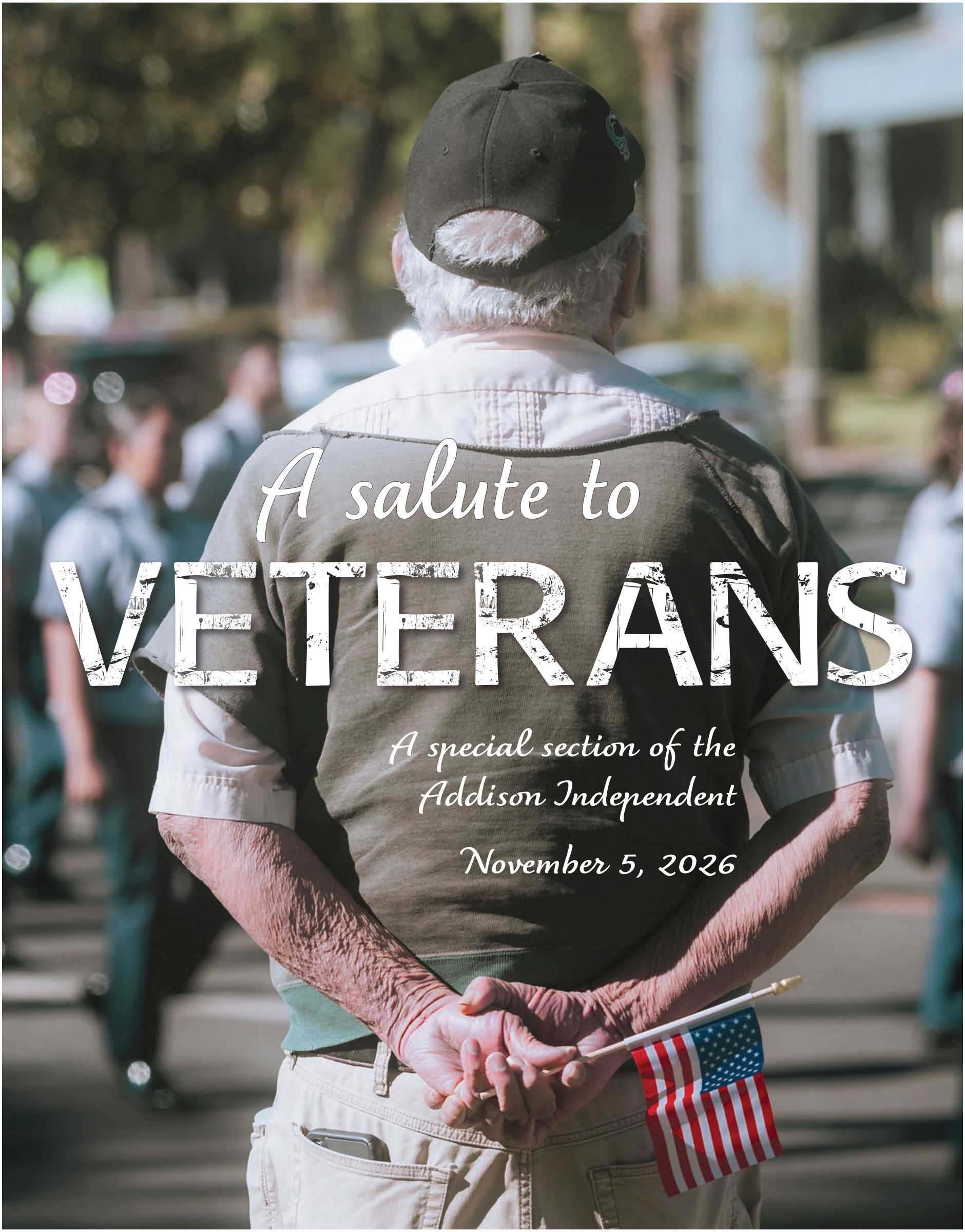


A salute to VETERANS

A special section of the Addison Independent

November 5, 2026





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Fighting in World War I ceased when an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918. For that reason, November 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of "the war to end all wars."

A law in 1938 made the 11th of November in each year a legal holiday.

