

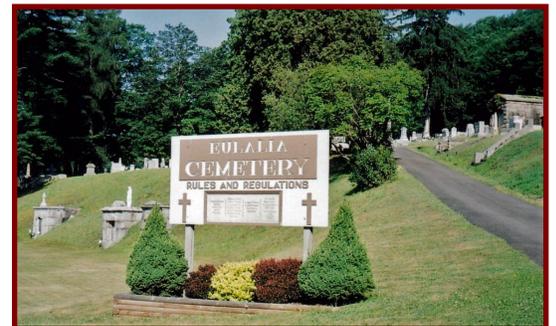


Restoring Veterans' Dignity



Hundreds of veterans' grave markers scattered across Potter County have become difficult, if not impossible, to read. The Potter County Veterans Service Committee embarked on an ambitious plan to rectify the situation with a successful launch of the Veterans Gravestone Restoration Project, held at the Eulalia Cemetery in Coudersport.

Members of Coudersport Boy Scout Troop 536 and other community volunteers turned out for the kickoff event at Coudersport's Eulalia Cemetery. Below, Linda Russell scrubs the gravestone of a soldier she knew. The project is spreading to other cemeteries.



Members Bill Simpson, Paul Heimel and Dawn Wooster continue to recruit volunteers to "adopt" the markers all across Potter County and be responsible for their maintenance so that these veterans are never forgotten. The local project has drawn national attention.

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A poignant veterans memorial ceremony launched the project. Afterwards, more than three dozen volunteers fanned out across the Eulalia Cemetery to begin their work. This was just the start of a countywide project that will continue for many years. Several cemetery managers, community leaders and other volunteers have already signed up.



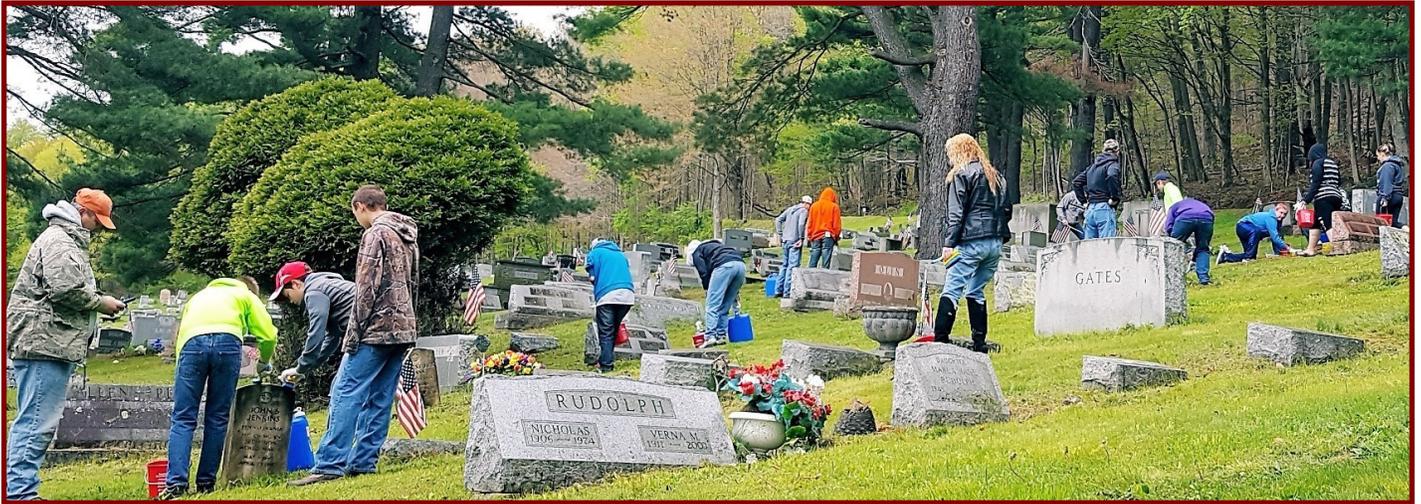
Wayne Wentzel, president of the Coudersport Arboretum Committee, volunteered for the Eulalia Cemetery work bee.



