

Northern Niagara joins in Veterans Day observances

Youngstown chicken BBQ benefits members of two posts

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief

Veterans Day events were observed throughout Western New York this past week, with various parades, recognitions and memorial tributes.

Among the many programs in Niagara, hundreds joined in what has become an annual opportunity to share a meal, enjoy some camaraderie with vets, and also lend some support. First District Niagara County Legislator Irene Myers hosted her seventh annual Youngstown-Porter Veterans Day Chiavetta's chicken barbecue on Saturday afternoon at the Youngstown firehall. The combined dinner/basket raffle event sold out, with all proceeds going to benefit the members of Youngstown VFW Lake Ontario Post 313 and American Legion O. Leo Curtiss Post 830 in Ransomville.

"This event continues to help our veterans post keep their lights on! Thank you, friends and families that continue to 'thank' our vets! God bless and keep peace!" Myers said.

"Thank you to all who came to our successful seventh annual Town of Porter Veterans Chicken



First District Niagara County Legislator Irene Myers, shown with members of Ransomville American Legion Post 830 and Youngstown VFW Lake Ontario Post 313 at Saturday's benefit. • Members of VFW Post 313 offer their salute Monday at Youngstown's Veterans Memorial. At right, Senior Vice Commander Gary Zanardi offers his remarks.

barbecue. Seven hundred and thirty meals purchased, wow!" said Rick Newman, commander of Post 830. "Thank you to those who knew they would not be able to come but purchased dinners anyhow. These tickets were used to give free dinners to the Coast Guard Station Duty Section at Fort Niagara and the veterans who live at Heritage Manor Assisted Living Facility in Ransomville."

Newman spoke of the teamwork that joins these two posts and communities together.

"Thank you to Ransomville and Youngstown Volunteer Fire Co. auxiliaries for donating the macaroni salad and coleslaw respectively, and the Youngstown Fire Co. for the use of their facility,"

he said. "Thank you to the many restaurants and businesses who helped us presell tickets. Six hundred tickets were sold before we even opened the doors. ...

"Last but not least, thank you to Niagara County Legislator Irene Myers who started this collaboration between the VFW Lake Ontario Post 313 from Youngstown and the American Legion O. Leo Curtiss Post 830 in Ransomville seven years ago. We are already looking forward to Nov. 8, 2025, when we will be doing this again at the Ransomville American Legion Post."

Post 313 Senior Vice Commander Gary Zanardi, likewise, offered his thanks to the community for Saturday's event. Noting an estimated 17,000 veterans



residing in Niagara County, he pointed to the handful of visitors Monday at the Youngstown Veterans Memorial and asked for continued support for the concept of military service, as well as support of posts such as those in Youngstown, Ransomville and elsewhere.

"I encourage you, if you are veteran ... to keep these organizations alive," he said.

"For Veterans of Foreign Wars, you need an overseas combat ribbon. But you can join the American Legion, any veteran can join the American Legion. If you're awarded an overseas combat ribbon, we certainly invite you to

join our (group). Since there's so few participating in being here, we appreciate that."

Zanardi continued, "In a way, (we) feel guilty about Vietnam vets because they didn't get the recognition when we came back. ... Well, we're certainly getting that now. There's a whole list of places that veterans can go for three meals, which is all well and good. ... (But) it shouldn't jump out at you that you're better. I mean, yes, what is it, 1% of the population now (that's enlisted)."

"So, I guess what I'm trying to say is that military service should be

considered a little more commonplace. And not so rare and unique. We appreciate it; we appreciate all the good pancakes at IHOP. But what I'm saying is it shouldn't be so unique. It becomes a rare occurrence. I just wanted to draw a comparison from (millions earlier) to the 1% that serve now. ...

"I'm not making an argument for compulsory military service, but I guess that point is we don't want to make it so unique and so unusual. That retards people from wanting to join the military. Because there's some evil out there and we need (the military). We (always) need to defend our shores."

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Town of Niagara observance

The Town of Niagara held its annual Veterans Day ceremony on 11/11 at 11 a.m. at the Town of Niagara Community Memorial Park by the Town of Niagara Lion's Club.