistant Principal
Billy Davis, Taylor County Tie Man
Vehicle – Taylor County Soccer Association
Vehicle & Trailer – Girl Scout Troop 10604
Truck & Trailer – Boy Scout Troop 6
Heroes 4 Higher – Batman & Batmobile
304 Jeep Club

Division III

Division III Banner

- Taylor County Middle School Students
Taylor County Middle School Marching Band – Josh Chiado
Car - WV National Cemetery Essay Contest Winner – Middle School Division
Taylor County Middle School
Truck – Transformers AOE Optimus Prime
Float - 501st Garrison Corellia
Float – Almost Heaven West Virginia Traffic Control
Band – “The Pride of Barbour County” Philip Barbour High School Band
Car – Queen Silvia LXXXV Mountain State Forest Festival – Anna Ruf
Car – Shawn D. Nines, Circuit Judge
Car - Taylor County Commission
Car – Taylor County Assessor, Christa Kinsey
Car – Toothman Ford Sales
Baton Group – Stutters Baton & Dance Team
Car - City of Grafton
Car – Senator Randy Smith
Float – Preston County Buckwheat Festival

**157TH ANNUAL
WEST VIRGINIA MEMORIAL DAY PARADE
Monday May 27, 2024**

Division III continued...

Truck – Victor Lucas
Band – Mallory Bozovich
West Virginia University Mountaineer Mascot
Car – State Senator Jay Taylor
304 Jeep Club

Division IV

Division IV Banner

Van – Genesis Rosewood Center
Truck - Central Supply Company of WV
Baton Group – Marion County Rockettes
Vehicle – Leer Mine Complex
Truck & Trailer – Octane Industrial
Vehicle – Taylor County Fair Queen – Kasey Rush
Truck and Rocket Car – Joe R Pyle Auctions
Band – North Marion Husky Band – Matthew Morgan
Vehicle – Taylor County Junior Calico Queen – Oliva Barker
Uncle Sam – Josh Rhine
Van/Trailer – Oak Grove Baptist Church
Vehicle – Grafton Police Department – McGruff the Crime Dog
Band – Soda Pop Gypsies
Float – Grafton City Hospital
Vehicle and Trailer – Rush Valley Tiny Homes
Float – WV Country Music Hall of Fame
Band – Pittsburgh Steeline
Car – Country Roads Physical Therapy
Vehicle and Trailer – Grafton SWPA
Car – Donald G. Ford Funeral Home
Baton Group – Country Beauty Twirlers
Truck – David and Friends
Car – WV Caring
Vehicle and Trailer – Green Racing
Band – Zona Hester
Vehicle – Taylor County UMC Cooperative Community Ministries
304 Jeep Club

Division V

Division V Banner

Truck & Trailer – Taylor County Fair Association
Car & Trailer – Mannington District Fair Ambassador and Charley Clayton
The True Vine Ministries
Jeep – Michael Shipp

**157TH ANNUAL
WEST VIRGINIA MEMORIAL DAY PARADE
Monday May 27, 2024**

Division V continued...

Band – TBD
Van - Grafton Ace Hardware
Taylor County Shrine Club
Osiris Shrine Red Fez
Osiris Shriners Curmudgeon Cruisers
Osiris Shrine Desert Caravan
Osiris Shriners Mountaineer Patrol
Osiris Shriners
304 Jeep Club

Division VI

Division VI Banner

This division will contain late entries not published in this program.

Horses – Haddix Farms
Flemington Volunteer Fire Department
Taylor County Emergency Squad
Grafton Fire Department
West Virginia Memorial Day Committee, Inc.

Many more participants will be registering prior to parade day.
Please visit wvmemorialday.com or pick up a copy of the May 22nd edition of
The Mountain Statesman newspaper for the full, up to date parade lineup.

