VETERANS DAY SALUTE

Honoring the brave men and women who have served to protect our freedom.

American Legion Leaders Visit Sidney, Highlighting Veterans and Youth Programs

Annual Delaware County stop includes history museum tour, community lunch and wreath-laying ceremony; local commander reports about 655 members county-wide

By Lillian Browne

SIDNEY - American Legion leaders from across New York visited Sidney Oct. 27 as part of the organization's annual state department visitation, highlighting programs for veterans, youth and local communities while recognizing the work of Delaware County's Legion family.

The day included a visit to the Sidney Historical Association and Museum, 44 Grand Street, lunch at Cafe 55 and a wreath-laying ceremony at the Sidney Veterans Memorial Park on River Street.

The wreath was placed in remembrance of veterans who have died, including those honored at the memorial. The day concluded with a dinner at Sidney's Charles L. Jacobi American Legion Post 183.

Delaware County American Legion Commander Patricia Svoboda served as master of ceremonies and helped coordinate the visit with members of the county legion family, who assisted in welcoming the state representatives and other guests.

The annual visitation brings newly elected state legion leaders into local communities, giving them an opportunity to meet members, learn about local efforts and raise support for their projects, Svoboda said.



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Sidney Veterans Memorial Park, 116 River Street, Sidney.

"It's a way of honoring them and also for them to get to know the people in the state, and then also to raise money for their projects," she said.

Svoboda serves in three Legion leadership roles: adjutant for Margaretville Post 216, commander for Delaware County and adjutant for the Sixth District. She also oversees the county's Boys State program.

The county has American Legion posts in Stamford, Roxbury, Margaretville, Downsville, Walton, Sidney, Delhi, Franklin and Hancock. Svoboda estimated approximately 655 members are enrolled across the county's posts.

Youth programs and veterans' services

Youth engagement was a central theme of the State Commander Thomas Schreck's remarks, with an emphasis on American Legion Boys State.

Boys State is a week-long citizenship and leadership program for high school students who have completed their junior year. Participants learn how government operates by taking part in a simulated government, with students assuming roles in local, county and state government.



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Delaware County American Legion First Vice Commander James Omahen and Thomas Schreck, commander of The American Legion Department of New York, makes remarks at the Sidney American Legion Post Tuesday, Oct. 27.

The program is designed to develop an understanding of civic responsibility, public service and democratic government.

Svoboda said she and the state commander have both been involved with the program for years. She said the Legion's youth work also includes scholarships and an oratorical contest.

State American Legion Auxiliary President Lora Rowe highlighted a creative arts project for veterans living with post-traumatic stress disorder or military sexual trauma, known as MST, or both. The program uses activities such as painting, music and other forms of artistic expression as therapeutic outlets.

Detachment Commander Edward Hooke discussed two additional initiatives: the Oxford Guild, an outreach and advocacy arm of the New York State Veterans Home at Oxford, and ClearPath for Veterans.

The Oxford Guild supports veterans at the Oxford veterans home, providing assistance beyond what the facility's state-funded operations can cover. ClearPath for Veterans, which serves veterans in the region, organizes activities and offers resources that encourage camaraderie and connection. Svoboda cited group meals, kayaking events and other activities as examples of its work.

She said the projects reflect the Legion's broader mission of supporting veterans while encouraging community involvement and service.

A veterans' organization with a community mission

The American Legion describes itself as the nation's largest wartime veterans organization, devoted to mutual helpfulness and committed to mentoring youth, sponsoring community programs, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting national security and supporting fellow service members and veterans.

Svoboda said the Legion is often misunderstood by people who associate local posts primarily with their buildings or canteens.

"The American Legion is not a bar; it is a service organization," she said.

She explained that local posts provide veterans with opportunities for camaraderie and con-

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American Legion Leaders...

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nection, while also supporting youth programs, scholarships, veterans' services and community activities.

Svoboda joined the Women's Army Corps in 1976, served on active duty until 1980 and later joined the Army Reserve. She was activated during Desert Shield and Desert Storm in January 1990 and worked at the Armed Services Blood Program office in Washington, D.C. She retired from the military in 2004 and joined the American Legion in 1990.

She said the organization appealed to her as both a veterans' group and a community service organization.

"It was a veterans' organization - that was first and foremost, but it was a community-oriented service group," she said.

Svoboda said she would like to see the Legion continue its work as an advocate for veterans before Congress while maintaining its support for young people and local communities.

She identified declining population and limited public awareness of the Legion's service work as challenges to maintaining membership.

She pointed to changes in school enrollment as one indication of the region's population decline, noting that Margaretville Central School had more than 900 students when her oldest child graduated in 2008 and now has roughly 300 students, including prekindergarten.



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American Legion members, from left, Patricia Svoboda, Delaware County Commander Thomas Schreck, commander of The American Legion Department of New York, and Linda Belmont, Walton American Legion Post Ladies Auxiliary president, tour the Sidney Historical Association and Museum Tuesday, Oct. 27.

She also said people who join Legion online should contact their local post to ensure their membership is assigned to the community where they live. Otherwise, new members may be placed in a general post and not connected with their local organization.

Membership and local involvement

Membership in The American Legion is open to eligible veterans and current service members who meet the organization's service requirements. Under the LEGION Act, the eligibility period extends from Dec. 7, 1941, to the present, covering the current war era. Prospective members can contact a local post to learn about eligibility and joining.

Svoboda encouraged interested veterans to connect with a nearby post rather than simply enrolling online, so they can become involved in local activities and meet other veterans.

For more information about the organization's mission and programs and connection to local posts email Svoboda at alnypost216@gmail.com or call her at 845.586.3563.



