

8th Annual American Legion Armistice Day Race

Tuesday, 11 Nov 1941 at Legion Hall in Uptown Butte

Flames of War

“Flames of war in Europe licking the shores of America added a somber touch to this year’s celebration of the gladsome day, the end of World War No. 1. ... With reverence for the American flag as practically the only symbol left of freedom in the world, Butte yesterday took note of another Armistice Day. ... Promptly at 11 o’clock the Legion bombs were heard bursting over the city. Shortly after the aerial bombs climbed high into the sky and burst with a thunderous roar, four rockets carrying American flags were shot into the air,” so reported by the Montana Standard.

Recovery of the launched flags was treated as a contest in which the first three people to find and return the wayward flags to Legion Hall would receive a \$1 reward. The first returned flag was found near the Parrot Mine, and it was returned to the Hall within 6 minutes.

At noon the Legion’s 2-mile race was held under the direction of C. Owen Smithers. The race started at Legion Hall on East Broadway west to Dakota, south to Park, east to Warren, north to Broadway and then back to the Legion Hall.

The Standard report continued that “the real thrill of the morning” came at the finish of the Legion’s 2-mile race, where Christian Brothers High School’s “agile, deep-chested” senior Joe Lynchehan burst through the finish tape in a time of 11:45, only 5 seconds ahead of the defending champion, Marty Kearney who ran attired in his street clothes and who was listed as an alumni of Christian Brothers. The two runners completed the first two-thirds of the route running abreast before Lynchehan throttled ahead of Kearney on East Broadway.

2 mile: 1, Joe Lynchehan, BC, 11:45; 2, Martin Kearney, BC Alumni, 11:50; 3, Fred Calcaterra, BH, 14:20; 4, John Frankovich, BH; 5, Robert Johnson, BH; 6, Ray Nystrand, BH; 7, Peter Prlain, BH; 8, Charles Michaud, BC.

The day’s activities also included open house affairs for Legionnaires and other ex-service men and a “huge” 7:30 p.m. parade including, among other groups, half a dozen brightly uniformed drum corps led by high-stepping drum majors. When those drum lines broke formation, some stayed to stage individual demonstrations at Legion Hall. Of particular note was the Miners’ Union Corps which marched in “digging” overalls and mining helmets with lamps fixed. The evening continued with dinners and dances.