

# Salute to Veterans

You answered the call and gave it your all. We are forever grateful.

## 2026

Tillamook
Headlight Herald

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*Nathan Stewart*



*Ashley Miller*



*Todd Grosse*



*Dean Massender*

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- Tim Mayne – U.S. Army
- Rick Miller – U.S. Marine Corps

**Tillamook Bay Fire & Rescue**
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H29093



**Memorial To** All the young men and women who gave their lives in World War II to save and keep us Free.

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**SAVE HANGAR B**

H29095


# Salute to Veterans

# Veterans Day November 11

## Veterans Day events planned

*Staff Report*

In recognition of Veterans Day on November 11, the Tillamook Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars will be hosting an event at Tillamook Bay Community College beginning at 11 a.m.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 2848 is also celebrating its 30th anniversary at the event and hosting a fundraising breakfast at the Rendezvous Bar & Grill before it, beginning at 8 a.m.

At the event, the Tillamook High School band will accompany the school's choir and the Bay City Community Chorus for each of the service anthems, before keynote speaker Mike Kreger, who served as a Navy Seal during the Vietnam War, addresses the crowd. A VFW color guard will also present the colors and a flyover is expected, before the ceremony concludes with a performance of Taps.

Members of the VFW, American Legion and Tillamook County Veteran services will be at the event to provide information about each group's benefits and programs for veterans. Burt Darnielle will also be on hand with his traveling military museum.

On November 11 Werner Beef and Brew will also be offering veterans with a valid military ID a free meal and donating 10% of their total revenues on food sales that day to VFW Post 2848.

In the evening, the Tillamook Elks Lodge at 1907 Third Street will be hosting a free meal for veterans at 5 p.m., followed by a ceremony beginning at 6 p.m.



# Salute to Veterans

## Veterans Day bio

### Dean Massender

Dean Massender was born in Coeur D' Alene, Idaho and grew up in Spirit Lake, Idaho. He graduated from Kellogg High School in June 1989 and joined the Army 2 months later.

Massender spent five and a half months completing Basic and Advanced Individual Training as an M1 Main Battle Tank Mechanic. After completing training, he was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor, 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas.

In December 1990 Massender deployed to Saudi Arabia in preparation for Desert Storm. During the conflict, he was issued a large and rather bulky electronics device called Magellan, an early handheld GPS device, much unwieldier than later versions.

After returning from Desert Storm, Massender finished out his enlistment before returning to Idaho, where he joined the Idaho National Guard for five years. When that contract expired, he chose to reenlist active duty after trying to balance family, service and multiple job fields.

In his second stint in the service, Massender was stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armor Cavalry Regiment as an M1 Mechanic. While in Carson, Massender again deployed, this time to Bosnia and Herzegovina, formerly Yugoslavia, as part of a peacekeeping force named SFOR7. Massender remembers the countryside being ravaged, with destruction to most buildings, yet the country was beautiful. Massender ultimately reenlisted for another 3 years in Bosnia.

Upon returning stateside, Massender was assigned to Fort Stewart, Georgia. While at Fort Stewart he was responsible for keeping everything mission ready as the Squad Leader of a tank maintenance platoon. While at a field training exercise, Massender fell ill and was eventually medically discharged.

In total, Massender served seven years active duty and five years in the Idaho National Guard. During his service Massender was awarded the Driver and Mechanic Badges, Valorous Unit Citation, four Army Achievement Medals, two Army Good Conduct Medals, National Defense Service Ribbon, Southwest Asia Service Medal with three Campaign Stars, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Professional Development Course Ribbon, Kuwait Liberation Medals, Nato Medal and the Army Service ribbon.

After his service, Massender joined the VFW and served as Post Commander Post 1473 in Spirit Lake, Idaho. He and his wife Autumn moved to Tillamook County in 2019 and joined VFW Post 2848. He currently serves as the Post Quartermaster and Youth Scholarships Program Liaison.

Massender's work with local schools and aiding VFW District 2, Dept of Oregon earned him recognition as National Aide de Camp for 2026-2027. Massender is proud to have served his country and is excited that his oldest granddaughter joined the Air Force this summer after graduating High



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H29096

# Salute to Veterans

## Veterans Day bio




### Nathan Stewart

Nathan Stewart served in the United States Army from 2001 to 2013, as a 68W, Combat Medic, reaching the rank of Staff Sergeant.

Stewart deployed to Iraq twice and Afghanistan once, spending approximately 27 months overseas in support of military operations. As a combat medic, his job was to take care of wounded and fallen soldiers, often in some of the most difficult and dangerous situations imaginable. Stewart says medics are trained to be ready for anything, but there is no training that can fully prepare you for the realities of combat.

