



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact: Lee Wilson, Commander, Simsbury VFW
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**The Metacomet Post 1926, Veterans of Foreign Wars
and the American Legion Post 84, Simsbury, CT
announces plans in May in honor of Memorial Day 2022**

Simsbury's Metacomet Post 1926, Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion Post 84, announce plans for the month of May to include the traditional two Memorial Day parades.

It will begin on **Thursday, May 19** when members of both Posts, as well as other veterans from the area, will speak to classes at Simsbury High School's Veteran History Day about their personal military experiences. This in-person event has returned since the pandemic allowing students to meet those who served our country and learn what it means to them.

On **Saturday, May 21**, members of both Posts, with the help from Simsbury Scout Troops 76B, 76G, 175 and 1175, will place US flags on the graves of military veterans in Center Cemetery in Simsbury and St. Bernard's Cemetery in Tariffville. The flags are provided annually by the Town of Simsbury to recognize all citizens who served in our nation's battles from the Revolutionary War to present day.

The VFW Post will hold their annual Buddy Poppy Drive outside Fitzgerald's Foods, 710 Hopmeadow Street, on **Friday, Saturday & Sunday, May 20, 21 and 22**, from 9:00am to 5:00pm. Proceeds will benefit veterans in need and programs that assist veterans in and around the Farmington Valley. Recent donations from past poppy drives have been to The Dog Star Veterans Program (DS4V), Bloomfield; Resilience Grows Here, Canton; Foxfield F.A.R.M. (For a Recovery Mission), Granby; Veterans Outreach at the School of Business at University of Connecticut for scholarships; VFW National Home for Children, Eaton Rapids, MI; and VFW VMS Program (Veterans & Military Support) Kansas City, KS. The familiar red cloth poppy, normally worn in the lapel, is a symbol from WWI memorialized in a poem written in 1915 by John McCrae about Flanders Field, Belgium, where, in 1914, American soldiers were engaged in battle in the fields of poppies that grew there.

Historically, the VFW conducted its first buddy poppy distribution before Memorial Day in 1922, becoming the first veterans' organization to organize a nationwide distribution. The buddy poppy soon was adopted as the official memorial flower of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Military veterans of the Simsbury Post will be distributing poppies and welcome local veterans to stop by and say hello! To make a mail in donation, checks can be made out to Simsbury VFW Post 1926 and mailed to: Simsbury VFW Post 1926, P.O. Box 211, Simsbury, CT 06070. Please note "Poppy Drive" on the memo line of the check.

On **Monday, May 30**, both Posts will hold the traditional two parades – Tariffville in the morning and Simsbury center in the afternoon. The afternoon parade and ceremonies are great family events involving bands, members of the town's police and fire departments, town, state and federal government elected officials and military veterans marching, many in uniform. Simsbury's VFW and American Legion Posts are encouraging all veterans, and active military personnel, to join in this annual event. The public is invited to attend both parades and ceremonies.

The first parade will step off at 9:00am from Winthrop Street in Tariffville and will conclude at St. Bernard Cemetery. There will be a short ceremony with guest speaker and playing of Taps to honor all veterans buried there. In case of inclement weather, the ceremony will take place at 9:00am inside Trinity Episcopal Church, 11 Church Street, Tariffville.

The second parade, held for more than 100 years, will step off at 1:30pm from Owens Brook Boulevard and will conclude across from the Simsbury Library at Jim Gallagher Way. Following the parade there will be a ceremony at the Simsbury Veterans Memorial at the driveway entrance to the Simsbury Library, 725 Hopmeadow Street. There will be the traditional Memorial Day reading of the names of Simsbury soldiers who gave their life in battle from the Revolutionary War to present. The Master of Ceremonies will be Joseph Haney, US Navy, Petty Officer 3rd Class, Operation Southern Watch, Gulf War. He is member of the Simsbury VFW Post and Historian for the Department of Connecticut American Legion. The keynote address will be presented by Justine Ginsberg, Director, Resilience Grows Here, who will speak on the importance of resilience in times of turmoil. In case of inclement weather, a ceremony will take place at 1:30pm inside Eno Memorial Hall, 754 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury.

Organizing co-chairmen Lee Wilson and John Fox from the Simsbury VFW stated, "we are excited to return to our traditional Memorial Day events all month long."

For veterans who cannot march, there will be rides available for them in classic military vehicles. All veterans participating, including active-duty personnel, are asked to wear a uniform if possible. If they do not have a uniform, they are asked to wear a hat designating their branch of service or conflict. All members of the VFW and American Legion are asked to wear their cover.

Letters inviting participation in both parades are being sent to all known veterans in Simsbury. If a veteran does not receive an invitation, they are more than welcome to join in by contacting Lee Wilson at 860-798-3562 by May 15th.

If Covid restrictions require it, the parade or indoor ceremony may be canceled. Any changes will be posted on the Town's website and on the VFW Post website, www.vfw1926.org

All events in the month of May are only a few of the many activities that the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion conduct during the year in support of the Simsbury community. If you are a Veteran and qualify, please consider joining the American Legion and /or Veterans of Foreign War Posts to help in providing the good works that we both do in the community. For information regarding membership in either Post please call Jon Blume for the American Legion at 904-487-1952 or Lee Wilson for the VFW at 860-798-3562.

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