Veterans Day continues to be observed on November 11, regardless of what day of the week on which it falls.

The Veterans Day National Ceremony is held each year on November 11th at Arlington National Cemetery. The ceremony commences precisely at 11 a.m. with a wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknowns and continues inside the Memorial Amphitheater with a parade of colors by Veterans' organizations and remarks from dignitaries. The ceremony is intended to honor and thank all who served in the United States Armed Forces.



Service members and families to share their stories at THT

MIDDLEBURY — Military service shapes the lives of entire families. On Thursday, Nov. 12, Town Hall Theater in Middlebury will host Family Vets Town Hall: Honoring Service, Hearing Families.

Held the day after Veterans Day in THT's Anderson Studio from 5:30–7 p.m., this free community gathering invites immediate family members of veterans to speak about their experiences — and, crucially, it invited everyone to listen.

Emceed by Cathy Turner, the event offers family members up to 10 minutes each to share the pride, challenges, sacrifices and lasting impact of a loved one's military service. All perspectives are valued, and speakers need no formal presentation — just a willingness to share their own experiences.

The Vets Town Hall model originated with author and journalist Sebastian Junger, who collaborated with Congressman and Marine veteran Seth Moulton on the first gathering in Massachusetts on Veterans Day in 2015. There have been Vets Town Halls in Vermont since 2017.

Its premise is simple: sharing personal experiences and listening without judgment can deepen understanding between veterans and the communities they call home. This family-focused gathering extends that opportunity to those whose lives have been shaped by a loved one's service.

For community members, attending offers a meaningful way to honor military service beyond Veterans Day observances. By listening to families' stories, neighbors can better understand experiences that often remain private and recognize the many ways service continues to affect life at home.

The event is free, non-political, and open to all, whether or not attendees have a military connection. RSVPs are encouraged for both speakers and listeners.

Marlon Fisher, who participated in a Vets Town Hall in the Statehouse last November, had never spoken publicly about his own time in the military, as reported in a story on the news site The Bridge. Fisher said he served as an intelligence analyst for the U.S. Army in Germany with one deployment to Afghanistan.

"I was sitting next to soldiers with guns in their holsters, my weapon of choice a laptop," he said, Katie Lyford reported in The Bridge. "My first night of deployment, I was terrified. There was a rocket attack and horrific conditions."

Lyford reported how Fisher described a rocket attack on his last night in Afghanistan, and the difference a year with other soldiers made.

"Fast-forward to the end of my year there, and it was like the first night repeated, another rocket attack," he said. "But as I looked around, seeing my battle buddies, I realized I was no longer afraid. That is the power of community."

(See Town Hall, Page 4D



ARMY CAPTAIN, CHIEF Nurse and Vietnam War veteran Maureen Dwyer speaks at the Vets Town Hall at the Statehouse in Montpelier on Nov. 2, 2025.
Photo by John Lazenby





MARLON FISHER, WHO served in the U.S. Army, speaks about his experience at the Vets Town Hall 2025 at the Vermont Statehouse on Nov. 2, 2025.
Photo by John Lazenby

Town hall

(Continued from Page 3D)

At the same Vets Town Hall in Montpelier last year, Vietnam War Army Captain and Chief Nurse Maureen L. Dwyer shared a similar experience of shock and fear when she arrived in the war zone, and the growth of a sense of family among soldiers.

"Even though it was 'off to the races' every day, we were like a family, both your colleagues, as well as the patients, who were mostly young men," Dwyer told the Town Hall audience. "You couldn't help but love them, more than a professional nurse in the States would, because there's no family. And because some of them were not going to make it out of there."

The emcee in Middlebury, Cathy Turner, is a health educator, yoga teacher, artist, and cofounder of The Restored Heart Collective, an organization supporting spouses of military and veterans.

Register as a speaker or attendee: vtvetstownhall.org/event/middlebury-family-vets-town-hall-2026.