During one of his deployments to Iraq, Stewart was wounded by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) while on patrol under enemy fire earning him one of his Purple Hearts. During his deployment to Afghanistan, his convoy was hit by an IED and came under gunfire. These experiences exposed him to the realities and dangers of combat and reinforced the importance of relying on training, experiences and the soldiers by your side.

The bonds formed with the men and women he served alongside are the reason why he kept putting himself in harm's way. They became more than the people he was working with; they became his family. Those experiences have stayed with him long after his time in uniform ended.

Stewart's service continues today as the Chaplain for VFW Post 2848 and an employee of the Oregon Department of Forestry. Being involved with the VFW gives Stewart the opportunity to support fellow veterans, connect with those who have shared similar experiences and help make sure our local veterans and their families know they are not forgotten. It also affords him the opportunity to form bonds with Veterans of multiple generations, as he once did in uniform.

Stewart appreciates that even though they are different, every veteran has a story. Some stories are shared openly, while others are carried quietly. Every veteran's experience is different, and all have their own reasons for serving and different challenges when returning home, and Stewart is proud to continue to be there for others. We served our country together and believe we have a responsibility to continue looking out for one another when we come home.

Stewart encourages everyone to find time to ask a veteran about their service and listen to their story but be wary of certain questions and not push the issue if they are not willing to share. He is proud of his service, proud of the soldiers he served alongside, and proud to continue serving our veterans and community here in Tillamook County.

Expeditionary Medal, Professional Development Course Ribbon, Kuwait Liberation

See **STEWART**, Page A5





*Nestucca Rural Fire Protection District would like to thank all of Tillamook County's veterans for their service to our country.*

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# Salute to Veterans



## Veterans Day bio

### Ashley Miller

Ashley Miller enlisted in the Missouri Army National Guard at 17 and served first as a radio operator-maintainer. She went on to earn her commission through ROTC at the University of Central Missouri in 2003.

Over nearly two decades with the Army, as a soldier, an officer and later an Army civilian, she served as a Signal and Military Intelligence officer and became a badged and credentialed Counterintelligence Special Agent. She reached the rank of Captain.

In 2005, Ashley served as a Company Commander during Hurricane Katrina relief operations in New Orleans, living out of the Convention Center. Her area of responsibility was the French Quarter and the surrounding neighborhoods. There she coordinated with aviation units stationed at Belle Chasse Naval Air Station, Signal units headquartered in downtown New Orleans, the 82nd Airborne Division, regional law enforcement agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Her service later took her overseas. In England, she led a team of 30 international personnel as a NATO Watch Officer in Charge during Operation Unified Protector, the 2011 Libya no-fly-zone mission. As an Army civilian in Germany and England, she spent nearly ten years as an intelligence analyst and security cooperation liaison for U.S. Army Europe and NATO.

Ashley now carries that same commitment to service into her work as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She runs and offers mental health services through Hope and Renewal Counseling, LLC. An active member of Tillamook Elks Lodge #1437 and Tillamook American Legion Post 47, she is devoted to supporting veterans and their families here in Tillamook County.

## Stewart

Continued from Page A4

Medals, Nato Medal and the Army Service ribbon.

After his service, Massender joined the VFW and served as Post Commander Post 1473 in Spirit Lake, Idaho. He and his wife Autumn moved to Tillamook County in 2019 and joined VFW Post 2848. He currently serves as the Post Quartermaster and Youth Scholarships Program Liaison.

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PLEASE JOIN US FOR A HOSTED
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9th OMS SR-71A Crew Chief

SGT Eric Woods '85 - '91
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# Salute to Veterans

## Veterans Day bio

### Paul Ferris

As he approaches his 80th birthday, Paul Ferris has found himself reflecting more frequently on his service a translator in the Air Force during the Vietnam War.

Born November 22, 1946, in Cos Cob, Connecticut, Ferris grew up loving the outdoors and exploring Montgomery Pinetum, a park populated by red foxes, deer, snapping turtles, wood ducks, eels and bullfrogs.

Ferris said that one of his formative memories is the day President John F. Kennedy's assassination in Dallas. Ferris, then a junior at St. Mary's High School in Greenwich, Connecticut, said he distinctly remembers throwing a football with friends when a peer broke the news that Kennedy had been shot and watching Walter Cronkite announce the president's death later that day.

"I didn't cry that day," Ferris said, "but America changed."

After graduating high school, Ferris received a scholarship from the Greenwich Country Club and attended the University of Connecticut, graduating in 1968 with a degree in zoology and biology.

Following college, Ferris joined the Air Force in 1969 and was sent to Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas (an Army base) to study Vietnamese after scoring highly on a language aptitude test. A year of Vietnamese studies was followed by a five-month course in radio operations and one week of survival school before Ferris deployed.

