



## MEMORIAL DAY - 2010

by Richard Bayer, Veterans Service Officer, Racine County Workforce Development Center

Throughout history, societies have called upon their citizens to put their lives on the line in times of conflict. The United States is no different. In fact, it took a war, and the lives of many patriots, for our nation to win the right to be an independent country. In the 200-plus years of our nation's existence, the United States has continuously found itself in need of a strong military. Today, our soldiers, airmen, sailors and marines are fighting in our name in both Iraq and Afghanistan and standing on guard at sites around the globe.

Every year on Memorial Day, Americans solemnly remember all the men and women who, while fighting for the United States in conflicts throughout the world, gave their lives that we may live in security and liberty. Communities large and small in every part of the country will be holding events to honor and commemorate those who made the ultimate sacrifice in our name.

Racine County is no different. In the City of Racine, there will be a parade - properly called a procession because this is a solemn, and not a festive, occasion. It will begin at 10:00am at West Blvd. and Washington Avenue and will proceed down West Blvd. to

Osborne Ave. and into Graceland Cemetery. There a program will be presented by the Racine Area Veterans Council in the Veterans' section of the cemetery.

Other municipalities in Racine County will host their own events to mark this special day. To find out about those events you may contact, in Union Grove, Mr. Tom Turner at 262-878-2516 or, in Waterford, Mr. Vito Colano at 262-534-5863. Both are members of the American Legion Posts in their communities. Members of the VFW, DAV, AMVETS, to name a few others would be good sources of information for local events throughout Racine County. The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs will have their annual Memorial Day event at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Cemetery on Sunday May 30 at 10am. If you would like to know more about this fine event, please call the Cemetery office at 262-878-5660 for more details.

The State of Wisconsin is home to over 427,000 veterans, of whom more than 14,300 live in Racine County. This past January, our State welcomed back over 3,200 veterans who had served in Iraq. Unfortunately, many veterans return from active duty to find that the jobs they left no longer exist. These veterans need help to either get back into the job market or to return to school. Either way, there are Federal and State benefits that may be available to them.

Most returning veterans make contact with the Racine County Veterans Service Office 262-638-6702, for information about benefits of all kinds, or the Veterans Staff 262-638-6564 for help with employment issues. Both of these offices are located in the Workforce

Development Center at 1717 Taylor Avenue in Racine. There are also many other resources available at the Center to help veterans with their needs. One vet remarked to staff that he "was really surprised at the number of benefits there for me. I wish I had known

about this sooner." Another mentioned that, "this place has quite a bit available for me and my family. It's been hard in this economy and we need all the help we can get. This seems to be that place where it's-at for all kinds of real help!"

As Memorial Day, and the events planned around the County approach, it is appropriate to note that one Racine County Veteran noted that the Memorial Day Procession to the cemetery was, "the only time one could still see folks remove their hats as the flag

passed by. This used to be common at every parade around town. Even the police officers would take their caps off when Old Glory went past."

Things may be different these days, but our love for our country, and our need to remember and honor those who have given their lives for our freedoms, remain the same. Please take time to participate in one of the events and as you cook out, relax and enjoy

the company of family and friends, remember the many selfless Americans who gave their lives so that we may enjoy the privilege of living in this truly great country.

If you have questions regarding the article, please contact Dick Bayer at x6667.