The Middlebury Vets Town Hall is one of 10 such events for Vermonters this month. Other Vets Town Halls are happening:

Nov. 6, 6 p.m. in Bennington
Nov. 6, 6 p.m. in Rutland
Nov. 7, 10 a.m. in Barre
Nov. 8, 1 p.m. in Saint Johnsbury
Nov. 8, 1 p.m. in South Burlington
Nov. 8, 1 p.m. in Brattleboro
Nov. 9, 6:30 p.m. in Charlotte
Nov. 10, 6 p.m. in Hanover, N.H.
Nov. 15, 3 p.m. in Wilmington.

What to expect

For all attendees: All community members are invited to this event. Only immediate family members of veterans will speak, but all are encouraged to attend and listen. Throughout the event, you may hear something you agree or disagree with. You may have a question. Or you may want to say encouraging words with the intention to help. However, we ask that you please refrain from responding. We are simply here to listen and learn.

For speakers: Please tell us about your own experiences, whatever they may be, rather than speaking broadly about an issue or organization. You're a member of our community, and it's your stories, reflections, and insights that we're anxious to hear. Each speaker will be given up to 10 minutes. Family members of veterans who would like to speak can mark that preference when registering. If you're considering speaking but prefer not to register, we encourage you to attend. After pre-registered speakers go, the emcee will take speakers from the floor, time permitting. Of course, family members of veterans (and all community members) are also welcome to simply attend and listen.



ARMY CAPTAIN MAUREEN Dwyer works diligently in her ICU surgical ward in Vietnam in 1970.
Photo provided by Maureen Dwyer

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American Legion Post #14
Auxiliary Unit # 14
SAL Detachment #14



Money raised locally helps homeless veterans



ADDISON COUNTY — Two local organizations are funneling funds they have raised (or soon will) to a non-profit called The Veteran's Place. Set in Northfield, the Veteran's Place is an 18-bed structured transitional home in which unhoused veterans can safely recover and rehabilitate.

First, the Masons of Libanus Lodge No. 47 in Bristol held a fundraising breakfast dedicated to the Veteran's Place. Amazingly, they rounded up $1,100 that day, which is a lot of pancake, home fries and sausage links.

Later, the group presented a check in that amount to Bristol Legion Commander Ron LaRose on behalf of the Veteran's Place.

Next up Vergennes American Legion Post 14 this Sunday, Nov. 8, will stage a vendor fair to benefit the Veteran's Place. This event, which will take place 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 100 Armory Lane, was very well attended last year and organizers are pleased to report that most of the 2025 vendors are back, in addition to some new ones. You'll find a wide array of things, including 3-D printed items, wooden products (cutting boards, jewelry, pens, & more), kitchen products and tools, quilled greeting cards, and a lot more.

The Vergennes LEOs will host a bake sale with fantastic treats, and there will be a big raffle. More details at tinyurl.com/yyxdcen2.

The Veterans' Place is a dedicated nonprofit committed to providing unhoused veterans with the environment, tools and support they need to transition to independent, sustainable, substance-free and productive lives. Providing high-quality, supportive housing services to homeless veterans in Vermont for over 16 years, the Veterans' Place collaborates closely with the Veterans Administration and all major Vermont housing agencies in an effort to deliver comprehensive, integrated services required to help homeless veterans transition to stable, permanent and affordable housing as quickly as possible.

By offering a wide range of support services to veterans, meeting their needs and removing barriers to housing, the Veterans' Place works tirelessly to end homelessness for area veterans.



BARRY BASSETTE FROM Libanus Lodge No. 47 in Bristol last month presents a check to Commander Ron LaRose to benefit the Veterans' Place of Northfield, which helps out homeless vets. The Vergennes Legion will host a vendor fair this Sunday to gather more donations for the Veterans' Place.

Photo courtesy of Cecil Foster

With respect and gratitude to our veterans, we thank you for your service.



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Middlebury Legion helps vets give back to the community

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Laura Flint, past commander and current steward of Middlebury American Legion Post 27, is aware of the misperception some folks have about veterans clubs.

"I think that the American Legion post had been viewed as little more than a bar for aging veterans, a place for cheap beer where people swap stories," she said during a recent interview.

Yes, Post 27 has a bar. But it has a lot more, and the veterans there are changing the narrative. Along with being a soothing refuge for veterans, it has a hall that hosts special events and a very generous annual giving campaign, among many other things.

