

WARSAW VETERANS PARADE

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Warsaw Remembers Our Vets - for 97 Consecutive Years

Warsaw's 97th Consecutive Veterans Day Celebration will take place Saturday, November 4th. The parade theme this year is "Marching Toward 100" (as we move forward to the 100th parade in 2020).

Craft & food vendors open at 9 AM as well as helicopter rides. Also at 9 AM is a farm implement display and 18-Wheeler display. The rest of the day will be packed full of events, including a Memorial Service at 10:00 AM held by VFW 9810. Just before 11 AM will be the National Anthem, a "Flag Jump" by the Special Forces Parachute Team and "Fly Over" by the North Carolina Forest Service to open the 97th Consecutive Warsaw Veterans Day Parade at 11 AM.

Parade Marshals for this year's parade are Ken LaCoe (WWII), August Cummings (WWII) and John Bowden (Vietnam). The parade will be made up of units from the United States Marine Corps, the United State Army, the United States Air force and the United States Coast Guard, the North Carolina National Guard Band, area high school JROTC units, area high school bands, area First Responders, car, truck and motorcycle clubs and units, Festival Queens, Sudan Shrine Units and a host of participants, all to Honor our Veterans.

According to Dennis Riley, Executive Director of the Warsaw Chamber of Commerce, "After the parade, in addition to the food vendors, a BBQ lunch will be served at the 'Old Fire Station' on Bay Street for only \$8 per plate. At 2 PM the entertainment will start. At the Warsaw Well-

ness Center will be the "Chairmen of the Board" and at the Duplin County Veterans Museum on Hill Street will be the "Antique Outlaws Band". It will be A DAY FULL OF FUN & EXCITEMENT FOR ALL, to honor our Veterans."

The Town of Warsaw, which sits just 12 miles east of Clinton, holds claim to our nations "Oldest Consecutive Veteran's Day Celebration". Chamber Director Dennis Riley remarked, "I think the people of Warsaw are very proud of the record- Oldest Consecutive Celebration of Veteran's Day. I am extremely proud of what Warsaw does for our Veterans and we do many things in our community to honor and thank those who have served, plus those that are currently serving. As you know, we have the Duplin County Veterans Museum here in Warsaw and we also have a celebration each Memorial Day to honor those who died while serving our country."

Riley, himself a Veteran serving for 6 years in the Army Artillery and a 42-year retired civil servant with the USMC, states, "The people of Warsaw and its surrounding community are very proud of our Military Personnel; those that have served and those that are now serving. To say that we have the oldest and longest continuous Celebration shows the dedication and pride for our servicemen and women and most of all this is our way to say Thank You!"

The Duplin County Veterans Museum was established as a tribute to all Duplin County Vet-

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WARSAW VETERANS PARADE



erans who served in war time or peace time. Museum Curator, Earl Rouse says, “Our current Honor Roll list 4,610 veterans from the Revolutionary war to current times. We invite everyone that is attending our celebration to come by and visit the Museum located at 119 E. Hill Street, Warsaw. The Museum is located within walking distance of all Veterans Day Activities. The Museum will be opened from 1 to 4 p.m. on Veterans Day. All other times the Museum will be open each Thursday and Friday from 1 to 4 p.m.”

Rouse, himself a veteran, says of the Veterans Day Celebration, “The people of Warsaw and its surrounding community are very proud of our Military Personnel; those that have served and those that are now serving. To say that we have the oldest and longest continuous Celebration shows the dedication and pride for our Servicemen and Women and most of all this is our way to

say THANK YOU. There was a time when our servicemen and women returned home without a hero’s welcome. Here in Warsaw we are very proud to call them Heroes.”

Warsaw’s Veterans Day Celebration started in November of 1921 by Judge Henry L. Stevens Jr. and at that time was known as the Armistice Day Parade. It later became the Warsaw Veterans Day Celebration and is now the longest continuous Veteran Day commemoration in the United States. In 1995 during the 75th Anniversary, the Veterans Day Commemoration was dedicated to Judge Stevens’ memory as Warsaw’s “Native Son”. And since that first celebration in 1921 it has never been cancelled or postponed. The community is looking forward to its 100th celebration which will happen in 2020.

Veterans Day in Warsaw has been a day of family and friends for many years. Rouse recalls, “Veterans Day was a very important day in our family. It was a day that the whole family would gather on Front Street in Warsaw to watch the Parade; to see all the Marching Units and their equipment, the bands and clowns and of course the candy. We all got to go to the Carnival. My father served in the Army and the local National Guard unit.” Rouse goes on to say that Veterans Day, “...means a time of celebration of freedom, and to honor those who gave us this freedom. Also, a time of remembrance for those that gave it all so that we can enjoy the freedoms that we have.”

Warsaw is a Veterans Day Regional site again for 2017, and Dennis Riley credits the community for Warsaw’s nationally recognized Veterans Day Celebration, “Our Veterans Committee and the Warsaw Chamber of Commerce are the leaders in putting together our celebration each year and they do a fantastic job in finding new ways to improve our events. This year will have some new things, including a street dance, following the parade. I would like to thank the many businesses, community organizations, our schools, and citizens who put together floats and other entries in the parade. It is truly a ‘Home Grown’ effort and one that deserves our support.”

Chamber Direct Dennis Riley concluded by saying, “Freedom is not free. Some of these people made the ultimate sacrifice in serving this country.”



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