

April 11, 2008

Dear Veteran,

Mark and I are writing to invite you to participate in the 2008 edition of the Mercer Memorial Day 500 Event to honor western Pennsylvania's veterans. We are called the 500 to highlight 500 American flags with dog tags attached that line our parade route and cemetery every Memorial Day. The "500" is highlighting the U.S. Navy this year with emphasis on the USS Intrepid. The four hour event will take place Monday, May 26.

9:30 MILITARY CONCERT, Mercer County Court House Bandstand. Military Concert performed by the 28th "Keystone" Division Pennsylvania Army National Guard Band.

9:30 VETERANS RECEPTION, north side of Court House. This provides a place for veterans to sit, eat, sign up for prizes, relax, talk or listen to band music. Free drawings will be available there for all veterans with some special ones for the Navy Veterans. Prizes include Hot Air Balloon rides and 2 all-expense paid trips for two to New York City to attend the Intrepid's rededication in November. There is reserved parking for veterans at the south side of the Court House and at Bethany Church, 1 block north. If you plan to attend and need assistance a golf cart can carry you from your car to the Veteran Reception. We can provide parking maps upon request. Your parade transport will be available nearby.

11:00 PARADE, Pitt Street, begins promptly at 11 a.m. with an Veteran Color Guard from Franklin, PA. There will be six bands and a flotilla of ship representations for Navy Vets to ride on, or behind with other former crewmembers. We've ordered 80 ship names, 6" by 18", to be displayed on the Navy transports. If you are a Navy Vet consider making something with your ship's name on it to display.

12:00 MEMORIAL SALUTE, Citizens Cemetery, bottom of Pitt Street at Veterans Platform. This is the main reason for the day. It features 3 musical groups, one singing the Navy Hymn, 21 cannon salute, honoree awards, former prisoner of war recognition and keynote speaker, Ray Stone, author of "My Ship, The USS Intrepid", Plank Owner and member of the Board of Directors of the USS Intrepid Former Crewmembers Association in New York City. Ray's book is available through Amazon.com. Transportation is provided back to your car. We have some veteran seating available but you are encouraged to bring your own.

What you need to know from us

- There will be food vendors along North Diamond Street from 9:30 to noon.
- Portable restrooms will be available in the following locations: beside United Auto near parade line-up; beside Sky Bank near Concert/Reception; at the west side of Citizens Cemetery near the Memorial Salute.
- No candy throwing or politicking allowed! Patriotic handouts only!

We hope you will decide to join us this year. It would be an honor.

Patriotically,

Mark and Linda Brown Organizers