

1945 May 28-June 3

Memorial Day 1945

Memorial Day, the day we remember the men and women who have died in the armed forces of our country, has a long tradition. [Major General John A. Logan](#), a Civil War veteran and head of the [Grand Army of the Republic](#), an organization for Union veterans of the Civil War, established Decoration Day on May 5, 1868. He said Decoration Day should be observed on May 30 every year by decorating the graves of men killed in the nation's wars. Although there had been similar local ceremonies around the country before that, the first official observance was by 5,000 people at [Arlington National Cemetery](#) near Washington D. C. in 1868. Several cities have claimed to be the birthplace of Decoration Day, now called Memorial Day, but Congress and President Lyndon Johnson in 1966 officially named Waterloo, New York, as the birthplace because of its May 5, 1866, ceremony to honor local Civil War veterans.¹

Partly because of lobbying by the travel industry and labor unions, Congress passed the [Uniform Monday Holiday Act](#) in 1968 to create legal public holidays as three-day holiday weekends. Starting in 1971, Memorial Day was observed the last Monday in May every year.²

While many Americans view the "first weekend of summer" as a time for travel, picnics, or an extra day to do yard work, veterans' organizations such as the American Legion have continued the tradition of honoring our war dead with solemn ceremonies in local cemeteries. These typically include a parade, a speech, patriotic music, the firing of a 21-gun salute, and the playing of "Taps." Youth organizations often decorate graves with flowers, harkening back to the original Decoration Day.

In May 1945, every man who had given his life in World War II, as well as all of those in previous wars, were a reason for remembrance and reflection by the people of La Crosse County.



Parade, Programs In Two Cemeteries To Feature Memorial Day Observance

La Crosse's Memorial Day observance, although there is a threat of rain during the morning, will feature the customary parade and programs in Oak Grove and Catholic cemeteries, Judge R. V. Ahlstrom, general chairman, said Tuesday.

The rain will be in the nature of a shower, with the storm area moving northeast toward La Crosse from Iowa, Meteorologist A. D. Sanial said.

"There is a possibility, because the storm center is moving rather rapidly, that the rain will be over prior to the scheduled 9 a. m. parade hour," Sanial said. "Wednesday afternoon will be much cooler, with the high temperature expected to be about 65 degrees."

Will Hold Parade

Judge Ahlstrom said every effort would be made to have the parade Wednesday morning, although it might be delayed a few minutes because of weather conditions. In past years the parade has started promptly at 9 a. m.

"We would like to have all parade units follow the originally announced plan and assemble at their designated places in either Cameron park or the Market Square at 8:30 a. m.," he said.

"Any organizations of a patriotic nature, not on our lists but desiring to march are asked to report to one of the marshals in the park or Market Square at 8:30 a. m. and they will be assigned places in the parade."

"We are asking that there be no parking of automobiles along the line of march prior to and during the parade."

A new feature of the observ-

ance this year, Judge Ahlstrom said, will be a field mass at the Catholic cemetery. This is planned for 9:45 a. m.

Plan Field Mass
It was because of the field mass that the parade formation was changed this year, Judge Ahlstrom explained. The Catholic cemetery section will be the first one in the parade.

The parade is to leave Fourth and King streets, going east on King to West avenue, where it will divide. The Catholic cemetery section will turn south on West avenue to Cass, go east on Cass to 22nd, south on 22nd to Market and then east on Market to the cemetery.

The other two sections of the parade will turn north on West avenue and over Forrest avenue

to La Crosse street and the Oak Grove cemetery.

Immediately upon arrival, high school students will place flowers on the graves of soldier, sailor, marine and war nurse dead under the direction of members of the citizens' decorating committee. The programs in the Catholic and Oak Grove cemeteries will follow.

At the Catholic cemetery the address will be given by the Rev. Stanley Andrzejewski, while at Oak Grove the speaker will be the Rev. Christopher Boland.

Members of the civil air patrol, Capt. C. L. McCall, commanding officer said, are to meet on the Market Square at 8:30 a. m. Wednesday. They are to be in uniform. Former members of the CAP also are urged to join the unit in marching.

(La Crosse Tribune, 1945 May 29, page 1)



MEMORIAL DAY

Heroes are not born. Circumstances create them. Men who have lived the simplest, homespun lives in time of peace—in defending the ideals they live by, the homes they treasure, the families they love—are capable of the most heroic deeds. So on this Memorial Day we honor not just the famous names in history books recounting the Civil War and the wars after it in which the United States has engaged: but we also honor the men and boys who lived as average Americans—and who died true heroes.



LA CROSSE LAUNDRY **And CLEANING COMPANY**

John D. Ward

Theo. W. Ward



(La Crosse Tribune, 1945 May 29, page 4)



LA CROSSE TRIBUNE

Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods; wherefore I will deliver you no more.—Judges 10:13.