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Following the ceremony Tuesday, Oct. 27, veterans, legionnaires and auxiliary members reflect at the Sidney Veterans Memorial.

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8 Ways to Honor Veterans



Millions of people make considerable sacrifices to protect the freedoms of their fellow citizens. According to the Pew Research Center and data from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Census Bureau, there are currently more than 18 million living veterans in the United States.

The term "veteran" refers to a person who served in the active military, naval, air service, or space service and was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. In the U.S., there are actually five types of protected veterans, according to the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974. Under VEVRAA, a veteran may be classified as a disabled veteran, recently separated veteran, active duty wartime or campaign badge veteran, or Armed Forces service medal veteran.

Veterans deserve respect and admiration all year long, but also get their own holiday each November. Veterans Day celebrates veterans' patriotism and willingness to sacrifice and serve. This Veterans Day, people can consider these eight unique ways to honor the veterans in their community.

1. Attend events. Organize or participate in local Veterans Day celebrations, such as parades and ceremonial events.

2. Get involved with veterans' affairs. Support veterans by volunteering with organizations that assist them, such as the VA, local veteran's groups, VA hospitals, or charities dedicated to veteran services.

3. Petition for veteran speakers. Reach out to schools, scout troops or other groups and arrange opportunities for veterans to share their stories and contributions. Learning about the sacrifices these men and women made can heighten individuals' appreciation for veterans.

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2026 Delaware County Veterans Day Commemorations



Andes

Thursday, Nov. 5 at 1 p.m. Andes Central School will host a Veterans Day luncheon. RSVPs from veterans were required by Oct. 30.

Delhi

Tuesday, Nov. 10 – Delaware Academy Central School District at Delhi will host its annual Veterans Day assembly which will begin at 8:15 a.m. with breakfast provided for area veterans. After breakfast at 8:50 a.m. the assembly will begin with performances by high school, middle school, and elementary school students. Contact the main office to RSVP at 607-746-1300.

Downsville

Tuesday, Nov. 10 – Downsville Central School will host a Veterans Day event at 12:45 p.m. with a luncheon, followed by a ceremony at 1:30 p.m. in the gymnasium. Veterans, to RSVP call 607-363-2106 by Friday, Oct. 30.

Wednesday, Nov. 11 – Legion Post 167 will hold a Veterans Day ceremony at the Colchester Community Church monument starting at 11 a.m. on Main Street.

Franklin

Tuesday, Nov. 10 - Franklin Central School will host a Veteran's Day program to honor the community's veterans. A breakfast for veterans starts at 8:15 a.m. and the program starts at 9:15.

Hancock

Hancock Central School will welcome veterans at their morning program **Thursday, Nov. 12** at 10:25 a.m. Following the program veterans are invited to stay for coffee and donuts.

Harpersfield

The Col. Harper Grange, 170 Wilcox Road, Harpersfield, will host a free dinner for veterans and a spouse or guest **Saturday, Nov. 7** at 3 p.m. RSVP to 607-434-6613 to reserve a seat.

Margaretville

Margaretville Central school will honor veterans **Tuesday, Nov. 10** at 8:30 a.m. with a ceremony and breakfast.

Roxbury

Tuesday, Nov. 10, Roxbury Central School will host a Veterans Day assembly at 1:30 p.m., followed by a luncheon for veterans. The public is welcome to attend.

Sidney

Nov. 11 – Sidney VFW Veterans Day event with meal to follow starts at 6 p.m. at the Sidney VFW Post 7914, 133 West Main Street, Sidney.

South Kortright

Friday, Nov. 13 at South Kortright Central School, a Veterans Day program will be hosted at 2 p.m. by Ms. Katie Wayman's 12th grade Participation in Government class. Veterans are invited to attend but no reservation or RSVP necessary.

Unadilla

Tuesday, Nov. 10, the Unatego Elementary School will have a Veterans Day breakfast from 8:30–9:15 a.m. and program from 9:30-10 a.m. to honor local veterans who have a connection to elementary students, facility, and staff at the school. Reservations by Nov. 9, please - veterans should call 607-369-6200 or email kbarber@unatego.stier.org if you would like to attend.

Walton

Nov. 10 – Townsend Elementary School will host a Veterans Day program with songs, discussions, and light refreshments starting at 8:30 a.m. To RSVP call 607-865-5220.

Nov. 11 – A Veterans Day parade will form on Gardiner Place at 10:30 a.m., and at approximately 10:50 a.m. will march to the World War II Memorial in front of the Castle on the Delaware (former armory) on Stockton Avenue, where a ceremony will be held at 11 a.m.

8 Ways...

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4. Support the families of veterans. Reach out to veterans' families, who also must make sacrifices and concessions. Anything from shopping, babysitting, doing chores, or making a meal can help the families of veterans.

5. Make a donation. If finances allow, make contributions to reputable charities that provide services for veterans like those that offer mental health counseling or job placement services. If there isn't a charity that fits with your vision, begin one.

6. Hire veterans to work. If you are a business owner or hiring manager, consider hiring veterans for open positions at your company. It can be challenging to re-enter the workforce after service, so make it known that your firm welcomes veterans.

7. Offer personal acknowledgements. Take the time to speak to veterans and thank them for their service. If possible, when dining out, ask the server if you can pay for the meal of a veteran who also is dining that day.

8. Don't forget the fallen veterans. Although Memorial Day is designed to honor those who lost their lives through military service, people still can honor the fallen veterans on Veterans Day by sharing stories or placing flags at veteran cemeteries.

Veterans Day is celebrated on November 11, marking an opportunity to express one's gratitude and support for the scores of veterans who have served honorably.



















