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Memorial Day Parade to kick off on Monday

By Mike Lauterborn

A much-anticipated event in the Town of Fairfield, the annual Memorial Day Parade is scheduled for Monday, May 27, kicking off at 10 a.m. and lasting until 11:30 a.m. This year's theme is "Red, White and Blue: We Honor You" and is a salute

to the Armed Forces serving in Iraq and Afghanistan – a Thanks for Taking a Stand.

The Parade has been an annual Town staple since 1936, with dozens of groups participating, from scouts, civil service men and women and local businesses to military, clubs

and schools. Many groups create elaborate entries, like Boy Scouts Pack 197, which will have a patriotic truck hitch, life-size Pinewood Derby Car and derby push-cars. The Shriners are always a favorite, driving miniature motorized cars in zigzag patterns down

the road. Dance performances, vendors hawking patriotic items, children tossing candy, live music and more offer additional highlights.

The Parade starts at South Pine Creek Road and travels east along the Post Road to
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Fairfield Public Library, then south along Old Post Road to Flint's Corner, and east again along Old Post Road passing the Town Green to beyond South Benson Road.

A spectacular addition to the lineup of classic vehicles this year is George King's 1916 WWI Model T Ambulance, attended by a Color Guard from Port Five and followed by Gwen and Parker Ackley's 1915 Dodge Brothers Touring Car as its Army Staff Car, a vehicle that was favored by BlackJack Pershing whose own Dodge was nicknamed Daisy. The Ambulance will represent the Fairfield Museum and History Center.

The Fairfield Museum's parade display will be in the First Division, following the Port Five Naval Veterans, a special arrangement facilitated by Commander Richard Iannucci of Port Five.

Ambulance 255, as it is known, is a 1916 Model T representative of the 1,200 Fords donated by Americans and driven by American volunteers during World



George King's 1916 WWI Model T Ambulance will be a new highlight in Fairfield's Memorial Day Parade this year.

War I in France. These volunteers paid their own way over to France and purchased their own uniforms. They succeeded in evacuating 500,000 French wounded from aid stations at the trenches to field hospitals in the rear. One hundred and twenty-seven drivers never returned home.

Renovation of Ambulance 255 commenced in 2009 following three years of research in the U.S. and France. The ambulance was dedicated in a ceremony on May 5, 2012 and has been featured in

such events as the 2013 Presidential Inaugural Parade.

The fun doesn't end when the Parade wraps. Fairfield Museum, at 370 Beach Road, invites the general public to join them for a free Community Memorial Day Picnic, from Noon to 3 p.m. Family and friends are all welcome to bring blankets and picnic baskets to the Museum grounds and enjoy an afternoon of games and family activities, including water-balloon toss and sack races. Refreshments will be available for purchase.

Memorial Day picnic at Fairfield Museum

The Fairfield Museum will kick off summer with various events and programs, beginning with the annual Memorial Day Community Picnic on Monday, May 27, from noon to 3 p.m. The afternoon will feature free exhibitions, games and refreshments sold by the Kiwanis Club of Fairfield.

The museum will be open on Memorial Day, free of charge, from noon to 4. Guests are encour-

aged to explore the museum gift shop's all new line of merchandise. During the grand re-opening, customers receive a museum tote bag with every \$25 purchase. Also currently on view is Images 2013, the fifth annual juried photography exhibition celebrating the work of 55 talented regional photographers and a solo show by photographer Philip Trager.

In this year's Memorial Day town parade, the Fair-

field Museum's display will include new additions, the Port 5 Color Guard and 1916 WWI Model T Ambulance 255, along with a regular entry, the 1915 Dodge Brothers Touring Car, driven by Fairfield residents Gwen and Parker Ackley. The ambulance will be driven by area resident George King, who is raising money to take the vehicle to France for the World War I Memorial celebrations.

Also launching on Memorial Day will be the Blue Star Museums program, a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families and the Department of Defense, offering free admission to all active duty military personnel and their families through Labor Day. More than 1,800 museums are participating in the Blue Star Program. A complete list is available at arts.gov/bluestarmuseums.