

Putnam Town Crier Article and Photos, 12/16/2023

PUTNAM --- At high-noon Dec 16, at Putnam's Veterans Memorial Park, a strange and wonderful calm seemed to descend upon the otherwise frantic hustle and bustle that you'd expect near a busy intersection on a mid-December weekend.

A ceremony was taking place, replete with a sharply dressed, spit-polished, military-type honor guard of flag bearers and riflemen, a podium with dignitaries and honored guests, and an audience of about 50 men and women in solemn silence.

In fact all across America similar scenes were taking place at war memorials – where wreaths were being placed to honor veterans - past and present.

“The watchwords for the Wreaths Across America Observance are: Remember, Honor, and Teach”. We remember the sacrifices made by our veterans, we honor their legacy, and we teach our younger generations the value of freedom,” said master of ceremonies, American Legion Post 13 Commander Michael Rocchetti.

“We lucked out. The sun was shining, the sky was clear and blue, the winds were calm, and the temperature was moderate. It was a great day for this ceremony,” he said.

Participants included: the American Legion Post #13, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #1523, the Putnam Elks #574 Veterans Committee, the Danielson Veterans Coffeehouse, and the Town of Putnam. Honored guests included local state Representative Rick Hayes and Putnam Selectman Michael Paquin. Speakers included Rocchetti, VFW Post 1523 Commander Hans Lowell, and Alan Joslin for the Danielson Veterans Coffeehouse. The National Anthem was sung by Emily Lajoie, and taps was played on the bugle by Tyler Eddy. The honor guard consisted of Michael Vassar, Chas Mackenzie, Curt Prochowski, Frank Tremont, Russ Waters, and members of VFW Post #1523. The invocation and benediction was given by Janet Muscara.

Lowell reminded those attending that this ceremony, in a season of celebration, is a celebration of past and active service members --- especially those on active duty who are unable to celebrate.

The wreath layers included: Tina Lajoie, William Schmidt, Donald St. Onge, Moe Auger, Thomas Lajoie, Patrick Kelly, Alan Joslin, and David Lavoie.

In addition to the wreaths on stands at the Veterans Memorial Park, a wreath was thrown into the Quinebaug River and wreaths were also placed, later, on bridge memorials and at cemeteries.

Commander Rocchetti also had words of praise for the Town of Putnam: “The Parks & Recreation Director Willie Bousquet and his assistant Marcy Dawley did a lot of work behind the scenes to make this happen – and I am very grateful for their support. Also Gene Palazzo did a fantastic job setting up the ceremonial site – with chairs, a podium, and a sound system. How lucky we are to live in such a wonderful community!”

History of the Wreaths Across America: <https://www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/About/OurMission>



Benediction



Color Guard



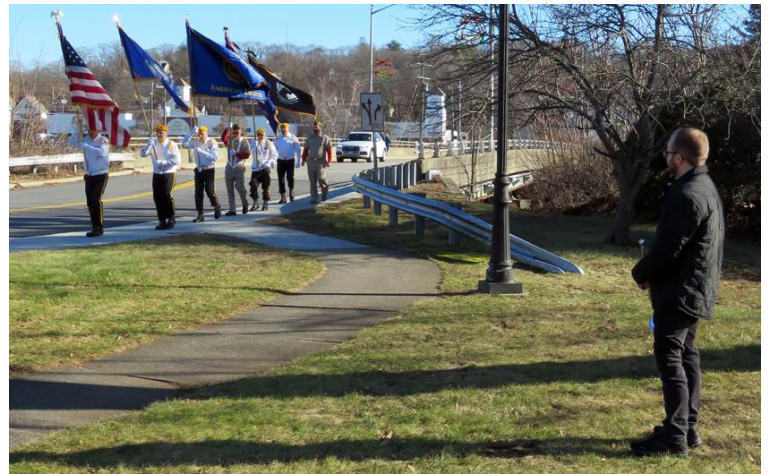
Color Guard



Putnam Elks Veterans Committee Reps



Wreaths in honor of Military Branches



Return from bridge