The American Legion has indeed changed its scope and mission since being founded by Congress in 1919. The organization laid down roots before post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health impacts of war were even acknowledged, Flint noted.

"Families and friends couldn't understand what the veterans were going through. And that's what Legions and VFWs were founded for, so vets… had somewhere they could decompress and realize they weren't alone," Flint said.

But beyond the healing aspects, Legion posts have also allowed veterans to recapture a sense of purpose.

"When you spend your life serving your country, the desire to serve doesn't disappear when you take off the uniform," she said. "By being a member of a Legion, it gives us the opportunity to continue to serve our country and our communities."

Legion members do this, in part, by donating money to local causes, and 2026 has already proved a banner philanthropic year for Post 27. The Middlebury Legion has so far this year given $57,000 in grants to various nonprofit, scholastic and athletic causes.

Among the 2026 recipients:

• $20,00 for the new Addison County Home Health & Hospice residential care home at 427 E. Main St.

• $2,000 for Addison County Readers, an all-volunteer organization that supports literacy in Addison County through activities such as distributing books, providing educational opportunities, and raising literacy awareness.



MIDDLEBURY AMERICAN LEGION Post 27 this past summer presented Addison County Home Health & Hospice with a $20,000 check for its plan to turn a home at 427 E. Main St. in East Middlebury into a residential care home. Pictured, from left, are Post 27 Finance Officer Laura Flint, Past Post 27 Commander Joe DeGray, current Post 27 Commander Gary Wisell, ACHHH CEO Deb Wesley, ACHHH Human Service Director Kristen Wilson, Age Well Nutrition Coordinator Michele Sullivan and Travis Watson.

Photo courtesy of Laura Flint

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• $2,000 each to the Dodge House and the Vermont Veterans' Place, two organizations providing direct support to Veterans and their families. The Legion also supports the Quilts of Valor Foundation.

• $2,000 to Elderly Services Inc., based in Middlebury.

• Amounts of varying sizes to the Atria Collective, Champlain Valley Stars Cheer (in Vergennes), all of Addison County's volunteer fire departments, the Middlebury Festival on the Green, and Camp Ta-Kump-Ta.

Oh, and let's not forget that Post 27 donates $25,000 annually to scholarships for Middlebury Union High School grads. It also bankrolls Middlebury's New Year's Eve fireworks display and the shire town's Memorial Day Parade in downtown Middlebury.

There's more, much more, that Post 27 — and indeed all the American Legion posts in the county — do for their respective communities.

How does Post 27 decide which funding requests to grant?

Well, some of them have become part of the annual rotation.

> "When you spend your life serving your country, the desire to serve doesn't disappear when you take off the uniform. By being a member of a Legion, it gives us the opportunity to continue to serve our country and our communities."
>
> — Laura Flint

Others come into the Legion's mailbox (P.O. Box 28, Middlebury, VT, 05753). Post 27 has a board of officers that reviews the requests and decides which the organization can fund with the resources at its disposal.

"We're always looking to support the community and assist with their needs when we are able to," Flint said. "We do our best to use volunteers and keep costs low so we can give as much as possible back."

And from where does Post 27 get its resources?

There's revenue from Wednesday Bingo, pull-tab tickets, its bar, rental of its gathering space at 49 Wilson Road, donations and bequests. That said, the Legion takes great care in ensuring that what it charges — be it for refreshments or hall rental — is as reasonable as possible. Post 27 has become a go-to for nonprofits seeking space for gatherings.

POST 27 MEMBERS

And Flint and her fellow Post 27 leaders hope to see more people at 49 Wilson Road — not only as event attendees, but as members. The Middlebury Legion's current membership — counting veterans, Sons of the American Legion, the Auxiliary — is around 800, according to Flint. Not all of those on the roster are active. Legion membership nationally, as of last year, was 1,435,845, according to legion.org. There were 3,013,189 recorded members in 1989.

Reasons for the national decline have included the passing of World War II, Korea and Vietnam War veterans, coupled with the fact that younger service members and vets aren't connecting with Legions, due in part to economics and competing interests.

