

THE PATRIOT

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Memorial Day in Huron County

The residents of Huron County honored Memorial Day in cities and villages.

Norwalk held its annual Memorial Day parade, followed by a ceremony in Woodlawn Cemetery. Mayor Dave Light welcomed the crowd. Scott Tester was the featured speaker and St. Paul High School student Caleb Schwab, winner of the Citizenship Award, also spoke. There were patriotic performances by the Norwalk High School band.

There also was a Memorial Day celebration at the Norwalk Memorial Home parking lot, which included a three-volley salute. "Taps" was performed afterward at American Legion Post 41 in Norwalk.



Monroeville resident William Stang (left), a U.S. Army veteran, lays a wreath at the World War I monument at Commons Park in Monroeville during the village Memorial Day ceremony. Assisting him is Greg Moore, who represented American Legion Post 547 in Monroeville. Tom Stieber, who served in the Army, was the parade marshal. (PHOTO BY BONNIE GFELL)

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HCVSO website



The Huron County Veteran Service Office has a website, www.huroncountyvets.com.

Among the information on the website is a financial assistance application form, a calendar of veteran-related community events, information on various veteran organizations, a link to a PDF of the HCVSO newsletter and more.



Members and advisors of the Rumblin Riders 4-H Club take time for a photo while placing flags at veterans' headstones for Memorial Day at the Hartland Cemetery in Clarksfield. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Memorial Day in New London began with a breakfast at American Legion Post 292. Later was a three-volley salute at Grove Cemetery and a parade in the village that started at the American Legion.

In Monroeville, village resident William Stang, a U.S. Army veteran, laid a wreath at the World War I monument at Commons Park. Greg Moore, who represented American Legion Post 547 in Monroeville, assisted him. Police Chief Gary Lyons was the featured speaker and Tom Stieber, who served in the Army, was the parade marshal.

The annual Memorial Day parade in Bellevue ended at the city cemetery. VFW Post 1238 hosted a lunch for veterans.

In Willard, the Huron County Veteran Service Office and Willard Crimson Flashes marching band participated in the annual parade. U.S. Marine Corps veteran Shawn Daley, of Sandusky, was the featured speaker during the subsequent ceremony in Greenwood Cemetery. *(See page 3 for photos and a story.)*

Two 4-H clubs also helped honor deceased veterans. Members of the Busy Needles placed flags at the Collins Cemetery while the Rumblin Riders performed similar volunteer work at the Hartland Cemetery in Clarksfield.

Memorial Day in Willard



U.S. Marine Corps veteran Shawn Daley delivers his speech during the Memorial Day ceremony at Greenwood Cemetery in Willard.

WILLARD — Memorial Day is a time to “honor the loyalty and bravery of our fallen in this noble calling” of military service, said veteran Shawn Daley, the featured speaker during the annual Memorial Day ceremony in Willard.

Daley, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps, said while Memorial Day “is typically spent recalling the valor of men and women who died in combat, we must never forget those quiet professionals who answered that noble calling to serve the people of the United States in peace time as well.”

David Simpson, chaplain of American Legion Post 514 in Willard, offered a prayer to open the ceremony in Greenwood Cemetery. The Willard Crimson Flashes marching band played “The Star Spangled Banner” and recent Willard High School graduate Jacklyn Harris performed “Taps.”



Members of a rifle detail stand at parade rest during the Memorial Day ceremony at Greenwood Cemetery in Willard.

National Purple Heart Day in Bellevue

BELLEVUE — The Purple Heart award “represents our freedom, selfless service and valor.”



Cheryl Fout, of the Marine Corps League, salutes while honoring Purple Heart recipients, their families, Gold Star families and Blue Star Mothers.

That was part of the opening message from Purple Heart recipient Robert Ward (retired U.S. Army) during the National Purple Heart Day program Aug. 7 at the Fallen Soldiers Memorial in Bellevue. The Purple Heart is awarded in the name of the President of the United States of America to those U.S. military personnel who were wounded or killed while serving on or after April 5, 1917.

Bellevue Mayor Kevin Strecker spoke about the importance of National Purple Heart Day before the program started.

“I think it’s huge for our city, specifically being named a Purple Heart City and Purple Heart Trail,” he said. “I’m hoping that some of the ceremonies we have like this here today will make us come together and be stronger for the appreciation of what our men and women in the military have done for us

and I think it’s immeasurable. I think it’s been kinda lost lately; I want that to be our No. 1 thing, that that’s what we’re here for.”

