

It's the last Monday in May, and that means Memorial Day.

First begun to honor Union soldiers who died during the Civil War, the holiday expanded after World War I to include those who died in any war or military action

Traditionally, flags are flown at half-staff today from dawn until noon and the holiday is observed by visiting cemeteries and memorials. There are plenty of other ways to celebrate in the High Country.

Memorial Day festivities start early. At 7:30 a.m. at the Veterans Memorial on the west side of the Dougherty Administration Building on the Appalachian State University Campus, a Memorial Day ceremony is being held. After the flag-raising ceremony and brief program, a continental breakfast is being served in the administration building. The public is encouraged to attend.

At 2:00 at the American Legion in Boone, a ceremony is being conducted by Disabled American Veterans, and that's not all.

A program at Newland Elementary School at 10 a.m. will have Avery County High School JROTC busy. A 4 p.m. parade that begins at Lowes Foods and ends at Avery Square will round out the holiday in Avery County.

From 11 to 5 at Blue Ridge Parkway milepost 328.3 the Orchard at Altapass has its celebration, complete with music and homemade barbeque.

The national moment of remembrance takes place at 3 p.m. today.

One way to help soldiers and families is to donate to Disabled American Veterans. Representatives will be at Ingles and Harris Teeter in Boone to accept donations.