June Day Parade, Largest Such Event on East Coast, Is a Massachusetts Tradition Starts at Faneuil Hall, stops at Boston Common, then on to Old South Church

By: Alex Peña (COM’18)

In a tradition dating back to 1638—one nearly as old as the commonwealth of Massachusetts—the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company (AHAC) gathers on the first Monday of June each year to reenact the commissioning of the company’s new command officers. The oldest chartered military organization in the western hemisphere, AHAC was formed in 1638 to train young officers for service in the commonwealth’s various militias. Today, it works to preserve the historic and patriotic traditions of Boston and the commonwealth.

The June Day Parade begins at Faneuil Hall at noon, proceeds to the Boston Common, and concludes at the Old South Church in Copley Square.

Billed as the largest military parade on the East Coast, it will feature AHAC members along with historic military groups from across New England, including personnel from the USS Constitution, Massachusetts National Guard members, and other historical groups from Lexington and Concord. This year members of the Washington Light Infantry from Charleston, S.C., will also participate.
The parade stops at the common for a drumhead election ceremony, where outgoing AHAC command staff relinquish their commissions to the Massachusetts governor (Karyn Polito, the lieutenant governor, presides this year) and incoming command staff accept their commissions. A volley of cannons will occur during the ceremony. The parade then proceeds to the Old South Church for a memorial service for the company’s recently deceased members.

The June Day Parade is Monday, June 4, from noon to 3:30 pm. It begins at Faneuil Hall, 4 South Market St., Boston, proceeds up Tremont Street to the Boston Common, then on to the Old South Church, 645 Boylston St. Take an MBTA Green Line trolley to Government Center. Find more information here.

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