

PRESS & GUIDE

Dearborn's 85th annual Memorial Day Parade to pay respectful tribute to America's fallen

Parade marshal is Medal of Honor recipient; Special concert will follow the parade, ceremony

PUBLISHED: May 6, 2009

DEARBORN - Dearborn's 85th annual Memorial Day Parade will pay tribute to America's fallen. The public is invited to attend the event, which begins at 10 a.m. on Memorial Day (May 25).

"This is a moment we set aside to remember those who have paid the ultimate price while serving our nation as members of the armed forces," said Gary Tanner, commander of the Dearborn Allied War Veterans Council.

"We encourage everyone to come and share this time together, as our way of honoring the men and women who never came home."

The parade route is Michigan Avenue from Firestone to Schaefer in east Dearborn. It is recommended that parade spectators plan to arrive early to get the best possible viewing spots. Bring a lawn chair or blanket for seating.

The theme of this 85th annual event is "Patriotism Past & Present," to commemorate Dearborn's long tradition of Memorial Day observances.

Serving as Parade grand marshal will be Michael E. Thornton, a retired United States Navy SEAL, a veteran of the Vietnam War and a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The South Carolina native completed several tours of duty in Vietnam and Thailand during the years 1968-1973. During his final tour, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for heroic actions which resulted in saving the life of a fellow SEAL.

Thornton is also the recipient of numerous other decorations and awards, among them the Silver Star, three Bronze Star Medals with Combat "V" and the Purple Heart.

Following Vietnam, his military career included stints as a SEAL instructor, SEAL team member, two years of special exchange service with Great Britain's Royal Marine British Special Boat Squadron and helping to establish and operate the elite SEAL Team Six. In April 1990, he coordinated a rapid response deployment in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Thornton retired in 1992 as the Navy's last Medal of Honor recipient serving on active duty.

Also participating in the Parade are members of Dearborn's many veterans' organizations, bands from several local schools, youth groups, community service organizations, special floats from The Parade Company and more.

Flyovers by military aircraft will also be part of the Parade, including a flyover by F-18 fighter aircraft to kick off the event at 10 a.m.

The public is also invited to attend the city's official remembrance service, held immediately following the Parade at the Dearborn War Memorial. The War Memorial is located on the grounds of Dearborn City Hall at the corner of Michigan and Schaefer.

Following the remembrance service, residents are invited to spend some time in City Hall Park to enjoy a free concert by the Rackham Ensemble Singers, who will perform a collection of "boogie-woogie" songs reminiscent of the World War II era. Bring a lawn chair or blanket for seating.

Hot dogs, soft drinks and beer will be available for purchase in City Hall Park as well, with proceeds benefiting Dearborn veterans.

Further details about Dearborn's Memorial Day Parade will appear in coming weeks in newspapers, online at www.cityofdearborn.org and on CDTV (City of Dearborn Television; Channels 12 and 915 on Comcast, Channel 10 on WOW!).