Community

Bloomfield Veterans Cemetery Memorial Day Services

MAY 28TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Written by
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Dexter, Missouri – Memorial Day is traditional set aside to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. If you did not have an opportunity to visit the Veterans Cemetery in Bloomfield for their ceremony on Monday, you missed a wonderful tribute to the Prisoners of War, the fallen soldiers and those Missing In Action.

The Stoddard County Honor Band played patriotic music as over 500 people turned out to honor our military.

Retired members of the Marine Corps, U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard performed a ceremony at the beautifully decorated POW/MIA Table while Gary Kitchen SFC USA Retired narrated In the background one could hear Allison Statler, a Bloomfield student perform Amazing Grace on her violin. This ceremony honored the service of those from each U.S. military branch who perished while serving this great country!

The table symbolizes the fact that members of our armed forces are missing from our ranks. They are referred to as POW's and MIA's. They are unable to be with

their loved ones and families today. The tablecloth is white, symbolic of purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms. The single red rose in the vase signifies the blood many shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of our beloved USA. The rose also reminds us of the family and friends to keep the faith, while awaiting their return. The yellow ribbon on the vase represents the yellow ribbons worn on the lapels of thousands who demand unyielding determination a proper accounting of our comrades who are not among us tonight.

A slice of lemon on the plate reminds us of their bitter fate. The salt sprinkled on the plats reminds us of the countless fallen tears of families as they wait. The glass inverted, as they cannot toast with us today. The chairs are empty as they are not here. The candle is reminiscent of the light of hope, which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home into the arms of a grateful nation. The black ribbon on the candle reminds us of those who will not be coming home. The faded picture on the table is a reminder that they are missed very much and are remembered by their families.

Let us remember and never forget their sacrifices.

Gathered around the POW/MIA Table and performing the Memorial Day service were Bill Alexander, USAF Retired, Justin Baker, USCG Retired, James Adams, US Army Retired, Bill Miranda, USMC Retired, and Carl Bess, USN Retired.

Director Kenneth Swearengin, SMSgt USAF Retired welcomed Paul Schuerenberg as the guest speaker. He is the Veteran Experience Officer and Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist at John J. Pershing VA Medical Center in Poplar Bluff, told the audience to remember the day following the attack of 9-11 when the country was unified in both patriotism and spirit. "Remember that day," he stated. "Remember every day how it felt and how we reacted."

After closing comments and the benediction by Jim Long Jr., Lt Col USAF Retired, the firing of volley and taps commenced. The Stoddard County Veterans Honor Guard of Dick Hart, Elmer Wilson, Jack Gilles, Jerry Elder, Cotus James, Rick Mclean, John Roach, Jesse Deardorff, Mark Hux, Mike Williams, Denny Robinett, Dale Weaver, Bradley Williams, Lynn Mattingly, and Dallas Buchanan.
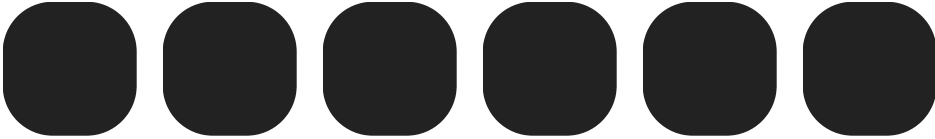
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Taps performed by student, Michael Angel.

We would like to thank the Stoddard County Veterans Honor Guard, American Legion Post 59 Honor Guard, Bloomfield Boy Scout Troop 72, Stoddard County honor Band, and the Bloomfield Assistance League of the Missouri Veterans Cemetery for all that you did to help honor our military and make this event possible.

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