Ferris flew in reconnaissance aircraft, first Boeing RC 135s based at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan, and then Lockheed RC 130s based at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam. Ferris's job was detecting North Vietnamese radio transmissions before taping and translating them for intelligence purposes.

When he discharged, Ferris became as a special education teacher before retiring and helping local high schools secure grants from the Veterans of Foreign Wars to support writing and food scarcity programs.

Today, Ferris is an advocate for veterans' issues in Tillamook and is working with the Tillamook Elks to organize a town hall meeting aimed at mitigating veteran suicide and supporting community growth.

Wednesday, November 11th
11:00am-7:00pm

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# Salute to Veterans

## Veterans Day bio

### Todd Grosse

Todd Grosse was born in Scappoose, Oregon, where graduated from high school in 1985, before joining the Army in 1986, the first in his family to do so since his grandfather passed during the Battle of Okinawa in World War II.

Grosse went to Basic Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Gordon, Georgia. Upon graduation from Single Channel Radio Operators School, he went on to be stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas. Grosse was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion 3/43 Air Defense Artillery Battalion.

Learning that his military specialty was being decommissioned shortly into his service, Grosse was forced to learn a new job on the fly, receiving training and certification to operate the new Patriot Missile Systems. Grosse's unit spent months at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico, training and preparing during Live Fire Exercises. Grosse was part of the first dually certified Desert and Cold Weather Patriot Team.

With the skills learned, training continued with war games with the Navy and Air Force due to their advanced radar systems. Grosse's service ended just prior to the United States involvement in Desert Storm. During his service he earned the Army Service Ribbon and Expert Rifle and Pistol Badges.

In 2016, Todd moved to Tillamook and married his lovely wife, Sunny. He has always had a passion for helping others, including his fellow veterans. In October of 2025 he was afforded his best opportunity to do so, starting a job with the Tillamook County Veteran Services Office where he is now a certified Veterans Service Coordinator.

Grosse is an active member of Tillamook American Legion Post 47. On Wednesdays, you can find him at the Fern Restaurant at 9 a.m. having coffee with other veterans and most Thursday nights at the Upstairs Bar and Grill hosting karaoke.



SALUTE TO VETERANS 2026

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More gratitude. More honor.
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We're honored to care for those who have given so much in service to others.



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Salute to Veterans

# The roles of the various branches of the U.S. military

Each November, people across the United States and its territories honor the brave men and women who serve and have served in the various branches of the country's military. Veterans Day is observed annually every November 11 and honors the service of all U.S. military veterans. The day should not be confused with Memorial Day, which is celebrated each year in May and honors all military personnel who have died in service.

Veterans Day is a great time for anyone to learn more about the various branches of the U.S. military.

## Army

The U.S. Department of Defense notes that the Army is the largest and oldest service in the country's military. The Army provides the ground forces that protect the United States. Members of the Army are trained to defeat enemy ground forces and to seize and control enemy lands and resources. Army also are trained to control and interact with the general population in countries where members are stationed.

## Marine Corps.

It might surprise some to learn that the Marine Corps. is a component of the Department of the Navy. That's one reason why maintains amphibious and ground units for contingency and combat operations. The Marine Corps. is divided into four groups: the operating forces that fight; the headquarters for leadership; the supporting establishment that provides logistical support; and the Marine Corps. Reserve.



## Navy

The Navy protects America at sea. Despite its massive land mass, the United States is a maritime nation, which underscores how important a strong Navy is to the safety of the country and its residents. The Navy works alongside American allies and partners to keep the seas open and free.

## Air Force

The Air Force has five core missions: air superiority; global strike; rapid global mobility; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; and command and control. The Air Force defends the country and its residents in air, space and cyberspace and is capable of delivering forces anywhere in the world within hours.

## Space Force

The existence of the Space Force may come as a surprise to many Americans. Organized under the Department of the Air Force and established in 2019, this branch of the military organizes, trains and equips space forces in order to protect the interest of America and its allies in space.

## Coast Guard

During peacetime, the Coast Guard is part of the Department of Homeland Security. In times of war, it operates under the Navy. The Coast Guard provides law and maritime safety enforcement as well as environmental protection. In addition to promoting national security, border security and economic prosperity in the maritime environment, the Coast Guard saves those in peril on the sea.

See ROLES, Page 9

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## Roles

Continued from Page 8

### National Guard

The National Guard is comprised of the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. The National Guard has a diverse array of responsibilities that range from supporting combat missions to responding during domestic emergencies to assisting in humanitarian efforts and more.

The U.S. military is made up various branches, each with its own unique missions and responsibilities. Veterans Day marks the perfect occasion to celebrate the many individuals who have served and continue to serve in the U.S. military.















