



## Greene County Commissioners' Office

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### **News Release**

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### **Commissioners issue proclamation for Rain Day Boys**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WAYNESBURG – Throughout most of Rain Day on Sunday, July 29, the atmosphere for the event was festive as thousands flocked to downtown Waynesburg to enjoy a full day of fun, music, food, games, dancing performances and so much more.

But for one portion of the day, the mood was somber and yet still filled with pride, honor and remembrance as those in attendance gathered in front of the county courthouse for a special ceremony held to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rain Day Boys.

The “Boys” were 18 soldiers of Company K, 110<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 28<sup>th</sup> Division who fought in World War I and between July 28 and 29, 1918, were killed or mortally wounded in France during battle.

The members of Company K were called to the frontline trenches to relieve the 156<sup>th</sup> French regiment during the Second Battle of the Marne. In the early hours of July 28, 1918, they crossed into German territory to secure the high ground near Courmont, France known as Grimpettes Woods.

In Greene County’s military history, this was the largest loss of life in a single battle ever. These soldiers were honored Sunday during the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony, which was emceed by Doug Wilson and featured the Posting of Colors by VFW Post 4793, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 110<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment and James Farrell Post 330 American Legion.

The ceremony also featured an invocation by Rev. Dr. Bill Parker, the singing of the National Anthem by Lexi VanDyne, the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence, a reading of a special poem by 2018 Miss Rain Day Loren Schroyer, a keynote address by special guest speaker John “Jack” I. Hook III, the reading of the soldiers’ names, musical performances by Heaven Bound Ministries and Cole Leathers, “Taps” by Gerard and Livia Schleiker and a fly-over by SOAR of Greene County.

At the beginning of the ceremony, several local and state dignitaries were on hand to present special proclamations, citations and certifications.

Greene County Commission Chairman Blair Zimmerman presented on behalf of his fellow Commissioners, Dave Coder and Archie Trader, a proclamation honoring the Rain Day Boys.

The proclamation states that “Greene County honors the 18 young men and immortalizes them as our Rain Day Boys in observance of their sacrifice in France during a long-standing local holiday back home” and that the Commissioners “are honored to remember our Rain Day Boys on the 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of their ultimate sacrifice for freedom and democracy.”

The proclamation also recognizes the efforts of former district attorney Glenn Toothman III and genealogist Candice Buchanan, who 16 years ago began researching the fallen soldiers of Company K. To keep the memory of the young men alive, they wrote a book, “Rain Day Boys: The Greene That Lay Near Grimpettes Woods,” portraying their lives and their final battle.

Other dignitaries who presented honors included state Rep. Pam Snyder, who delivered a citation from the House of Representatives; state Congressman Conor Lamb, who offered an American flag that had recently flown over the U.S. Capitol; and a representative from Gov. Tom Wolf’s office, who also presented a special citation.

Throughout the ceremony, photographs of the 18 soldiers – wrapped in ceremonial wreaths – were prominently displayed in front of the Rain Day main stage. The photos were also displayed throughout the Rain Day festival on the courthouse lawn.

The soldiers were honored again later in the day with the event’s traditional Moment of Silence.

The soldiers (with their ages and ranks) who were honored are:

- Walter Burtrum Riggle, 23, Lieutenant;
- William Webster Throckmorton, 20, Private First Class;
- Floyd Thomas Hickman, 22, Private;
- Frederick W. Marshall, 21, Private First Class;
- George T. McNeely, 18, Private;
- Hallie Jackson Closser, 33, Private First Class;
- Harold Thomas Carey, 22, Private First Class;
- Harry Dunn, 23, Private First Class;
- James Leo Farrell, 19, Private First Class;
- John Grimes Duvall, 21, Private First Class;
- John Milton Paden, 33, Mess Sergeant;
- Francis Benton Moore, 25, Private First Class;
- Norman Montgomery Zahniser, 23, Private First Class;
- Russell Kenneth Yoders, 19, Private;
- Lawrence Leslie Staggers, 21, Private First Class;
- Albert “Bert” Buchanan, 26, Private First Class;
- Benjamin Arvid Manning, 25, Mechanic; and
- Charles Edward Murphy, 21, Corporal.

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