Post 27 is doing its part to try and change that. For example, the Middlebury Legion is emphasizing avenues for non-veterans to join:

• The Sons of The American Legion (SAL). Open to male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of American Legion members or of veterans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces (starting April 6, 1917, through present day, including World War I, World War II, and post-World War II eras).

• The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA). Open to spouses, grandparents, parents, siblings, and direct or adopted descendants (within two degrees of consanguinity) of active-duty or veteran U.S. Armed Forces members who served during qualifying war periods (World War I or post-December 7, 1941), as well as women who are eligible for American Legion membership in their own right.

Membership in a local Legion also allows access to other Posts throughout the country.

Post 27 is seeing an encouraging wave of new young members. Some frequent the Legion bar and a host of on-site events including line dancing, craft shows, bingo, karaoke, cornhole tourneys and dinners. Check out the lineup at Post 27's Facebook page.

"We're seeing a lot of young people coming in. It's got a much younger feel," Flint said.

"We need to get our numbers up."

John Flowers is at johnf@addisonindependent.com.

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SALUTING LOCALS WHO SERVED



SFC Lawrence "Toot" Bouvier

United States Army Air Corps
World War II - Philippines and New Guinea;
Pilot L-4 Grasshopper,
Recon/Forward Observer

SUBMITTED BY CONNIE LAROSE, NIECE



Lt. James Bouvier

United States Army Air Corps
Grafton-Underwood, England, B-17 pilot, POW

My Hero

SUBMITTED BY CONNIE LAROSE



Cpt. Christopher Cammack

13A & 90A,
US Army
OIF-3, OIF-5 and OIF-7
Chris, thank you for being willing to serve. Thank you, also, for being willing to get out (we would not handle our chaos well without you).

SUBMITTED BY: YOUR FAMILY



Christopher P. J. Cousino

Commander, United States Navy (Retired)
29 years service, enlisted and commissioned. Served on ships out of San Diego and Norfolk, deploying to the South Pacific and Persian Gulf. Deployed for one year to Afghanistan and Kabul, six months in Kuwait, one year in Bahrain. Recent tours in Washington Navy Yard, the Pentagon, and Operation Warp Speed Task Force.

SUBMITTED BY CONNIE LAROSE



SGT Emile "Frenchie" Ethier

United States Army- World War II
Ordnance Corps - Served 44 months in Germany and North Africa

SUBMITTED BY CONNIE LAROSE, NIECE



Aidan J. Gebo

Ensign
United States Navy
VT-27 NAS Corpus Christi
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SUBMITTED BY: MOM AND DAD



Ellis S. Grace

SFC U.S. Army
Retired 21 years
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Phoenix King

Chief Petty Officer
United States Navy - Nuclear Subs

SUBMITTED BY: CONNIE LAROSE



LTC Ronald LaRose

United States Army
Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Fort Sill, Oklahoma; 1/40 Field Artillery, 3rd Armored Division, Germany, Pentagon

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SUBMITTED BY CONNIE LAROSE



Helen E. Burritt (Layn)

1st Lieutenant
U.S. Army Nurse Corps;
237th General Hospital
Stationed: France

Battles and Campaigns:
Ardennes and Rhineland

SUBMITTED BY: CANDACE L. POLZELLA



Roger W. Layn

1st Lieutenant
U.S. Army Air Force; 322 Bomb Squadron 91 Bomb Group (H)
Stationed: England
Battles and Campaigns:
Air Offensive Europe; Schweinfurt Mission; POW in Germany

SUBMITTED BY: CANDACE L. POLZELLA



Thomas Morgan

Lieutenant Colonel
Air Force

South Korea, Italy, Alaska and Iraq

To us, you are husband, father, son, brother, and friend. We sometimes forget that you are also a warrior. On this day, may you realize how loved and appreciated you are for your service. Happy Veterans Day.