Honored Dead

ON the fourth Memorial Day of this war, the bugles will sound taps around the world in tribute to Americans who have given "the last full measure of devotion" in this and other wars.

Each succeeding May 30 has seen the battle lines grow and the number of hallowed places where lie the dead increase until now the consecrated ground and the waters which silently received the casualties of war on the high seas gird the globe.

Throughout America grateful Americans will assemble in burying grounds, on old battlefields and beside the waters to pay reverent tribute to men whose love of country was greater than love of life. They made victory in the war in Europe possible.

Nor is it forgotten that in the great industrial struggle behind the battle lines, many lives have been lost. Men have taken risks that good safety practice would forbid in normal times, and many have paid with their lives, faithful to country and conscience as long as strength held out.

Soldiers die for a cause. In dying they have made their ultimate contribution and can do no more. The pulsating life which activated them to stake all for an ideal has ended. Their cause is henceforth irrevocably committed to those who still tread the earth.

From Memorial Day devotions and formal celebrations by military pageant, the youth of the land draw the spiritual sustenance to nourish a great tradition.

Thus does the sacrifice of the heroic dead become the inspiration of youth in search of a way of life and a goal worthy of the best in the creed and purpose of free men.

(La Crosse Tribune, 1945 May 29, page 6)

Parade Largest In History; Weather Conditions Perfect

La Crosse had its largest Memorial Day observance in history Wednesday, and with perfect weather conditions.

Thousands of adults and children took part in the parade opening the day's activities, which marked the fourth World War 2 observance of Memorial Day here and in the nation.

Countless other thousands, ranging from little tots too small to join mothers and sisters in the marching columns to adults, lined the streets over which the procession passed.

Bouquets of flowers were held by hundreds of those along the sidelines, as they halted a few minutes prior to going to cemeteries to decorate graves of members of their families.

Many of the parade spectators later went to the Oak Grove and Catholic cemeteries to hear the programs that followed the decorating of graves of soldier, sailor, marine and war nurse dead by high school students.

Hold Field Mass

A field mass was held at the Catholic cemetery, it being the first ever attempted on Memorial Day. A large platform for the altar was erected in the new section of the cemetery. A choir of students assisted in the services.

At the program in that cemetery, the Memorial Day address was given by Rev. Stanley Andrzejewski. At Oak Grove cemetery the speaker was the Rev. Christopher Boland.

Veterans' graves in the Jewish and Woodland cemeteries were decorated during the morning by a citizens' committee, but there were no programs in those places. The Campbell cemetery program was held Wednesday afternoon.

Following the morning cemetery programs, hundred of families went to parks in the city and county for picnics, the afternoon being sufficiently warm to be comfortable without coats and jackets.

The morning, however, was a bit toward the chilly side.

A shift in the wind Tuesday morning caused the threatened storm moving up the valley from Iowa to veer toward the southeast. As a result, the only clouds visible during the day were the fleecy kind associated with pleasant weather.

There were countless boats on the rivers, sloughs and lakes in the area throughout the day, as fishermen tried their luck in the face of unfavorable conditions, as the water was high and still rising as the result of last week's heavy rains. The Mississippi and most other waterways were somewhat muddy.

Parade Starts Promptly

Judge R. V. Ahlstrom, general chairman of the city's Memorial Day observance started the parade from Fourth and King streets promptly at 9 a. m. For more than an hour prior to the starting times, groups began to assemble in Cameron park and on the Market street.

The parade went east on King to West avenue, where it divided. The first section turned south on West avenue to Cass, east on Cass to 22nd, south on 22nd to Market and east on Market to the Catholic cemetery.

The other two sections turned north on West avenue and over Forrest avenue to the Oak Grove cemetery. Some of the decorating units continued east on La Crosse street to the new section of Oak Grove cemetery, which adjoins Myrick park.

In the first section were the VFW colors and guard, the organization's drum corps, marching units of the VFW and auxiliary, Aquinas high school and St. Francis nurses' bands, and children from all of the city's Catholic schools.

The other two sections included the American Legion colors and

(See MEMORIAL DAY, page 1.)

Memorial Day

Memorial Day is a day of remembrance for the brave men and women who gave their lives for the freedom of our country.

It is a day when we pause to reflect on the sacrifices made by those who have gone before us.

It is a day when we remember the price that has been paid for the freedom we enjoy today.

It is a day when we are reminded of the duty that is ours to preserve the freedoms we have inherited.

It is a day when we are inspired by the courage and sacrifice of those who have given their lives for the good of our country.

It is a day when we are reminded of the importance of unity and cooperation in the face of adversity.

It is a day when we are inspired by the hope and faith of those who have believed in a better future for our country.

It is a day when we are reminded of the responsibility that is ours to the generations that will come after us.

It is a day when we are inspired by the love and compassion of those who have given their lives for the freedom of all.

