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Niagara County pays tribute to veterans

I recently had the opportunity to take part in a fantastic opening of an exhibit in the rotunda of the Niagara County Courthouse in Lockport. The exhibit, put together by the Niagara County Chapter 268 of the Vietnam Veterans of America, features both the Niagara County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall and the "Our Photo Album" with images from Vietnam during the war.

Wally Moxham, a Vietnam veteran and member of the Niagara County Chapter 268 of the Vietnam Veterans of America, discussed the origins of the "Our Photo Album." Moxham explained how the exhibit features images shot by local soldiers taken during their tours of duty in Vietnam. These are, indeed, very candid

and personal perspectives of what it must have been like in Vietnam during the 1960s and 1970s. Moxham talked about how the exhibit has been displayed across New York state and Southern Ontario and even featured on the "CBS Morning News."

The exhibit today has grown to more than 500 photos, a portion of which is currently on display. As you look at the photos, you can't help but be struck by the youth of the soldiers and how it captures moments of them simply experiencing life in Vietnam. It is very different from watching war footage or old news reports that focus on the battles, not the people.

When the exhibit was brought back in 2015 for its 25th anniversary, the Vietnam veterans wanted to make sure that their fellow soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice in giving their life for their country received proper recognition. That is when they created the Niagara County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. This large banner

prominently displays the name of every Niagara County resident killed in Vietnam. It is a solemn reminder that these soldiers must never be forgotten.

I commend County Clerk Joe Jastrzemski for helping facilitate bringing this exhibit to the courthouse. We thought this would be the perfect time of year, as we are approaching Veterans Day on Nov. 11. The exhibit is open to the public during normal business hours, although please note the courthouse is closed on Veterans Day. The opening was also filmed by LCTV, a link to which can be found at niagaracounty.com under latest news. It is definitely worth checking out.

As many of you know, our county clerk is a strong advocate for veterans. He led the effort to make Niagara County a Purple Heart County and created the "Thank a Vet" program. For those not familiar with that program, "Thank a Vet" is a discount program that offers eligible veterans a discount

on purchases and services at more than 200 participating merchants across Niagara County. The veterans discount card can be obtained through the county clerk's office.

The county clerk also oversees our Veterans Service Agency. This agency is charged with making sure that all veterans and their dependents have access to any benefits to which they may be eligible as the result of the veteran's active duty military. The agency often serves as a liaison to state and federal agencies to help veterans resolve any issues. For any veteran who may need help, I recommend you call the county clerk's office at 716-439-7022 and they can help connect you with someone who will work with you.

Above all else, as chairman of the Niagara County Legislature, I want to say to each and every man and woman who served in our military, thank you very much for your service. You are very much appreciated.

Ortt details 2021 ballot propositions

SUBMITTED BY STATE SEN. ROBERT G. ORTT

On Election Day, Nov. 2, in addition to choosing among candidates for several important local offices, voters will be asked to decide on five separate propositions to amend New York's state constitution.

Proposition 1: Redistricting. This would reverse some of the key reforms already approved by voters to help remove politics from the once-a-decade process of redrawing state legislative and congressional district lines, reflecting changes recorded in the most recent federal census. Those earlier

reforms, approved overwhelmingly by voters in a 2014 referendum, sought to reduce the influence of political parties in New York state and make the redistricting process more independent.

Proposition 2: Cleaner environment.

This proposal would amend New York's bill of rights to include the right to a clean environment.

Proposition 3: Same-day voter registration.

This proposal seeks to eliminate safeguards that protect the integrity of the ballot box by removing the reasonable 10-day registration requirement prior to casting a bal-

lot. The current safeguard allows boards of elections to determine a person's voting eligibility - for example, by ensuring they are registered in the proper district and haven't already voted in another location.

Proposition 4: "No Excuse" absentee voting.

Existing law limits absentee voting to the sick or disabled, or individuals otherwise unable to make it to the polling place, including members of the military. This proposal would allow for "no excuse" absentee voting, removing existing limitations on who is eligible for an absentee ballot.

Proposition 5: NYC Civil Court.

This proposal applies only to civil courts in NYC and doubles the monetary limits for cases to \$50,000, the first such increase in 38 years. Expanding access to civil courts helps ensure plaintiffs their day in court, while reducing expenses both to claimants and taxpayers. This proposal passed both houses of the Legislature unanimously.

On Election Day, remember to flip your ballot over and vote on these important propositions. The decisions you make will impact how our state operates for years to come.

Supports Myers for County Legislature

There is nothing better than having an elected representative listen, respond and take action. Irene Myers demonstrated just that.

Following Irene's election to the Niagara County Legislature, she was contacted about the

deteriorated condition of Porter Center Road between Ridge Road (Route 104) and Swann Road. She listened intently and said she would inspect it for herself.

Wasting no time, she did the inspection and verified it needed substantial work. She promised

she would discuss the matter with the highway superintendent. This was followed up in a timely manner with assurances that the road would be repaired.

This past summer, the above referenced section of Porter Center Road got more than the usual

Band-Aid. It was milled and repaved. Irene's promise was kept. She merits reelection and a vote of gratitude from the residents of our community.

George L. Brown Lewiston

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