SUBMITTED BY: IRENA PAVLIN



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Let's Put Our Hands Together for **Our Veterans**

Vergennes Lions Club



SALUTING LOCALS WHO SERVED



PFC Kris D. Roscoe

United States Marine Corps
3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Division, Vietnam

SUBMITTED BY CONNIE LAROSE, COUSIN



SGT Leonard "Flip" Roscoe

United States Army
Combat Medic - World War II; Battle of the Bulge - Ardennes

SUBMITTED BY CONNIE LAROSE, NIECE



Allen Vigotty

Army, Military Police Corps
Pusan, South Korea

Remembering your devotion to our country during the Korean War, with love and gratitude.

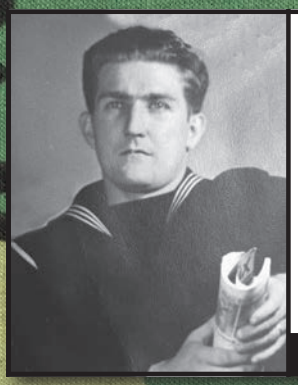
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Served on the USS Lake Champlain, Operation Magic Carpet

SUBMITTED BY: REGINALD WEDGE, JR. AND COLLEEN BOUVIER WEDGE



Rob Young

Aviation Machinist Mate Third Class
United States Navy
Floyd Bennett Field

He was so proud to have served.

SUBMITTED BY - RON HOLMES

Patrick J. Sullivan

U.S. Army Specialist
Korea
Thank you for your service!

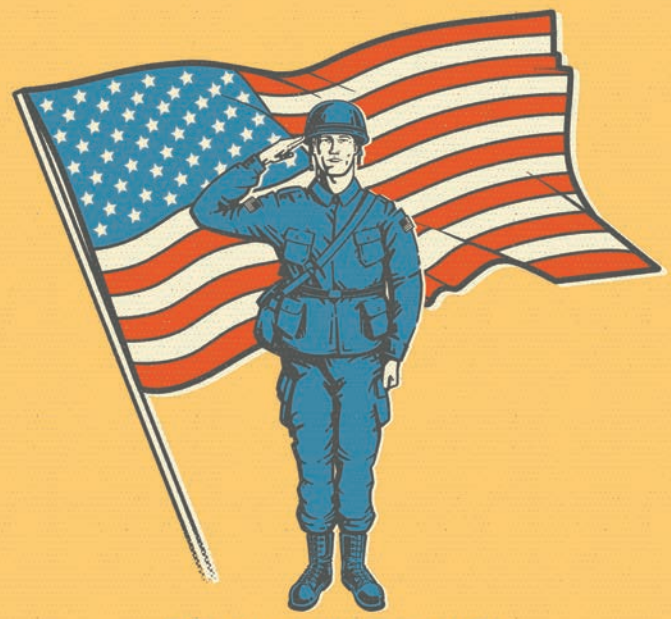
SUBMITTED BY BRIDGET SULLIVAN

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Respect and recognition

GARY WISELL, COMMANDER of Middlebury Legion Post No. 27, stands at attention on the Town Hall Theater steps and delivers a salute during the solemn ceremony after the Memorial Day parade this past May.

Independent photo/Steve James

Adaptive sports for vets is funded

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has awarded $100,000 to a Vermont community-based organization to support adaptive sports programs for veterans.

This funding is part of $16 million in grants awarded to 91 organizations nationwide to advance adapted sports programs for veterans and active-duty service members.

Adaptive sports programs give veterans opportunities to build independence, well-being, and quality of life through a variety of competitive and recreational activities. These activities, such as archery, skiing, cycling, wheelchair softball, hunting, fishing, and many others, enable the men and women who served their country in the armed forces to rehabilitate through recreation and encourage an active and healthy lifestyle.

View the complete list of grant awardees online at department.va.gov/veteran-sports/grant-program/grant-recipients.

"Adaptive sports programming brings meaningful change into our veterans' lives," said Kelley Saindon, acting medical center director at White River Junction VA Healthcare System. "Staying active, building confidence, and creating connecting with others through recreation and competition is crucial not only to the physical but also mental health of veterans."

Since the establishment of the Adaptive Sports Grant Program, Veterans Affairs has awarded over $150 million to expand access to adaptive sports nationwide.



Monkton looks to relocate veterans monuments

By MARIN HOWELL

MONKTON — An effort is underway in Monkton to move two monuments honoring local veterans to a more prominent location outside of the Town Offices on Monkton Ridge.