“It’s our hope that cemetery managers, veterans service organizations, local historians, school and youth organizations, and family members of our departed veterans will answer this local call to duty,” Simpson said. “At the same time, we are hoping that the historical organizations, genealogists and others who have been developing databases of veterans’ burial sites can work together and combine their resources. Ideally, we could end up with a website and permanent archive pinpointing the location of each veteran’s grave along with biographical information and photographs.”



With the Potter County Honor Guard standing sentinel, bugler Arthur Metzger sounded “Taps.” Rob Leete (right) delivered the keynote address.



For three hours, about 40 volunteers fanned out over the Eulalia Cemetery to launch the Potter County Veterans Gravestone Restoration Project. Residents of the Potter County Women’s Recovery Center in Harrison Valley pitched in, as did several community organizations. They ended up cleaning more than 100 grave markers.



Boy Scout Troop 536 Scoutmaster Mike Delp, a Pa. State Trooper, used the Potter County Gravestone Restoration Project as a lesson in patriotism and community service.

But for now, the Veterans Service Committee’s mission is to restore the grave markers and add to the rolls of participating cemetery caretakers and volunteers. The committee has acquired a limited number of grave restoration kits, including an environmentally safe cleaning solution identical to the product used in national military cemeteries. Start-up expenses have been covered through donations to a veterans service fund administered by the county commissioners. Detailed instructions will be provided to cemetery caretakers and volunteers to assure that markers are not damaged.

Anyone interested in supporting the project is encouraged to contact Bill Simpson at 814-274-8290, extension 210, wsimpson@pottercountypa.net; or Dawn Wooster at 814-274-8290, extension 207, dwooster@pottercountypa.net.

Project Healing Waters Welcomed to Potter County



A rousing reception organized by the Potter County Veterans Service Committee welcomed about a dozen military veterans and their motorcycle escort through the county seat for the tenth annual Project Healing Waters gathering. County employees turned out in force.

The committee also provided flags for citizens to wave as the vets passed through town. They were joined by other area veterans riding in a bus to show their support for the special guests. A Marine Corps League Honor Guard met the group as it entered the business district. The procession continued through the parking lots of Sweden Valley Manor and Charles Cole Memorial Hospital before a brief stop at American Legion Post 192. It then progressed through Austin to Moore's Run Fish and Game Preserve. Project Healing Waters is sponsored by the God's Country Chapter of Trout Unlimited and the Federation of Fly Fishers. Goal is to aid in the veterans' physical and emotional recovery through fly fishing and fly tying. All activities, services and equipment are provided at no cost, including equipment that accommodates special needs.

Honor Flight Embarks Sept. 22



Military veterans from Potter County are invited to apply for the Sep. 23 "Honor Flight" to Washington, D.C. Preference will be given to World War II veterans. Korean and Vietnam War vets may also be considered if space allows. This trip to war memorial sites in Washington is free. It's a service of the Honor Flight Network, a nonprofit organization. Local organizers hope to recruit as many as 25 area veterans along with guardians. Medical personnel will accompany the participants. Veterans and their escorts will spend the night of Sept. 22 in a hotel and fly out the next morning. More information on local arrangements is available from Katharine Pude at 814-362-3841, or kpude@bradfordareaschools; or from Nancy Fire at 814-598-2927, nafire@verizon.net. Details can also be found online at buffaloniagarahonorflight.org.

Lt. Governor impressed with area veterans' services

Military veterans were the primary focus of a recent visit to Potter County by Pa. Lieutenant Governor Mike Stack. He was so impressed with what he heard that he established a new seat on his new statewide task force on veterans' issues for Commissioner Paul Heimel, who will represent Potter, Cameron, McKean and Tioga counties.



Lieutenant Governor Mike Stack (right) was joined by his assistant, William Geigot, and retired Brigadier General Frank Sullivan (left), a Galeton native, during his visit to Potter County. They're shown here during a meeting on veterans' issues at the Gunzburger Building in Coudersport.

