

The Bourbonnais Friendship Festival Parades Committee is proud to announce that the "Charlie Company", Company C 1st Battalion 178th Infantry Airmobile Army National Guard division has been chosen to serve as Grand Marshals for the festival's Grand Parade. The members of Charlie Company recently returned from Afghanistan in August of 2009 after a 9 month deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Several members of the company will appear in the Grand Parade as Grand Marshals, along with Olivet Nazarene University ROTC Cadets, some which are also Charlie Company members.

While in Afghanistan, Kankakee based Charlie Company soldiers, along with 6 other units of the Illinois Army National Guard, formed "Task Force Bayonet". They helped trained the Afghan army and national police, built schools and irrigation systems, dug wells and patrolled dangerous territory.

The Charlie Company were chosen by the Parades Committee to honor their service to the United States and to celebrate all military personnel who deploy overseas to protect the freedoms that we enjoy here. If it weren't for the millions of servicemen and women who have served our country in this century and the last, we would not be able to enjoy our freedoms. One of those, freedom of religion, allows every American to celebrate whichever holiday they choose, with their families, in a peaceful country, without fear of persecution.

This year's festival theme "Jingle Bells in June ~ the Spirit of Giving in Bourbonnais" celebrates our willingness to give of ourselves to help our fellowmen. That spirit is exemplified in the actions of Charlie Company over the past year. We salute them for their dedication and devotion and willingness to spend holidays away from their families, so that the rest of us can be together peacefully.

The Grand Parade will be held on Sunday, June 27 at 1:00 p.m. The parade begins at the corner of Main Street and Monroe Ave (corner where Subway and Burrito Loco located), travels north on Main Street, turns onto Rte 102 (Main Street NW) and travels northwest, ending at the Village of Bourbonnais Municipal Center. The grassy area, otherwise known as Children's Memorial Park, between Jimmy John's and the Dairy Queen is a handicapped, senior citizen viewing area and is a NO THROW zone, where parade participants are not allowed to throw candy and other treats to parade viewers.

Any business or organization is welcome to participate in the Grand Parade. There is no entry fee. Entry forms are available online at www.bourbonnaisfriendshipfestival.com or at Schoop's Restaurant at 515 S Main St, Bourbonnais.