

Commemorating the USS Maine

A Texas Post honored the memory of 266 sailors and Marines

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Last month, VFW Post 8904 in Center, Texas, commemorated the 266 Americans who died when the USS Maine exploded in the Havana, Cuba, harbor on Feb. 15, 1898, during the Spanish-American War.

According to Post 8904 Quartermaster Larry Hume, the USS Maine remembrance ceremony is just one of more than 25 events the Post schedules throughout the year to honor veterans and historic events impacting the United States.

“We do these ceremonies because we do not want any veterans group to be forgotten,” said Hume, a Gold Legacy Life member.

Center is the county seat for Shelby County. Most of the Post’s ceremonies are held in the town square at the county courthouse where a veterans memorial sits. During the USS Maine ceremony, a wreath was placed at the memorial.

Hume read the names of six Shelby County residents who were associated with the Spanish-American War: Elijah Webb, Edwin A. Booth, Brunson Cline, Charles Hudson, Charlie E. Matlock and James Mosby Jr.

Post 8904 Commander Richard Lundie played Taps to conclude the remembrance ceremony.

Hume said that while the ceremony was attended largely by Post and Auxiliary members, the local newspapers regularly publicize the Post’s events. The Light & Champion newspaper wrote a lengthy piece on the USS Maine event, according to Hume.

“The newspapers are always there,” Hume said of the coverage. “We have developed a good relationship with them over the years. They give us front page coverage whenever they can.”

Hume said the events are advertised in the newspapers and on the radio.

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“It’s sad to say, but we don’t get a lot of attendees outside the Post and Auxiliary,” Hume said. “Of course, on Patriot’s Day, we always have a good turnout just as we do on Memorial Day.”

Does your Post conduct similar ceremonies? If so, let us hear about it. Email JDyhouse@vfw.org.