Volunteers needed!

Volunteers are needed for two upcoming events: The Huron County Veteran of the Year golf outing at Millstone Hills Golf Club in New London on Aug. 28 and the Veteran of the Year banquet at VFW Post 1238 in Bellevue on Dec. 4.

If you’re interested, text Mindy Soisson-Calhoun at 419-677-3385.

The Rev. Dr. Diane Carter, pastor of St. Paul’s United Church of Christ in Bellevue, delivered the invocation and benediction. Purple Heart recipients unfurled and raised a flag in honor of her late father, Cpl. Wayne Carter, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1960 through 1964.



This is the new Purple Heart memorial at the Fallen Soldiers Memorial in downtown Bellevue.

SFC Jerry Risner, of the Ohio National Guard, also a Purple Heart recipient, was the main speaker.

Norwalk graduate supports veterans

During the funeral for her great-grandfather, Alyssa Godfrey first experienced the importance of the military life and a veteran's legacy.

The Milan resident has turned that into her platform for the American Royal Beauties scholarship pageant. Godfrey, a 2007 Norwalk High School graduate, earned the title Miss Midwest for 2020-2021.

"My platform is military and veteran's family support," she said. "My platform has a broad range. I look to do anything from giving a ride to the doctor's office (to) giving a ride to the grocery store to making a care package for your son overseas because he needs something cool. ... Just to know he's being thought about and remembered.

"Over the travels of the country, I made a ton of friends with Army, Navy, Air Force and the Marine Corps (veterans); I just made lifetime friends. Once you're the wife of a Marine, you know the life, the challenges, what they're going through — the ups, the downs, the good, the bad and all the tests in between."

As a Marine's wife for about 12 years, Godfrey learned how close Marine families are.

"Once you spend time with the veterans, you kinda realize that sometimes they are struggling a little bit and you see that struggle in their eyes and you're like, 'I wish I could help you more' — and that's what drives me," she said.

It's not unusual for a veteran to call Godfrey for help in the middle of the night, "when the demons are getting a little ugly."

"I like being there and them knowing that they have someone that they can call," she said.

Her platform is vital to the way she lives her life.

"I'm just little ol' me. I grew up here in Norwalk. Everybody knows me, everybody knows of me, they know how to get a hold of me and even if they don't, I love when people send me somebody and I get a call from somebody who goes, 'Hey, I am just having a rough day and my buddy said that I could call you.' That's just one more person I have made an impact on and that's why I do it," Godfrey said.



Alyssa Godfrey, of Milan, is Miss Midwest for the American Royal Beauties scholarship pageant for 2020-2021. Her platform is military and veteran's family support. She attended the Celebrating Veterans outreach event May 14 at Sheri's Coffee House in Norwalk.

Veterans in the community



Matt Raymond, director of the Huron County Veteran Service Office, accepts an award certificate from Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Members of the DAR made the presentation June 14 for the Huron County Veteran Service Commission properly using and displaying the U.S. flag.



U.S. Army veteran Cyrus Lewis (left), of Norwalk, stands with Shawn Daley, benefits counselor for the Huron County Veteran Service Office, during the Celebrating Veterans outreach event July 28 at the Copper Top Bake Shop in Bellevue. (PHOTO BY EXCLUSIVELY BA)



A veteran flag detail leads the Fourth of July parade in Norwalk. Behind members of VFW Post 2743 and American Legion Post 41 in Norwalk is the Marine Corps League color guard. (PHOTO BY NORWALK REFLECTOR)



Members and advisors of the Busy Needles 4-H Club take time for a photo while distributing flags at veterans' gravesites in the Collins Cemetery for Memorial Day. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

1940s-era veteran shares his story

Ernie Borsich started serving his country two months after World War II ended.

He was attending Lorain High School when he was drafted into the U.S. Army.

“I was in my senior year,” said Borsich, 93, who was expecting to be drafted. “I was not surprised.”

Borsich, who has lived in Norwalk since 1986, said he didn’t necessarily have any fear of being in the Army since ‘by that time the war was over.’

His service started Nov. 6, 1945. Borsich’s basic training was at Camp Atterbury in Indiana. He remembers doing basic physical fitness and learning how to shoot a rifle.

“It didn’t seem like anything out of the ordinary,” said the veteran, who didn’t find shooting all that difficult.



