

DOWNTOWN BEDFORD VIRGINIA

D-DAY PLAQUES

- 1 Centertown Plaza
- 2 Bedford Presbyterian Church
- 3 Bedford's Factories/Smyth
- 4 Green's Drugstore
- 5 Olde Liberty Station
- 6 Bedford High School
- 7 Bedford Museum & Genealogical Library
- 8 County Courthouse

COMMUNITY SITES

- 1 Wharton Gardens
- 2 Market Pavilion
- 3 County Administration Building
- 4 Bedford Municipal Building
- 5 Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce
- Bedford Public Library
- Post Office

HISTORIC SITES

- A Avenel
- B Bedford Boys Tribute Center
- C Meeting House

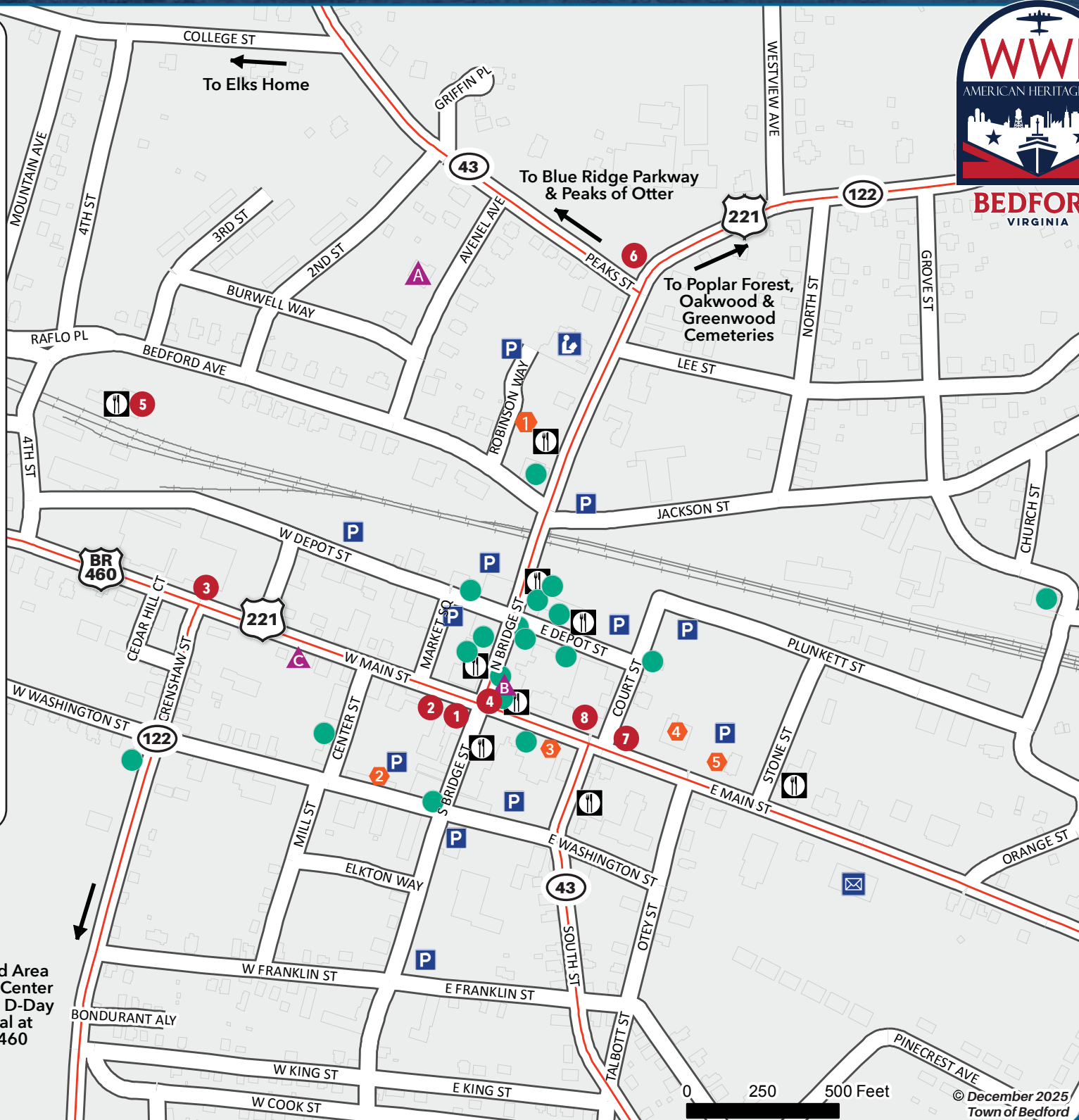
SHOPPING & ART

DINING

PUBLIC PARKING



To Bedford Area
Welcome Center
& National D-Day
Memorial at
Route 460



1 CENTERTOWN PLAZA



In February 1941, Co. A of the 116th Regiment, VA National Guard, kissed mothers and girlfriends goodbye and filed onto a waiting train at Bedford's depot. By the end of the year, America was at war, and the "Bedford Boys" were in it for the duration. Nineteen men from Co. A, and another Bedford Boy from Co. F, would perish on the beaches of Normandy. The loss of 20 young men was the highest-known per capita loss of any community in the United States on D-Day. In addition, more than 130 other young men from Bedford would fall elsewhere in the war.

2 BEDFORD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



On the evening of June 6, 1944, the town of Bedford gathered here for a special prayer service to mark the long-awaited D-Day. More than 300 folks attended—some standing outdoors under the windows to hear—then returned home to listen intently to the radio for news. At that point, no one knew how many local boys might have landed in France, or if any had died. This was D-Day for

Bedford – uncertainty, hope, and fear in measure.

3 BEDFORD'S FACTORIES/ SMYTH

Like most throughout the nation, Bedford's factories converted to wartime production during WWII. This factory, formerly Piedmont Label, was in the printing business; elsewhere Rubatex (*rubber goods*), Hampton Looms (*woolen textiles*), Belding Hemingway (*rayon thread*), Bedford Pulp and Paper Company, and others made important contributions to the war effort.

4 GREEN'S DRUGSTORE

At the corner of Bridge and Main Streets, Green's was a popular gathering place for locals. It was also the location of the Western Union telegraph counter, where telegrams were sent or received, too often beginning with the dreaded words "the Secretary of War desires me to express his deep regret..." Nearby, learn more of the story at the Bedford Boys Tribute Center.

5 OLDE LIBERTY STATION



Now a popular restaurant, this was for many years Bedford's railroad station, built 1881. It was from this depot that the Bedford Boys departed for the service in February 1941, later to be followed by hundreds of local men and women serving in uniform.

6 BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL

On February 17, 1941 the Bedford Boys attended a dance and farewell party at this school, which many had attended. For many, it would be the last time they would walk its halls. Outside, a plaque commemorates alumni who were killed in World War II.

7 BEDFORD MUSEUM & GENEALOGICAL LIBRARY

The museum, located in the beautiful 1895 former Masonic Lodge, is dedicated to telling centuries of the Bedford story, from the colonial era to present times. A special exhibit highlights the Bedford Boys and the local contributions to winning World War II.

8 COUNTY COURTHOUSE



The local courthouse served as the armory for Company A before the war, and housed various wartime offices during. Outside is the Bedford Boys Monument, dedicated in 1954, the first such memorial to D-Day in the nation. Mounted on a stone from Normandy, a plaque reads "Erected by the Parker-Hoback Post, 29th Division Association, in memory of the Bedford County men of the 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Division, who gave their lives in preparation for and the participation in the Normandy Invasion and later battles of World War II."