

## COMMENTS FROM PARADE PARTICIPANTS

**Below are words from a gentlemen from Grove City who attended the 2014 Mercer Memorial Day 500 for the first time. His words are truly powerful!**

Thank you so much for inviting me to this event - I had a wonderful time! I was released from active duty on June 26, 1974 - 40 years ago next month. But, today, as I walked along the parade route, I watched people rise to their feet as we approached, and they applauded us, and they thanked us for our service...I have never experienced anything like that before - it was amazing. When I got home from my Army service back in 1974, there was no welcome from the community, just hostile comments from people on the street. Walking along that parade route was an emotional experience for me. After almost 40 years, it felt like my country was finally saying "thank you" to me, and it felt wonderful.

Thank you again for telling me about this event - it was an awesome experience, and I believe there are other veterans here in Mercer County who would benefit from taking part in the parade, like John and I did. As John said, there were a lot of Vietnam-era veterans who were "on the sidelines," standing in the crowd today...

**Below are words from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne out of Pittsburgh**

"Memorial Day Parade...Mercer PA offers the perfect small town U.S.A. atmosphere complete with friendly citizens and picturesque setting. Great praise is due the parade organizers, volunteers, local officials and especially the applauding, cheering rows of people lining the parade route. Their sense of appreciation was as palpable as it was moving. I can't imagine a better parade venue...honored to have been asked, thrilled to have marched. Thank you, Mercer PA!"