Stack met with the three counties' veterans affairs directors, members of local American Legion and VFW posts, and the Potter County Veterans Service Committee as part of his two-day visit to Potter and Tioga counties. A highlight was the presentation by committee members Heimel, Bill Simpson and Dawn Wooster, detailing local projects and advocacy for veterans that the panel has pursued over the past several years.

Simpson detailed the partnership with the Bath (N.Y.) VA Medical Center to operate a clinic and enhance health care for area veterans. He also cited an increase in veterans enrolling for the benefits and ser-

vices they have earned, which has a ripple effect on Potter County's economy.

Wooster summarized a countywide initiative to rally volunteers for the cleaning and restoration of veterans' grave markers, as well as a repository of biographical information and photos of those who have served.

Heimel implored Lt. Gov. Stack and other state officials to support a crackdown on thieves who prey on veterans, active-duty service members and their families. He also called on the federal and state governments to pay at least a share of the expenses for county-level veterans service officers.

The committee also detailed the Potter County Veterans Discount program and new efforts being pursued to provide transportation for vets who have medical appointments and other out-of-town business.

Also highlighted were the God's Country/Trout Unlimited Project Healing Waters and the LEEK Hunting and Nature Preserve in Oswayo.

"Great ideas come out of these small places," Stack said following the presentation. "The things you are doing are simply amazing, and we'd be honored to have you represented on our veterans task force."



Lieutenant Governor Mike Stack speaks with Cameron County Veterans Affairs Director Joe Williams (center) and Jesse Olson, Pa. District 15 Commander for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, during last week's visit to Potter County.

Korean War casualty memorialized

A Potter County native who lost his life in the Korean War will forever be remembered by a bridge named on his honor. Family members, friends and community supporters turned out to dedicate the Paul M. Brown Memorial Bridge over Bailey Run near Wharton.



Paul M. Brown

Army Technician Fourth Grade Paul Brown lost his life during combat operations in South Korea on March 2, 1951. Brown lived with his foster parents, Mr. and Mrs. James D. Glover, in Wharton Township. He was working for Williamson Pulp and Paper Company in Austin when he was called for service in World War II. Brown was deployed overseas on in May 1943 and returned just before Christmas 1945.

He went to work for the Department of Forests and Waters and, later, Kress Flagstone Company in Wharton Township while remaining on the roster of the Army Reserve. In 1950, he was called to duty in Korea.

He was killed by enemy fire during heavy fighting which ensued around Cheehon, Chungju, and Pyongchang as part of an effort to push the North Korean and Chinese forces away from Seoul, South Korea.



Among family members of Army Technician Paul M. Brown attending the bridge dedication ceremony were, from left: Deb Pfaff, Thomas E. Bissman, Tristin Bissman, Edwin L. Bailey, Gloria Brown Bailey (great-niece), Scott W. Bissman, David Wilson (nephew), Sandy J. Bissman (great-niece), John Wilson (nephew), and Burton Wilson (nephew).

Special 'Flag Day' In Shinglehouse

Flag Day was a special occasion at Shinglehouse American Legion Post 530. Officials from Post 530, the Legion Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion were joined by two recent Oswayo Valley High School graduates who have enlisted for military service and will report for basic training in August. Dalton Ford will be joining the Marine Corps and Adam Ferguson enlisted in the U.S. Army. Each was presented with multiple gifts, including \$1,000 to help their families attend their graduation from basic training. Shown from left are Post 530 Adjutant Bill Chatham, Dalton Ford, Auxiliary representatives Wanda West and Tina Mesler, Sons of Legion Adjutant Mike Mesler and Adam Ferguson.



Woodland Cemetery Restoration Session

Potter County's Veterans Grave-stone Restoration Project has moved on to a third cemetery. About a dozen volunteers recently gathered at the historic



Woodland Cemetery in Hebron Township to scrub and otherwise restore the markers of military veterans buried there. Among volunteers turning out were (from left): John Peet, Wanda Metzger, Arlene Saulter, Jack Lent, Rhoda Weimer, Elaine Goodrich, Betty Saulter, Barney Saulter and David Saulter. Also pitching in were Cynthia Kelly, Arthur Metzger and Potter County Veterans Affairs Director Bill Simpson.