

# Memorial Day Program

Special 100th Anniversary Edition

Honoring VFW Post 376 Glennon-Sayers - West Orange

1921 - 2021

100 YEARS OF SERVICE



Ralph Panciello  
Late Post Commander  
1928-2021



Founding Members  
Washington Street School - 1921



Original VFW Post 376 Membership Card - 1921  
Richard J. Fagan - World War I Veteran

West Orange Town Hall - May 31, 2021

This program is presented by the

**WEST ORANGE  
VETERAN'S OF FOREIGN WARS**

in cooperation with the

**MAYOR'S OFFICE  
TOWNSHIP of WEST ORANGE**

and the

**WEST ORANGE HIGH SCHOOL  
AIR FORCE  
JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICERS TRAINING CORPS**



**MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE TEAM**

Sergeant Robert Krimmel

Megan Brill

Joseph Fagan

Major Joseph Marchesini, USAF (Ret.)

Captain Joseph Matullo

Shari Ann Quirk

Chief Master Sergeant Ricardo Thurston, USAF (Ret.)

VFW Post 376

## *Order of Events*

- Welcome.....Major Joseph Marchesini, USAF (Ret)
- Posting of the Colors.....AFJROTC, WOPD & WOFD Color Guard
- Pledge of Allegiance.....Kim Ameli  
VFW Post 376 Senior Vice Commander
- "The Star Spangled Banner"*.....Joseph Florendo (WOHS)
- Invocation.....Pastor Douglas Adams  
1st Class Petty Officer, USN
- Remarks and Presentations.....Hon. Robert D. Parisi,  
Mayor of West Orange
- Oath of Enlistment.....Andrei Rosu  
2nd Lieutenant, USA
- Wreath Dedication.....Joseph Fagan, Township Historian  
Township Council Members &  
AFJROTC Cadets
- "American Soldier"*.....Joseph Florendo (WOHS)
- "Taps"*.....Alexander Gough  
Andrew Strom  
(WOHS)
- Dedication.....Presentation to Family of Ralph Panciello
- Benediction.....Monsignor Michael Kelly  
Captain, USAR (Ret)
- Retiring of the Colors.....AFJROTC, WOPD & WOFD Color Guard
- "God Bless America"*.....Joseph Florendo (WOHS)

## ***Founding of the VFW Post #376 of West Orange***

by West Orange Township Historian Joseph Fagan.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) was first organized in 1913 with the emergence of two organizations of Spanish-American War veterans. The VFW post in West Orange was founded only eight years later, as best can be determined, with 27 founding members. Twenty of these members served in the Army and seven served in the Navy. All were WWI veterans with the exception of John Underwood, a West Orange resident who served during the Spanish-American War.

In West Orange, like countless communities across the country, many young men were eager to serve when the United States joined the World War in 1918. They all likely left West Orange and joined the patriotic cause with a youthful sense of invincibility and adventure. In total, 150 young boys left West Orange but in the harsh reality of war 28 never returned home. West Orange officials were quick to honor them and subsequently inscribed their names on a bronze plaque in the newly created War Memorial Park in 1920.

Today the original park and plaque is known as Veterans Memorial Park located on the grounds of West Orange Township Hall. It was dedicated on July 20, 1920 when the plaque was unveiled and West Orange veterans of the World War were presented with a special medal inscribed: Presented by the people of West Orange, N.J. in grateful recognition of service in the World War 1917-1918.

This inspired the war veterans to form a VFW post in West Orange the following year. It was named for two boyhood friends John Glennon and James Sayers who grew up in West Orange and were affectionately known as “Stickey” and “Jumbo”. When the United States entered the great war they were quick to answer the call to duty. They both enlisted on the same day and served in Company B of the 113th Infantry attached to the Blue and Gray Division. On October 12, 1918 both childhood pals John Glennon and James Sayers were killed in combat nearly at the same time. Their names became the standard bearer for West Orange Glennon/Sayers VFW Post #376. The post’s first commander was James A. Glennon, brother of John Glennon.

No surviving records from the formation of Post #376 other than the original registration cards exist. They seem to indicate that the founding members from October 1921 are: Herbert Barry, George Boetash, William E. Brennan, Anthony A. Christiano, Nicholas J. Christiano, John Deckenback, Bernard M. Degnan, Richard J. Fagan, Edward J. Feeney, James A Glennon, Matthew T. Glynn Jr., Harry H. Hain, Gibson Hallett, Albert M. Heis, Benjamin E. Jagers, Foster Kells, William Landers, George Mulvihill, Hugh McCartney, John McLoughlin, Charles E. Ober, George H. Pflug, John Preiss, Liberto L. Santucci, John Schack, Robert

V. Sphale, Alfonso Tarantino, and John J. Underwood. These are presumably the 27 members seen in the only known group photo of the founding members taken in 1921. (pictured below)

Of these founding post members Herbert Barry served as the President of the West Orange Board of Education from 1923 to 1934. Bernard M. Degnan served as West Orange Mayor from 1938 to 1951. Harry H. Hain served as West Orange Police Chief from 1938 to 1957. Anthony Christiano and George Mulvihill both served on the West Orange Police Department. Richard J. Fagan is the great uncle of Township Historian Joseph Fagan and James Sayers for whom the post is partially named is the great uncle of Township Business Administrator Jack Sayers.