It is a day when we are reminded of the power of the human spirit to overcome all odds.

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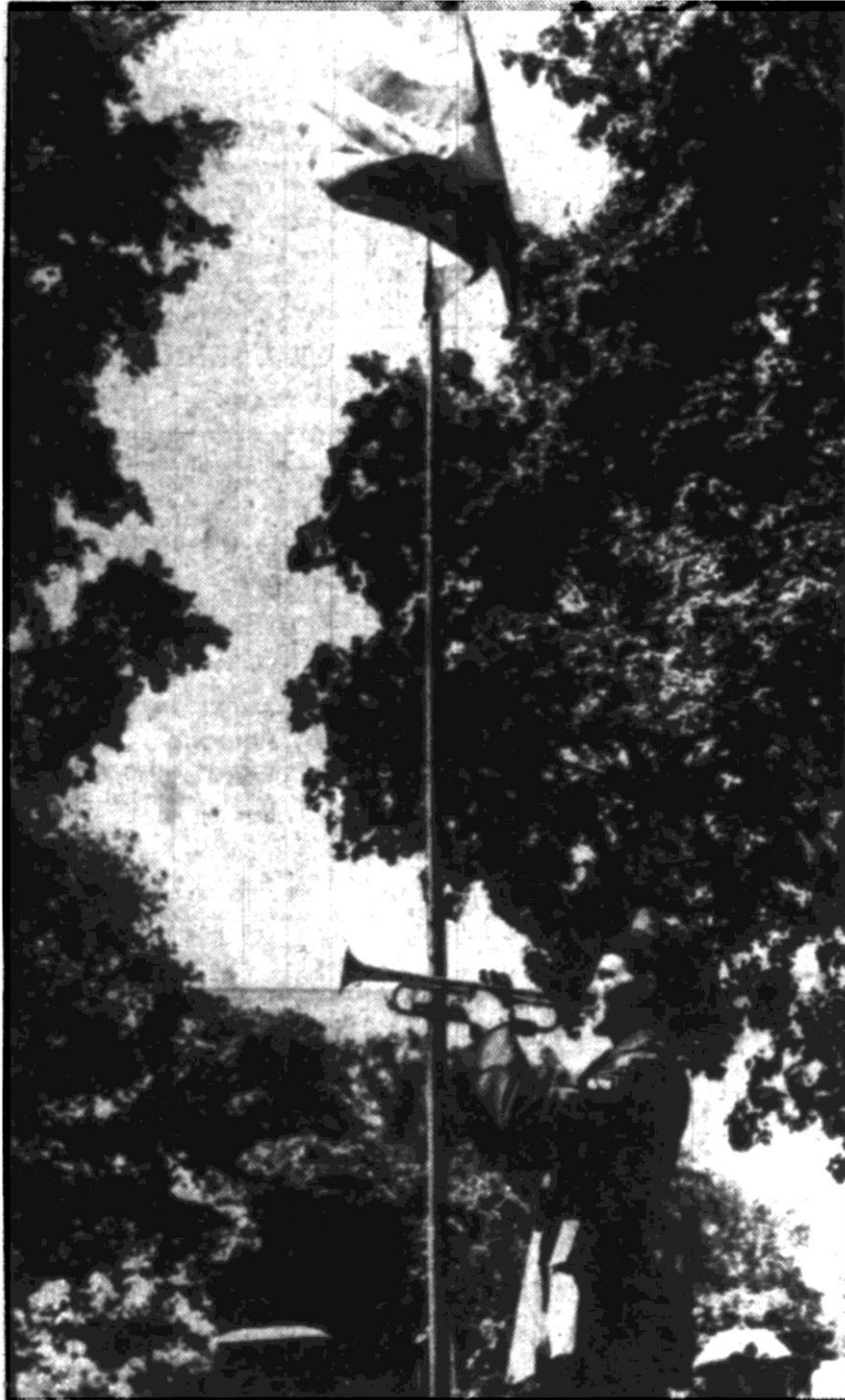
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La Crosse's Coast Guard Reserve made a snappy appearance in uniform in La Crosse's Memorial Day parade Wednesday. The reserve was led by its commanding officer, Ensign Russell Aldrich. —All Tribune Photos

(La Crosse Tribune, 1945 May 31, page 20)



Bugle Notes Of "Taps" floated over La Crosse cemeteries Wednesday at the conclusion of annual Memorial Day programs. Don Mattson was the bugler at Oak Grove cemetery.

(La Crosse Tribune, 1945 May 31, page 20)

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Sources & Notes:

¹ "Memorial Day History," *U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs*, 2015 July 20, <https://www.va.gov/opa/speceven/memday/history.asp>.

² Ashley Ross, "This Is Why Memorial Day Is a Three-Day Weekend," *Time*, 2019 May 24, <https://time.com/4346170/memorial-day-three-day-weekend/>.