Currently located on private property at the former Grange, also known as the Monkton Borough Baptist Church, the monuments recognize those who have served our country in prior conflicts. One is the Monkton Honor Roll monument, which lists the names of community members who served in the Korean conflict, Vietnam and both world wars.

The second monument posts an inscription that explains it was erected by the American Legion Bristol Post 19 and Auxiliary and dedicated to "the honor and sacrifice of our men and women who served our country in all wars."

Moving the monuments from private property to a public spot is something the selectboard has discussed over the past several months and applied for grant funding to support. Local veterans and other community members have expressed support for moving the monuments to the Town Office property.

"I feel anyway, from a veteran's standpoint and after discussing this with members of the American Legion, that it should be here at the town offices," Denny Cota told the selectboard in May. "I think it's important…that it should be here because this particular status here being the town offices, being part of the government…democracy, and things of this nature, I think it should be fully respected. The people that have died and given their lives for the privileges that we have today should be honored here."

The May 14 conversation marked the start of selectboard discussion of the idea this year. Town officials have continued to explore the feasibility of moving the monuments, community members' feedback and potential grant funding.

"This is a topic, just candidly, of immense personal importance to me," Selectboard Chair Sam Peisch said in May. "I have a number of veterans in my family; I think it's incredibly important to honor our veterans in a respectful way."

At another selectboard meeting this summer, town officials heard from Eric Bessette, who owns the Grange property with his wife.

> "The people that have died and given their lives for the privileges that we have today should be honored here."
> — Denny Cota

"We love hosting the memorials, but over the 30 years we've lived here, very few people have visited," Bessette told the board in June. "We have the opportunity here in Monkton to enhance our community by remembering those who served and their families. I strongly believe the memorials belong on the front lawn of the town hall in a place of honor."

Bessette shared his background as an exhibit designer, including having designed displays for the Vermont Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Sharon, and offered to help the town with a design for the project.

Peisch said many other community members have reached out wanting to get involved in the effort.

"I think it's a real testament to this community and the commitment to honoring our vets," he said.

The proposed design created by Bessette shows the monuments on the front lawn of the town offices, near a bench and flagpole. Peisch noted the bench and sidewalk featured in the design aren't at the site yet.

He said the selectboard would discuss next steps for the effort in future meetings, and he expected the project would break ground in the spring.





THIS PROPOSED DESIGN, above, created by Eric Bessette shows what Monkton's veterans monuments could look like in a new location on the front lawn of the town offices. Moving the monuments to that spot is something the selectboard has discussed for months and an idea that's received support from local veterans and other community members.

Design by Eric Bessette

MONKTON COMMUNITY MEMBERS are looking to move these two monuments, left, honoring local veterans to a more prominent location at the town offices. The monuments are currently located on private property at the Grange off Monkton Road, and the landowner noted very few people visit the monuments at the site.

Photo courtesy of Sam Peisch

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In service to our nation

AN AMERICAN LEGION official lays a wreath on the prominent downtown monument called "Middlebury To Her Soldiers" this past Memorial Day. The 1905 granite monument was created by artists Marshall Jones and Seward Jones. The veterans in Civil War uniform depict an artilleryman, a cavalryman, a marine and an infantryman.

Independent photo/Steve James

Vets can get help with home and vehicle modification

Veterans who are disabled may need to adapt their living spaces or transportation to maximize their utility.

CAN DISABLED VETERANS GET HELP MODIFYING THEIR HOMES?

Yes. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs operates two different programs that can help veterans modify their homes to accommodate their service connected disabilities. Together, they provide a maximum of $54,000. They can also be used towards the construction of a new home that meets the needs of the veteran. We recommend you apply for these benefits with the assistance of a veteran service officer.

- American Legion Veteran Service Officer (Office at White River Junction) - 802-296-5166
- Disabled American Veterans Veteran Service Officer (Office at White River Junction) - 802-296-5167
- Veterans of Foreign Wars Veteran Service Officer (Office at White River Junction) - 802-296-5168
- Vietnam Veterans of America (Various Locations Statewide) - 603-283-3164
- State of Vermont Veteran Service Officer Program (Travels Statewide) - 1-888-666-9844 (toll free in Vermont only)

CAN DISABLED VETERANS GET HELP MODIFYING THEIR VEHICLES?