Ernie Borsich, 93, of Norwalk, shares his time of handling railroad security in Germany in the late 1940s.

he had he was supposed to report it to his commanding officer and keep the person in custody.

One of the train stops involved prisoners of war.

“We had 1,200 German POWs and we dropped them off in Liverpool, England,” Borsich said. “I’m only guessing that they were turned over to England.”

Borsich eventually went overseas. His barracks were in Helmstedt, Germany and he was there for about 16 months. He was attached to the 379th Triple A Battalion.

“We were on security duty,” Borsich said. “So we rode trains from a town called Brunswick ... and we went into Berlin.”

He estimated he took that route dozens of times.

“We were watching the trains so there were no trespassers,” Borsich said. “We were looking for people who broke into trains, trying to probably steal food.”

While he never found any culprits on the box cars, but if

Rides available

The Huron County Veteran Service Office continues to offer transportation services to any medical appointment or other services, such as errands to the post office or grocery store.



At least 48 hours before your appointment, call 419-668-4150. Be ready to provide the following: Your full name; phone number; date, time and location of your appointment; and the last four numbers of your Social Security number. If you request a ride for errands, you will need to list all the stops our driver will need to make that day.

Ryan Wolfe or Cary Ashby, of the transportation department, will call you the day before your appointment to confirm your ride.

Free trips to Nat'l Veterans Memorial and Museum

Did you know the Huron County Veteran Service Commission has been offering free trips to the National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus?



Any Huron County veteran, surviving spouse, Gold Star family, and a guest are eligible for free admission — which includes a guided tour — and transportation to the museum in downtown Columbus. The trips are on the second Wednesday of every month through December 2022. A Huron County Veteran Service Office van leaves the office at 7:30 a.m. and returns about 4:30 p.m. We are located at 185 Shady Lane Drive, Suite C in Norwalk, which is at the back of the Huron County Department of Job & Family Services building.

To reserve a spot or request more information, call the office at 419-668-4150. All reservations, which are on a first-come first-serve basis, must be made at least one week before the trip.

Upcoming veteran events

August

- Monday Night Meals, 5-7 p.m. through December at American Legion Post 547, Monroeville
- 21 - VFW Post 2743, Norwalk picnic (members only)
- 28 - Huron County Veteran of the Year golf outing at Millstone Hills Golf Club, New London
- 29 - U.S. Marine Corps Reserve birthday

September

- 11 - Salute to the Services, 7-9 a.m. at New London Recreation Park
- 11 - 9-11 Moving Tribute 5K Run/Walk, at 7 a.m. starting at Huron County Memorial Park, Norwalk
- 11 - 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony, 8:25-10:30 a.m. at Huron County Memorial Park, Norwalk
- 11 - 9-11 Ceremony, 9:50 a.m. at Fallen Soldiers Memorial, Bellevue
- 11 - Reverse raffle at American Legion Post 547, Monroeville; social hour at 1 p.m. For tickets, see a member or go to Post 547.
- 11 - Girl Scouts Silent Walk, Willard; starts at 8 p.m. at Blossom Centre
- 13, 20, 27 - Fish fry at American Legion Post 547, Monroeville, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 5:30-8 p.m.
- 18 - U.S. Air Force birthday
- 18 - Marine Corps League gun raffle drawing at 4 p.m. and picnic at 6 p.m. at American Legion Post 41, Norwalk

October

- 8, 15, 22, 29 - Fish fry at American Legion Post 547, Monroeville, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 5:30-8 p.m.
- 13 - U.S. Navy birthday
- 26 - National Day of the Deployed

November

- 5, 12, 19, 26 - Fish fry at American Legion Post 547, Monroeville, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 5:30-8 p.m.
- 6 - Honor Run 5K Run/Walk at Willard High School, 9 a.m.
- 10 - U.S. Marine Corps birthday
- 10 - Willard City Schools drive-in Veterans Day program, 9 a.m.
- 11 - Veterans Day
- 13 - Marine Corps Birthday Ball at Beirkeller, Bellevue; happy hour starts at 4 p.m.; for tickets, call Cheryl Fout at 419-405-5857
- 13 - Gun raffle at American Legion Post 547, Monroeville, 4-7 p.m.

December

- 3, 10, 17 - Fish fry at American Legion Post 547, Monroeville, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 5:30-8 p.m.
- 4 - Huron County Veteran of the Year banquet at VFW Post 1238, Bellevue; cocktail hour begins at 4:30 p.m.
- 7 - Pearl Harbor Day (80th anniversary)