



While much of Lumberton has become suburbanized, the community has deep historical roots embedded in tradition, one of which is the Memorial Day Parade. The holiday itself dates back to the Civil War period. Lumberton has been celebrating it for 134 years, the longest of any town in New Jersey.

The observance is held at the Village Green on Main Street, preceded by a parade that starts some blocks south at Bella Road. For anyone seeking the nostalgia of community times, it's not to be missed. Scouts, veterans, high school bands, fire engines, police, ambulances, old time cars, and politicians join with fervor. Some residents on Main Street bring picnic tables onto their front lawns and festoon their homes with bunting, while others set up folding chairs at their favorite spots along the route. The Historical Society opens its doors.

The ceremony at the park follows a set pattern, led this year by Township Mayor Sean Earlen, with the placement of wreaths at the permanent memorial, an explanation of the history of the day, and a main speaker. By tradition, General Order No. 11 of the Grand Army of the Republic, issued in May, 1868, establishing the tradition of "strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country..." is read in its entirety.

This year's main speaker was our own Brian Schultz of 132 Woodside Drive. A 1961 graduate of West Point, he pursued a distinguished career which included service in Korea and Vietnam, as well as being an instructor in nuclear physics at West Point. He continues his service assisting interested youth in navigating the admission process to this venerable institution.



Brian noted his respect for the young people of today who he works with, as well as the overarching values of true patriotism. He concluded his remarks by noting that while the ultimate sacrifice of the fallen was the focal point of the day, that this area has many Quakers who have also served their country well through participation in medical studies and as battlefield medics. He ended by observing that war ultimately has no winners.



Weldon Storey.

Sitting in the audience was another veteran, Weldon R. Storey, born in Lumberton in 1921, who served in the Army's 87<sup>th</sup> Mountain Infantry in World War II. His father had served in France in World War I, and his son in Vietnam. All three were awarded the Purple Heart for wounds

suffered in combat, as well as other decorations. Mr. Storey is the author of a collection of historical documents and personal recollections about Lumberton entitled *Lumberton Then & Now: A Little Town with a Big Heart*. Having lived in several states, most recently nearby Pennsylvania, he returns whenever possible. Several years ago, he conducted a bus tour of historical sites in Lumberton, at which he displayed a keen memory of how the town once was. He recalls his first march in the Memorial Day parade in Lumberton in 1928, with a group of Sunday School children. That year, a veteran of the Civil War also marched.

In September 1946, Mr. Story joined with other returning veterans in forming the Last Man's Club of Lumberton, a group dedicated to community service, which for many years bore responsibility for the parade. An honor roll of fallen servicemen (viewable on the right of the top photo) was maintained adjacent to the old Town Hall, now called the Gaun Building, which serves as the headquarters of the Lumberton Historical Society. Memorial Day ceremonies were held there. However, the Last Man Standing group recognized that something larger was needed, and was instrumental in the construction of the current memorial in the Village Green.

Other efforts included aiding the local fire company, providing assistance to veterans and others in need, building playing fields, sponsoring school teams, and lighting the tree next to the old Town Hall each Christmas. Mr. Storey is the last living member of the group.

Brian Schultz concluded his remarks by reciting the quote: "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away." To which we might add: "the good that honorable soldiers do lives on."