Yes. The VA also has a program that helps veterans modify vehicles to accommodate their service connected disabilities. This is frequently used when injuries to the lower extremities require additional hand controls. The VA can provide up to $11,000 towards the purchase of a vehicle with modifications. Like applications for home modifications, we recommend you apply for these benefits with the assistance of a veteran service officer.

- American Legion Veteran Service Officer (Office at White River Junction) - 802-296-5166
- Disabled American Veterans Veteran Service Officer (Office at White River Junction) - 802-296-5167
- Veterans of Foreign Wars Veteran Service Officer (Office at White River Junction) - 802-296-5168
- Vietnam Veterans of America (Various Locations Statewide) - 603-283-3164
- State of Vermont Veteran Service Officer Program (Travels Statewide) - 1-888-666-9844 (toll free in Vermont only)

— Source: Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs

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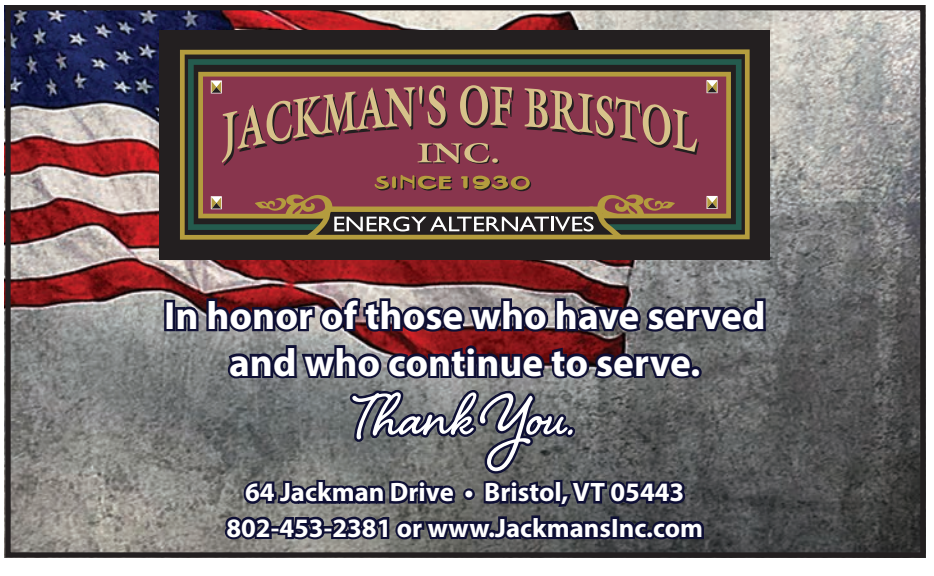




Service flags

FLAGS HANGING ON the gazebo on the Orwell town green recognize five branches of the United States Military: from left, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Marine Corps.

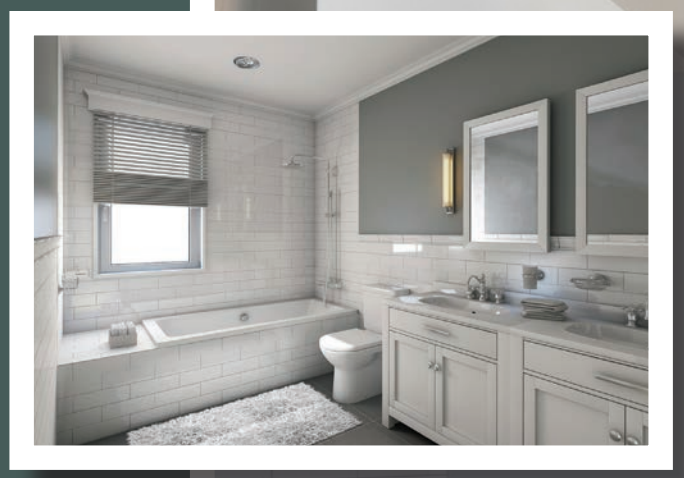






Thank you!

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