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Fort Chadbourne exhibits celebrate National Medal of Honor Day

Submitted by Ann Pate
National Medal of Honor Day is Tuesday, March 25, 2014. Many Americans are unaware that this day even exists. The date was chosen because the first six Medals of Honor were awarded on March 25, 1863. The men were members of Andrews' Raiders and took part in "The Great Locomotive Chase", a raid to destroy the Western and Atlantic Railroad which was used by the Confederates as a main supply link to Chattanooga, Tennessee. On April 12, 1862, exactly one year from the outbreak of the Civil War, James Andrews, a civilian scout, along with volunteers from the Union Army, hijacked a train, known as the "General", thus beginning the great chase.

Train employees pursued the commandeered train following the raiders to Kingston, Tennessee. There, they boarded a south bound train, the "Texas", running it backwards along the opposite tracks to the Union soldiers, in pursuit of the "General".

Along the way, Andrew's Raiders did as much damage to the tracks as they possibly could, even setting a railcar on fire in order to burn a bridge, but the timbers were rain soaked from the night before and the tracks were so well built that without explosives or demolition tools, it was impossible to do more than minor damage.

Eventually the "General" ran out of fuel. Andrews and the Union soldiers abandoned the train and spread out, but were caught within the next week. The soldiers were held in Confederate P. O. W. camps, eventually being traded in a prisoner exchange.

Five of the men, including Andrews, were tried and hung. Approximately four months later, eight of the remaining Raiders escaped. Six of the men were found, returned, and brutally beaten. These six men would become the first Medal of Honor recipients. They were Jacob Parrott, William Bensinger, Robert Buffum, Elihu Mason, William Pittenger and William Reddick. Eventually, nineteen of Andrew's Raiders would be awarded the Medal of Honor.

Fort Chadbourne honors all 3,485 recipients of the Medal of Honor inside the Visitor Center/Museum. All recipients' names are inscribed on a wall listed by war or interim. Every Medal of Honor is also on display in the museum including the medals issued in the 1800s to those issued today. All branches of service are represented. Six men who served at Fort Chadbourne received the Medal of Honor for actions in the Civil War. They were Eugene Beaumont, Peter Boehm, Zenus Bliss, Joseph Hedges, David Stanley and Henry Clay Wood. Several items belonging to Medal of Honor recipients are also featured, including a Henry Rifle that belonged to Alanson Pitts Webber, and a sword that belonged to a Fort Chadbourne recipient, Major Peter Boehm who served at Fort Chadbourne in 1867. Medals from the Purge of 1917 are also displayed.

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Republican County Convention set for March 22

The Biennial County Convention for the Coke County Republican Party will be held on Saturday, March 22, at 10:00 AM in the Commissioners Courtroom at the Coke County Courthouse in Robert Lee. All concerned members of the Republican Party are invited to attend in order to elect delegates to the State Convention of the Republican Party of Texas. Coke County is entitled to send three delegates and three alternate delegates to the Convention which will be held from June 5 to June 7 at the Fort Worth Convention Center.

Other business at the Coke County Convention will be the adoption of resolutions to be forwarded to the Republican Party of Texas.

Democratic Party County Convention slated for March 22

In 2014, the Convention process of the Texas Democratic Party begins at the County and Senate District Conventions to be held on Saturday, March 22. The Coke County Democratic Party Convention will be held at the church hall next door to Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Robert Lee beginning at 10 am. The convention will



Fort Chadbourne National Medal of Honor Exhibits



be open to any qualified voter who signs an oath of affiliation with the Democratic Party.

If you are interested in participating in the convention, please be sure to bring your voter registration card for identification. Register at this link and learn about the convention process: <http://register.txdemocrats.org>.

**Regular Meeting
Commissioners Court
Monday, March 24
9 am
Commissioners Courtroom
Coke County Courthouse**