



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 27, 2019

FAYETTE COUNTY CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS REMEMBERED

Uniontown, PA – Fayette County has long been revered for having a storied military history spanning many generations and all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Each year, hundreds of volunteers honor that history by paying tribute to thousands of Fayette natives who lost their lives in combat. They place American flags, wreaths and other decorations on military graves in honor of Memorial Day.

Less commonly known as Decoration Day, Memorial Day is a federal holiday observed annually on the last Monday of May, in remembrance of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their homeland.

With many historical roots in Pennsylvania, from Gettysburg to Boalsburg, Memorial Day is also widely celebrated throughout Fayette County, with organizations, government officials and families marking the occasion with parades, picnics, religious services and other events.

Though Memorial Day falls on May 27 this year, its history predates the American Civil War, in which dozens of Fayette County citizens fought valiantly.

As all Civil War soldiers are now deceased, Fayette also celebrates those who survived combat but later died, as not all have relatives remaining in the area to remember them on military holidays. Five of those Fayette soldiers received the Medal of Honor for their heroic efforts during the Civil War.

Established by Congress in July of 1862, the Medal of Honor is awarded to those who, while serving, distinguished themselves by risking their lives above and beyond the call of duty, through acts of self-sacrifice and unmatched bravery.

Pvt. Samuel Johnson of Company G of the 9th Pennsylvania Reserves earned his accolades for his actions on Sept. 17, 1862, in Antietam, Md. According to historical documents, Johnson, who received his medal on May 30, 1863, was severely wounded while capturing two enemy colors of the 1st Texas Rangers.

On April 22, 1863, Pvt. Casey Henry, serving with Company C of the 20th Ohio Infantry stationed in Vicksburg, Miss., voluntarily served as a crewmember during a transport that passed forts under heavy fire. He received his medal on Sept. 23, 1897.

Also in Vicksburg, Miss. one month later - May 22, 1863 - Pvt. Joseph (Wertick) Wortick of Company A of the 8th Missouri Infantry earned his medal for gallantry in the charge of a volunteer "storming party." He received his medal July 14, 1894.

Pvt. Francis Morrison of Company H of the 85th Pennsylvania Infantry was serving in Bermuda Hundred, Va., on June 17, 1864, when he voluntarily exposed himself to heavy fire while rescuing a wounded comrade from the battlefield. He received his Medal of Honor Aug. 2, 1897.

Cpl. John S. Shellenberger of Company B of the 85th Pennsylvania Infantry captured an enemy flag on Aug. 16, 1864, in Deep Run, Va. His medal was awarded April 6, 1865.

An expansive history of Fayette County's military records, including records of those killed or missing in action who are regularly celebrated on Memorial Day, can be found in The Pennsylvania Room at Uniontown Library.

Annually, thousands of visitors and amateur historians access the library's books, county records, microfilmed newspapers, genealogy collections and more, in the hopes of uncovering pieces of Fayette County's storied military past.

Those feeling nostalgic this Memorial Day can find more information and resources at www.uniontownlib.org. For details on Fayette County's Memorial Day celebrations, visit www.FayetteCountyPa.org.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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