

'People Need to Remember'

Oregon VFW Post organizes Memorial Day events

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For the Past 30 years, a VFW Post in the Beaver State has hosted a Memorial Day event commemorating the men and women who have died in war.

VFW Post 661 in Salem, Oregon, held a Memorial Day service in remembrance of troops who made the ultimate sacrifice. The program took place at Salem's City View Funeral Home and Cemetery and featured the Willamette Bagpipes Band that started the ceremony. More than 500 people attended the May 29 event, according to VFW Post 661 Quartermaster Kerry Wymetalek.

"We set up 400 chairs before the event," Wymetalak said. "But, there weren't enough chairs for everybody. Some brought their own chairs and others stood for the entire ceremony."

Wymetalek, who has participated in the event for the past 10 years, said this year's ceremony was the largest he had been a part of.

Midway through the ceremony, two military jets conducted a flyover. VFW Post 661 members also performed the rifle salute at the ceremony and local high school Junior ROTC members conducted the raising of the U.S. flag for the ceremony.

Wymetalek, a retired Navy and Army National Guard veteran, said, "If someone isn't here to remind people what Memorial Day is for" then people will forget why it's a national holiday.

"That's why we do what we do – people need to remember and learn what Memorial Day is all about," Wymetalek said.

VFW and many other veterans service organizations, including the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Military Officers of America, Gold Star Families, were represented at the ceremony.

The National Anthem was performed by Julie Young and TAPS was performed by retired Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Rick Breen, who also addressed attendees of the Memorial

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