



*The 3rd Annual*  
**Flag Day Festival**  
Main St., Somerville, NJ

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**SOMERVILLE ELKS AND AT&T HONOR  
OPERATION JERSEY CARES FOUNDER JOHN DORELL  
AT THIRD ANNUAL FLAG DAY FESTIVAL**

***Saturday, June 11, 2016  
11:30am – 4pm  
Somerset County Courthouse Steps, Main Street, Somerville***

SOMERVILLE, N.J., June 11, 2016 - The American flag has been a symbol of our country's freedoms and ideals for more than two centuries. In downtown Somerville on Saturday, June 11 the public is invited to celebrate the American Flag, the country's most revered symbol and to enjoy the festivities during the third annual Flag Day Festival.

Somerville Mayor Brian Gallagher and Somerset County Freeholder Director Patricia Walsh and members of the Somerville Elks Lodge #1068 will be among the speakers to kick off the festival with AT&T volunteers at 12 noon. The program will include a re-enactment of the historic photograph of Marines raising the American Flag on Iwo Jima on February 23, 1945. The Somerville Elks will also conduct a special "Flag Day" flag ceremony, normally performed within its lodge, to commemorate the birth of the American Flag and remind attendees of the importance of honoring the American Flag as a symbol of our freedoms.

John Dorell, a resident of Somerset County and founder of [Operation Jersey Cares](#), a nonprofit dedicated to helping our troops overseas and those who have returned home, will also be honored with the Flag Day Festival "Defender of Freedom" Award, presented by AT&T.

"We are so honored to recognize John's patriotic spirit and tireless dedication to our troops serving overseas and those who have returned home," said Jill Marsh, Exalted Ruler Somerville Elks Lodge #1068. "When AT&T volunteered to present this award which honors a citizen who exemplifies the spirit of our American flag, John's nomination stood out. His personal commitment to find ways to support our troops while teaching each generation to respect those who have served is a shining example of what 'Flag Day' should mean for everyone."

Dorell served in the Army National Guard for six years and retired in 1967 to return home to New Jersey to run his family business in Somerville. Over the years, he also gave back to his local community with an emphasis on supporting veteran's services and in 2007 founded Operation Jersey Cares to support troops and military families. Since then the organization has shipped over 500,000 pounds of goods to soldiers overseas to help lift the spirits of those serving our country and to supplement military rations.



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“AT&T is honored to recognize John Dorell for his efforts to make every soldier deployed and every veteran at home feel appreciated for their service to our country,” said J. Michael Schweder, Mid-Atlantic president AT&T. “We hope the public comes out in force to enjoy all of the ‘red, white and blue’ festivities, learn some interesting facts about the American flag and support our brave service men and women at home and abroad.”

AT&T New Jersey Pioneers will be on hand to teach attendees the proper way to fold the American Flag. The pocket-sized American flags will be mailed to U.S. troops. The Pioneers are also collecting used cell phones from the public that will be donated to [Cell Phones for Soldiers](#). The organization uses the proceeds from recycled cell phones to buy long-distance calling cards for military stationed overseas and home so they can connect with their loved ones. AT&T Pioneers are employees and retirees who volunteer and give back to their local communities. Worn flags will be collected for proper retirement by the American Legion.

The public is encouraged to bring with them donation items to support Operation Jersey Cares including instant oatmeal, canned tuna or chicken, granola bars, beef jerky, trail mix, or everyday items including razors, toothbrushes, toothpaste and shampoo. Veterans and service members in attendance will receive a free ice cream from the ice cream vendor.

The event is free to the public and will feature live music including a performance from [Lauren Bonnell](#), a 19-year old singer and songwriter who has nearly 20 million YouTube views. Children will be entertained by a bouncy house and carnival games, and are encouraged to complete in a scavenger hunt on the grounds for prizes. Revolutionary war re-enactors will bring alive our local history. Historic military vehicles and muskets and cool SWAT vehicles will also be on display and attendees will also see a drill with New Jersey’s Revolutionary War Heard’s Brigade.

Flag Day is proudly sponsored by AT&T, Star 99.1 and Fulton Bank. It is part of the Somerville Elks’ commitment to their local communities through programs that help children grow up healthy and drug-free, by undertaking projects that address unmet needs and by honoring the service and sacrifice of our military and veterans.

More details on what to bring for the troops and the event itself can be found on the event’s website [www.FlagDayFestival.org](http://www.FlagDayFestival.org).