Salute to Veterans

Salute to Veterans

# A guide to local Memorials and Markers

## Bay City (2)

- Plaque/Native Boulder with POW/MIA Flag on the flagpole; Dedicated December 16, 2003; Located Marion Barr Library
- Vietnam Memorial; Dedicated July 4, 1992; Located Campsite between Bay City and Tillamook east of Hwy 101

## Cloverdale (1)

- Plaque; Located Nestucca Valley Cemetery off Highway 101
- Plaque; Located west of bridge off Highway 101 in Cloverdale, directly across from the High School digital sign

## Garibaldi (1)

- Coast Guard Boat Memorial; Dedicated - Unknown; Located near the marina off South 7th Street to Coast Guard Way just north of the Coast Guard facility.

## Hebo (1)

- Mt. Hebo Memorial Plaque; Dedicated 1987; Former Mt. Hebo Air Force Station

## Nehalem (3)

- Nehalem Bay Veterans Memorial; Dedicated May 21, 1989; Located Nehalem Bay Cemetery; http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM13M9_Nehalem_Bay_Veterans_Memorial
- Plaque (All Veterans); Dedicated - 1994; Dennis D. Schnoor Veterans Memorial Park located near the northwest entry to Nehalem Bridge
- Plaque/Flagpole (Veterans of All Wars); Dedicated - Unknown; Located Cemetery between Nehalem and Manzanita, Highway 101



**Veterans Monument located in Tillamook between First Street and Pacific and Main Avenues**

## Tillamook (7)

- Veterans Monument located between First Street and Pacific and Main Avenues
- Plaque (Tillamook County Veterans Korean and Vietnam); Dedicated - Unknown; Located US Post Office, 2200 First Street
- Plaque (All Wars); Dedicated - Unknown; Located Courthouse, 201 Laurel Ave.
- Plaque (Country's Dead); Dedicated - Unknown; Located Odd Fellows Cemetery, across from the County Fairgrounds, 4603 E 3rd Street
- Giant Flag; Dedicated - Unknown; Located next to Werner's Meats on East 3rd Street across from Goodspeed Park
- The Tillamook Air Museum (Wartime Memorabilia); Dedicated - Unknown; Located Highway 101 just south of Tillamook
- Pioneers Museum Exhibit of Veterans' Memorabilia; Dedicated - Unknown; Located Pioneers Museum, 2106 2nd Street





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*From the Davison Auto Parts Staff*

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H26042

Salute to Veterans

# Ways to honor veterans

Millions of people make considerable sacrifices to protect the freedoms of their fellow citizens. According to the Pew Research Center and data from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Census Bureau, there are currently more than 18 million living veterans in the United States.

The term "veteran" refers to a person who served in the active military, naval, air service, or space service and was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. In the U.S., there are actually five types of protected veterans, according to the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974. Under VEVRAA, a veteran may be classified as a disabled veteran, recently separated veteran, active duty wartime or campaign badge veteran, or Armed Forces service medal veteran.

Veterans deserve respect and admiration all year long, but also get their own holiday each November. Veterans Day celebrates veterans' patriotism and willingness to sacrifice and serve. This Veterans Day, people can consider these eight unique ways to honor the veterans in their community.

1. Attend events. Organize or participate in local Veterans Day celebrations, such as parades and ceremonial events.

2. Get involved with veterans' affairs. Support veterans by volunteering with organizations that assist them, such as the VA, local veteran's groups, VA hospitals, or charities dedicated to veteran services.

3. Petition for veteran speakers. Reach out to schools, scout troops or other groups and arrange opportunities for veterans to share their stories and contributions. Learning about the sacrifices these men and women made can heighten individuals' appreciation for veterans.

4. Support the families of veterans. Reach out to veterans' families, who also must make sacrifices and concessions. Anything from shopping, babysitting, doing chores, or making a meal can help the families of veterans.

5. Make a donation. If finances allow, make contributions to reputable charities that provide services for veterans like those that offer mental health counseling or job placement services. If there isn't a charity that fits with your vision, begin one.

6. Hire veterans to work. If you are a business owner or hiring manager, consider hiring veterans for open positions at your company. It can be challenging to re-enter the workforce after service, so make it known that your firm welcomes veterans.

7. Offer personal acknowledgements. Take the time to speak to veterans and thank them for their service. If possible, when dining out, ask the server if you can pay for the meal of a veteran who also is dining that day.

8. Don't forget the fallen veterans. Although Memorial Day is designed to honor those who lost their lives through military service, people still can honor the fallen veterans on Veterans Day by sharing stories or placing flags at veteran cemeteries.

Veterans Day is celebrated on November 11, marking an opportunity to express one's gratitude and support for the scores of veterans who have served honorably.






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