William C. Nicholas Memorial Award

For over 20 years Dr. William C. Nicholas, "Dr. Nick," was the heart and soul of Grafton's Memorial Day Parade. He, along with others, formed the West Virginia Memorial Day Committee, Inc., in order to continue the Memorial Day traditions that helped define this town. He strived to honor the holiday, along with bringing joy to the thousands of patrons that attended the annual parade, and the National Cemetery Programs at the Grafton National Cemetery and the West Virginia National Cemetery. Dr. Nicholas devoted a huge part of his life and personal finances so that Memorial Day would be remembered for the City of Grafton, State of West Virginia and the United States. On May 30, 1999, Governor Cecil Underwood awarded Dr. Nicholas the Distinguished West Virginian Award for service to the WV Memorial Day Committee. "Dr. Nick" was also a licensed pyrotechnician and provided the fireworks for the Memorial Day weekend and for the Taylor County Fair. Sadly, and suddenly, we lost "Dr. Nick" in March of 2009. In 2018, friends and committee members passed a motion to honor him by presenting an award in his name. Each year we remember "Dr. Nick" with the William C. Nicholas Memorial Award, by presenting it to a person/company that has continuously supported the committee and community during the Memorial Day weekend. The following is a list of those award recipients:

2018 Amy Summers - West Virginia House of Delegates

2019 Toothman Ford - JR Toothman

2020 Donald G. Ford Funeral Home - Donald G. Ford & R&R Services - Jeff Robinson, Gary Rucker

2021 City of Grafton Police Department, City of Grafton Fire Department, Taylor County Sheiff's Department, & Taylor County Emergency Squad

2022 City of Grafton & Taylor County Commission

2023 Grafton High School Musical Department & Taylor County Middle School Musical Department

2024 CG&J Towing & Nicholson Auto Inc.

Honor Court Initiative

The Memorial Day Parade in Grafton, West Virginia has been taking place for more than 150 years and, as a result, continues to be one of the longest running events of its kind. During the earlier years of this event, it was a tradition that school students and staff were asked to participate and demonstrate their respect for our fallen by wearing white and carrying an American flag, along with a small bouquet of flowers, that would be placed on graves at the Grafton National Cemetery.

More recently, that tradition has nearly disappeared. While our schools continue to participate, and the parade has continued to expand as a celebration, many seem to have lost the more traditional components of wearing white and bearing flowers. As a result, the Memorial Day Parade Committee has decided to re-introduce a small portion of the original tradition by introducing an "Honor Court" of representatives from the Taylor County School system. These chosen Honor Court members will be dressed in all white, both during the Memorial Day parade, and at the observance scheduled at Grafton National Cemetery, where they will place flowers on the graves of some of our fallen.

Thank you to all Veterans!

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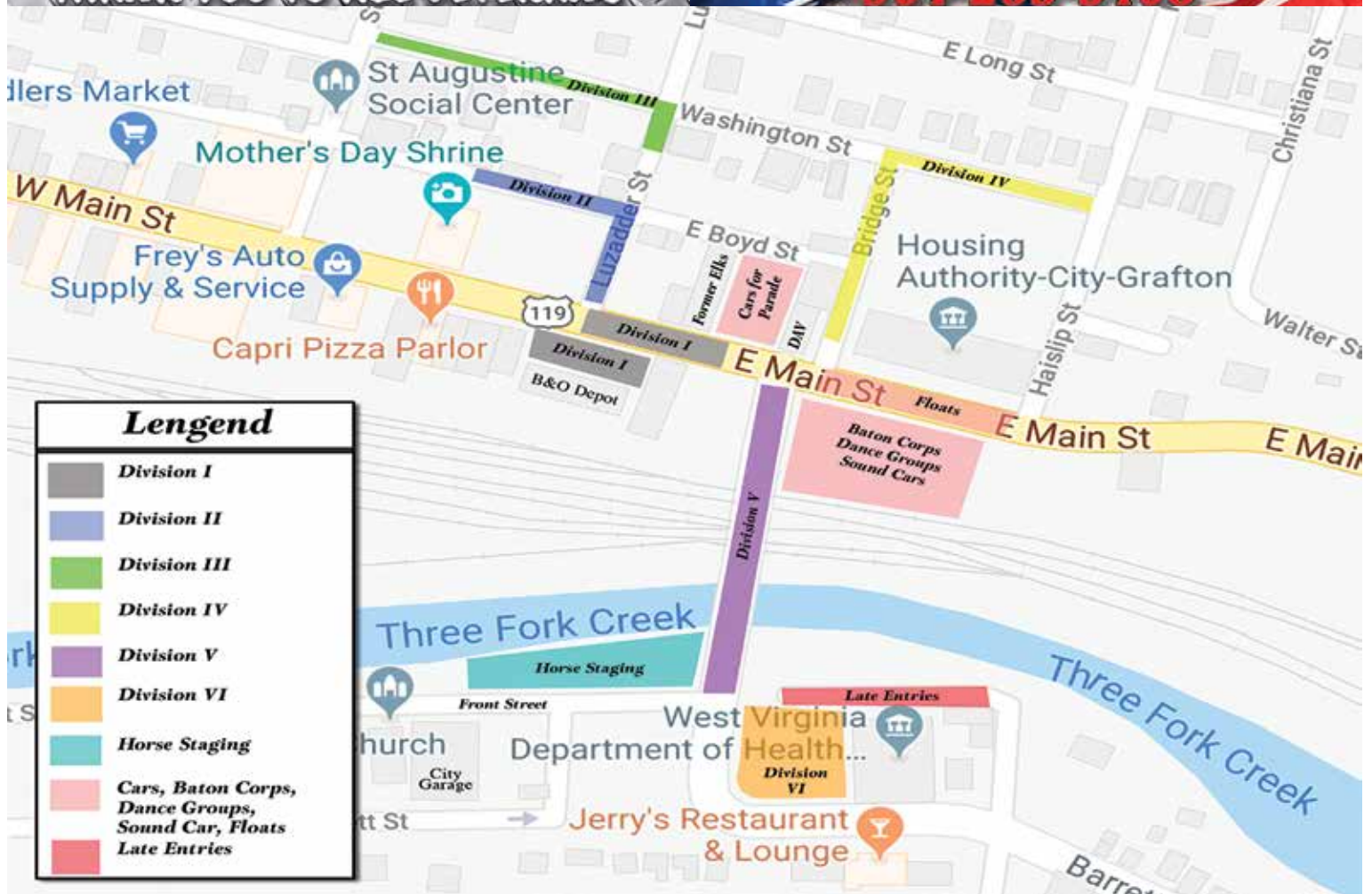
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Thank You