The West Orange Glennon/Sayers VFW Post #376 celebrates 100 years of service to the community this year. They were responsible for the subsequent inclusion of memorials honoring West Orange residents who perished in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. On May 31, 1999 the memorials were refurbished and cleaned and West Orange War Memorial Park was rededicated as Veterans Plaza thanks to the efforts of the VFW. They also donated the US Army M1A1 57mm anti-tank gun currently on permanent display there. In a sad twist of fate, the much beloved commander of VFW post #376 Ralph Panciello passed away this past March 11th in the 100th year of their existence in West Orange and whose presence will be deeply missed.







VFW Post #376 Commander Ralph Panciello is seen with fellow members standing in front of the World War II memorial at Veterans Plaza on Veterans Day 1999.



Veterans mostly received federal or state medals for their service during World War I. It was rare for a town to recognize veterans in the same manner. Seen here is the official town World War I medal issued by West Orange. This one belonged to an unknown recipient that was presented to all West Orange veterans of the World War on July 20, 1920 in a ceremony at War Memorial Park. It is inscribed: Presented by the people of West Orange, N.J. in grateful recognition of service in the World War 1917-1918.



Ralph Panciello was born and raised in Orange in 1928 before moving to West Orange 60 years ago. He worked as a machinist for Lock Joint Pipe Company in East Orange before retirement. Ralph proudly served in the United States Army during World War II. He was a member of Glennon-Sayers VFW Post #376 and served as post commander for many years. It was under his watch the post reached its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Ralph was a fixture at the town's annual Memorial Day Ceremony for more than 20 years. He was best known for leading the crowd in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. He also was a member of West Orange Elks BPOE #1590, and former Deputy Mayor of West Orange Township. His presence will be sorely missed but always fondly remembered.

## *Observance*

In traditional observance, the flag of the United States is raised briskly to the top of the staff and then solemnly lowered to the half-staff position, where it remains only until noon. It is then raised to full-staff for the remainder of the day. The half-staff position remembers the more than one million men and women who gave their lives in service of their country. At noon, their memory is raised by the living, who resolve not to let their sacrifice be in vain, but to rise up in their stead and continue the fight for liberty and justice for all.



The “National Moment of Remembrance” resolution of December 2000 asks that at 3pm local time all Americans “voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a Moment of Remembrance and respect, pausing from whatever they are doing for a moment of silence or listening to Taps.”



## *Our Performers*

### **COLOR GUARD**

West Orange High School Air Force  
Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps  
Color Guard

West Orange Police Department Color Guard

West Orange Fire Department Color Guard

### **TRUMPETERS**

Alexander Gough  
Andrew Strom

### **VOCALIST**

Joseph Florendo



*Message from the Mayor:*

Today the West Orange community comes together once again on Memorial Day to pay tribute to those township sons lost defending our nation.

We honor and remember these 156 brave souls who perished in wars and we vow to never forget them. We know what their sacrifice means to our community, our country and the world at large.

We've bestowed the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal, the State's highest honor for military service, on 360 of our deserving combat veterans, becoming "New Jersey's Most Decorated Community!"

We also recognize our men and women in uniform today and thank the West Orange High School Mountaineer Squadron Air Force Junior ROTC and its instructors, Retired Air Force Major Joseph Marchesini and Retired Air Force Chief Master Sergeant Ricardo Thurston as our program coordinators. We're proud to partner with them as we continue the tradition of honoring and celebrating this important holiday.

Keeping our nation safe is the ultimate sacrifice in keeping our country out of harm's way and strong. Today, and every day, we honor our fallen with tremendous gratitude and pride.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Parisi", is centered on a light yellow rectangular background.

Robert D. Parisi  
Mayor

## *West Orange Hometown Heroes Program*

The Hometown Heroes program is administered by the West Orange Alliance Downtown and is a program designed to place banners along the downtown corridor in West Orange. It is specifically intended to pay tribute as a living memorial to all service men and women from West Orange who have served or are serving in any branch of the military. Each banner will be in the same patriotic style and honor a specific individual that will include their name, picture (preferably in uniform), branch of service, and era of service. The name of the sponsor purchasing the banner will be listed on the bottom. The banners will be installed on existing utility poles in the downtown corridor. This program is open to all former and current residents who served in the military. For more information about the program or to fill out an order form visit the West Orange Downtown Alliance's website at: [DowntownWO.com](http://DowntownWO.com)





The Memorial Day Observance Team Celebrates, Honors and Remembers...

Veterans' advocate, decorated Vietnam veteran, and  
longtime Memorial Day ceremonies organizer...

Gary R. Englert  
1951 - 2015

Veterans of Foreign Wars Commander and  
World War II veteran...

Ralph Panciello  
1928 - 2021