

# Memorial Day Service at the NYS Veterans Cemetery – Finger Lakes Will Honor Purple Heart Recipients and Sampson Veterans

*Memorial Day Tribute Will Recognize 33 Purple Heart Recipients Interred at the Cemetery & Honor Two Veterans Connected to the Sampson Military Installations*

ROMULUS, NY, UNITED STATES, May 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The New York State Department of Veterans' Services ([DVS](#)) and the Friends of the New York State Veterans Cemetery – Finger Lakes today announced the special Memorial Day observance taking place Monday, May 25, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., at the New York State Veterans Cemetery – Finger Lakes, 6632 State Rt. 96A, Romulus, NY 14521.

The Memorial Day Ceremony will pay tribute to the men and women of

America's armed forces who made the ultimate sacrifice. The ceremony will also include a reading of the names of 33 Purple Heart recipients interred at the Cemetery through a special "Purple Heart Roll Call of Honor" and the presentation of New York State legislative resolutions recognizing their courage, sacrifice, and service to the nation. The resolutions will be presented to attending family members.

The ceremony will also honor two distinguished Veterans connected to the former Sampson Naval Training Station and Sampson Air Force Base: World War II Sampson Navy Veteran Lloyd Evans of Geneva, New York, and Sampson Air Force Veteran Dr. Ken Padgett, former President of the New York Chiropractic College and longtime Seneca County resident. The legislative resolutions were authored and enacted under the leadership of New York State Senator Thomas O'Mara and New York State Assemblyman Phil Palmesano and New York State Assemblyman Jeff



DVS Logo Image

Gallahan.

NOTE FOR MEDIA: Prior to the formal program, there will be a ribbon-cutting and photo opportunity at 1:30 p.m., dedicating the cemetery's new maintenance building and columbarium. Media and elected officials are invited to attend the ribbon-cutting prior to the formal Memorial Day Ceremony taking place immediately afterward at 2:00 p.m.



Memorial Day 2025 Ceremony at the NYS Veterans Cemetery -- Finger Lakes. Photo credit: Charles Harrington

“Memorial Day is a sacred opportunity to pause as a nation and remember the extraordinary men and women who answered the call to serve and

made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our freedoms,” said New York State Department of Veterans’ Services Commissioner Viviana M. DeCohen. “The New York State Veterans Cemetery – Finger Lakes is where the stories of courage, sacrifice, and patriotism endure for generations. We are profoundly grateful to the Friends organization and our legislative partners for ensuring these heroes, especially our Purple Heart recipients, are honored with the dignity and reverence they so deeply deserve.”

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*DVS Commissioner Viviana M. DeCohen*

“During the 250th Anniversary of America’s Independence, the Friends of the New York State Veterans Cemetery – Finger Lakes are deeply honored to pay tribute to these heroic recipients of the Purple Heart, who were wounded while serving and defending our Nation during time of need. We are especially grateful to Senator O’Mara, and Assemblymen Palmesano and Gallahan for providing this special recognition,” said former New York State Senator and Chairman of the Friends organization Mike Nozzolio.

“The Friends are continually vigilant in recognizing and honoring those 750,000 men and women who, for a period of over 30 years, completed basic training at the Sampson Naval Base during World War II and then the Sampson Air Force Base. It was at this place where they prepared for battle to defend our Nation, some never to return. Those brave individuals truly consecrated the hallowed ground where the New York State Veterans Cemetery is now located,” concluded Chairman Mike Nozzolio.

"Places like the New York State Veterans Cemetery – Finger Lakes remind us that service does not end when the battle is over," said New York State Department of Veterans' Services Executive Deputy Commissioner Joel Evans. "These grounds preserve the legacy of those who defended our nation, comfort families who continue to carry their memory forward, and teach future generations about the true cost of freedom. This Memorial Day, we are especially honored to recognize Purple Heart recipients whose courage under fire forever changed the course of their lives and the lives of those around them."

"The New York State Veterans Cemetery – Finger Lakes is not only a place of remembrance, but also a solemn testament to New York State's enduring commitment to honoring those who served," said New York State Department of Veterans' Services General Counsel Jonathan Fishbein. "The powerful, poignant stories preserved here – from Purple Heart recipients to the generations who trained at Sampson – reflect the profound sacrifices made in defense of our nation and the enduring obligation we share to remember them with dignity, gratitude, and respect."

"The New York State Veterans Cemetery – Finger Lakes is a solemn place where families gather not only to mourn, but to remember lives defined by courage, duty, and love of country," said William Yale, Director, New York State Veterans Cemetery – Finger Lakes. "Every name honored here represents a story of sacrifice and service that helped preserve the freedoms we enjoy today. As we gather this Memorial Day, we do so with profound gratitude for those who gave so much for our nation and with a solemn commitment to ensure their memory is never forgotten."

The Purple Heart Roll Call of Honor will be led by Purple Heart recipient Sean Edmunds, a Friends Board member, and Wayne County Veterans Service Officer. He will be joined by Friends Vice Chairman General Bruce Tuxill, USAF (Ret.), Friends Board Member Mitch Rowe – whose father, Sanford Rowe, was a Purple Heart recipient interred at the Cemetery – and Friends Chairman Mike Nozzolio. The ceremony will also recognize the historic significance of the former Sampson Naval Training Station and Sampson Air Force Base, where approximately 750,000 Service Members trained over three decades during World War II and the Cold War era.

#### Ceremony Particulars:

**What:** Memorial Day Observance Honoring Purple Heart Recipients and Sampson Veterans

**When:** Memorial Day, Monday, May 25, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.; ribbon-cutting ceremony to dedicate the cemetery's new maintenance building and columbarium at 1:30 p.m. with formal Memorial Day ceremony to immediately follow at 2:00 p.m.

**Where:** New York State Veterans Cemetery – Finger Lakes, 6632 State Rt. 96A, Romulus, NY 14521.

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