

PRESS RELEASE

Amid nationwide cancellations of Memorial Day activities, local community band uses technology to release composition honoring centenarian from the Greatest Generation

Westerville, OH – In the 2019 Harper Collins book “Every Man A Hero,” World War II Veteran Ray Lambert provides a firsthand account when he, as a U.S. Army Staff Sergeant and Medic, was among the first wave of soldiers storming Omaha Beach during D-Day.

Upon reading the book, which was co-authored by Jim Defelice, Westerville-area composer and musician Bob Munson became inspired to create a musical composition by the same name that, through music, gives audiences and performers an appreciation for what Allied Forces experienced during this initial phase of operations to liberate Western Europe from Nazi Germany’s control.

Munson envisioned premiering this composition inspired by Lambert, who turns 100 years old on November 26, 2020, during this year’s performance of the Westerville Community Band at his community’s signature “Field Of Heroes” event. Sponsored by the Westerville Sunrise Rotary Club, this annual event over Memorial Day weekend draws thousands of visitors to a field adorned with more than 3,000 full-size American flags to reflect, reminisce, and remember. Community members purchase the flags in advance to honor their personal heroes and then keep the flags when the display is removed.

Sadly, this year’s Field of Heroes band concert was cancelled due to the worldwide coronavirus pandemic. With “Stay at Home” orders in effect for Ohio, the Westerville Community Concert Band suspended in-person rehearsals in early March. The band is comprised of 80 members from all walks of life, ages 17 to 76, who share a common love of music. Director Larry Klabunde wanted to find a way to keep the group together and the project moving forward. The band held its first virtual rehearsal of the piece in early April. As the group became more comfortable with virtual rehearsals, Klabunde involved Munson and Eric Van Wagner, who is a local sound engineer and educator, to help produce the final cut of this ambitious project.

More than 60 individual performances were pieced together into a seven-minute video that will premiere at 10:00 a.m. Memorial Day, May 25, 2020, on the Westerville Community Bands website www.westervillebands.org. The arrangement also features a brass quintet performance and the band secured permission from Defelice to narrate portions of the book into the composition.

“Just to read Ray’s story was chilling,” said Larry Loeffert, who serves as narrator. “To have the opportunity to narrate his words of that tragic time was a challenge and an honor. I can only hope that my interpretation can, in a small way, convey the life changing experience of this true American hero.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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