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Respectfully,
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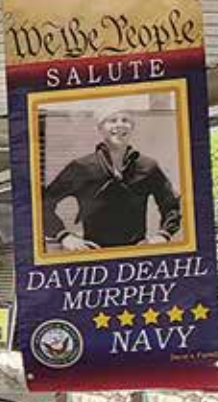
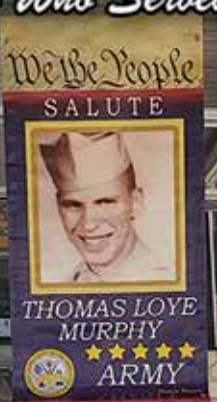
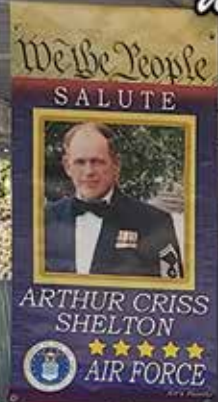
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WVNews

West Virginia's News

WVNews.com

International Mother's Day Shrine
11 East Main Street-Grafton, West Virginia



"Where Mother's Day Began" – May 10, 1908
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National United Methodist Historic Site June 30, 2007

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What: The American Legion Mountaineer Boys State

When: June 12, 2022 - June 18, 2022

Where: WVU Jackson's Mill

Why: Teach GOOD GOVERNMENT through participation

How: Contact your local American Legion Post or High School Counselor

[HTTP://WVBOYSSTATE.ORG](http://wvboysstate.org)

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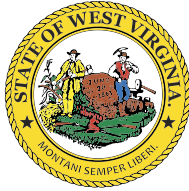
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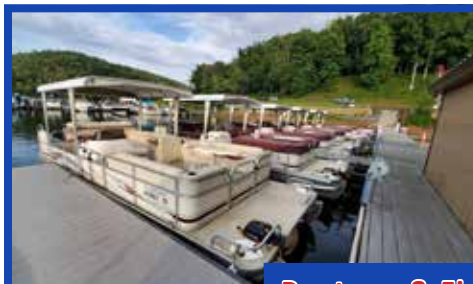
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May 5, 1924 - June 12, 2014*



Joe graduated from Grafton High School class of 1943. He went on to serve his country during WWII with the US Air Corp from July 28, 1943 to February 10, 1946, and then the Korean Conflict from October 10, 1950 to September 16, 1951.



