



HAVERSTRAW'S TRADITION OF MEMORIAL DAY REMEMBRANCE

BY: Steven Cobb

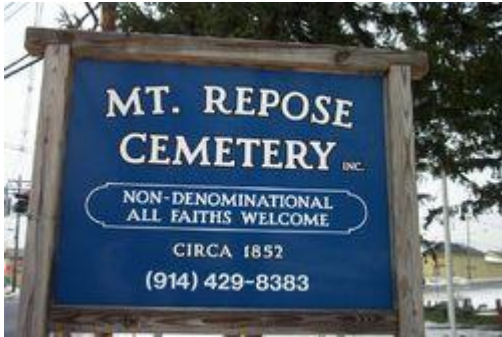


Our Memorial Day national holiday began in 1868 when John A. Logan (head of the US Army in the Civil War) issued a proclamation suggested that the graves of fallen Civil War soldiers be decorated with flowers.

The Veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic. This was the official name of the Union Army Haverstraw's chapter of the Civil War veterans took notice. Soon after veteran Ira Hedges was organizing annual parades as well as a memorial service at Haverstraw's Mt. Repose Cemetery at the intersection of Route 9W and Westside Avenue in Haverstraw which became the resting place of many of Haverstraw's Civil War veterans including Richard Smith who won the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery during the conflict.

Later in the week, at midnight on Friday May 29 a large watch fire emanating from a 15-foot wide by 15-foot-high wooden base will be lit at Bowline Park in Haverstraw in remembrance of the Haverstraw residents who gave their life in service of their country.

The large watch fire is appropriate because Haverstraw's list is long. It began back in the 1770s with three Haverstraw soldiers who fought and died in the American Revolution. It continues with about 30 who gave their lives in the Civil War including four who fell at the pivotal battle of Gettysburg. 18 of the nearly 300 Haverstraw residents who served in World War. We lost about 30 more in World War II including 13 in the D-Day campaign which liberated France from Nazi tyranny.



At 11 am, this Memorial Day May 25th, Don Joachim, Commander of Haverstraw's Leo Ladders American Legion Post will continue the 158th year tradition began by Sergeant Hedges with a special program related to America's 250th anniversary.

For Haverstraw, Memorial Day isn't a day which we participate as outsiders remembering other people from other places. It is a day where we stop to appreciate almost 100 men from our community who gave their lives over a span of 250 years.