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Grafton, WV 26354
304-265-3000

MEMORIAL DAY...

...is the day that's set to remember with gratitude and pride all those who served and died for our country and freedom. May your day be filled with memories and peace.

God Bless America!

Have a Safe Memorial Day!
**"We Pledge to Never Forget &
Forever Honor Our Heroes."**

SPONSORING

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Preston-Taylor Community Health Centers, Inc.

Providing Services in the Community Since 1976

Dental Center of Taylor County



711 North Pike Street
Grafton, WV 26354
Monday 7:30am - 5:00pm
Tuesday 7:30am - 7:00pm
Wednesday 7:30am - 5:00pm
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Friday 7:30am to 5:00pm

Dr. Cassi Zelenak, DDS
Dentist

(304) 265-4600

Community Eye Care

216 Lincoln Street
Grafton, WV 26354
Mondays/Friday 7:00am-4:00pm

(304) 265-1851



Sherry Swartz
Optometrist

Medical Center of Taylor County



Peter Wentzel, MD
Family Practice/Medical Director

725 North Pike Street
Grafton, WV 26354
Mondays/Thursday 8:30am-9:00pm
Tues./Wed./Fri. 8:30am-5:00pm

(304) 265-4909



Jacquelyn Raupach-Spencer, APRN, FNP-C
Family Practice



Desirae Templeton, PA-C
Family Practice



Crystal Rucker, PA-C
Family Practice



Megan Weese, APRN, FNP-C
Family Practice



Carla Gregory, PA-C
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Preston-Taylor Pharmacy

25 W Bluemont St. Grafton, WV 26354

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NO ONE IS DENIED SERVICES BASED ON ABILITY TO PAY. WE ACCEPT MEDICARE, MEDICARE D, MEDICAID AND MOST COMMERCIAL INSURANCE. LOW-INCOME ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR THOSE WHO QUALIFY.

ALL GAVE SOME...
SOME GAVE ALL.
REMEMBER THEM THIS MEMORIAL DAY



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Memorial Day 2024

*We Honor
Those
Who Served*



David Bolyard
Owner/L.I.C.



Nancy Bartlett
L.I.C.



Tim Schoonover
L.I.C.



Carol Peters
L.I.C.

Bartlett Funeral Home and Crematory

202 McGraw Avenue Grafton, WV 26354

304-265-0489 www.bartlettfuneralhomewv.com

The background of the entire page is a close-up, slightly blurred image of the American flag, showing the blue field with white stars and the red and white stripes. The text is overlaid on this background.

Taylor County Commission

*Memorial Day is a day
to remember and honor
all the brave heroes who
served to hold our flag
high.*

Tony Veltri, President
Orville Wright, Commissioner
Sam Gerkin, Commissioner
Jaron Freeman, Co Clerk

214 West Main Street
Grafton, WV 26354
304-265-1401



Bluemont Cemetery

*Grafton Municipal Cemetery – 151 Bluemont Street – Grafton, West Virginia
First Documented Interment 1842 – First Municipal interment 1866
Owned and Operated by the City of Grafton since 1866*

*Remembering and Honoring the Veterans and the Conflicts in which they served for the
Freedom of our Country who
are at rest in Bluemont Cemetery*

*War of 1812 ~ American Civil War ~ World War I ~ Korean War
Mexican War ~ Spanish-American ~ War World War II ~ Vietnam War*

The Memorial City Grafton West Virginia

**Welcomes you to the
157th West Virginia
Memorial Day Parade**

*The City of Grafton
1 West Main Street
(304) 265-1412
www.graftonwv.org*

*Mayor-Karen L. Willis
Vice Mayor-Phillip R. McDaniel
Councilwoman-Diana M. Thompson
Councilwoman-Brenda K Thompson
Councilwoman-Patricia A. Henderson*

*City Manager-Kevin M Stead
City Clerk-Larry M Richman
Public Works Director-Jason R. Setler
Bluemont Cemetery Caretaker-
Albert "Butch" Charleton
Police Chief- Coleman Y Durrett
Fire Chief-Ryan D. Roberts
Building Inspector-R Wayne Beall
Code Officer-Glenn H Bartlett II
Sanitary Sewer Director-Samuel J Jones
City Attorney-Mullens & Mullens, PLLC
City Judge-Robert L Bolton III*