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LOCAL

Ceremonies highlight Somerset's observance of Veterans Day 2026



Madolin Edwards
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Key Points

- Somerset County observed Veterans Day with two ceremonies honoring those who have served.
- A new Revolutionary War monument was dedicated on the courthouse plaza.
- Retired Marine Master Sgt. Brock Hemminger served as the guest speaker at the annual observance.

Somerset observed Veterans Day Nov. 11 with two ceremonies honoring the nation's first veterans and all who have served since..

The Great Glades Chapter Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) dedicated the new Somerset County Revolutionary War monument, a black granite piece on the courthouse plaza. The project got its start in 2024 when William Lehman, president of the Great Glades Chapter, asked members to spearhead the effort. All agreed, he said.

The group first estimated the cost at $10,000; it ended up near $52,000, Lehman said.

"We got lots of support from citizens and organizations. Donations were anywhere from $10 to the thousands," he said after the ceremony.

Artist Don Troiani designed the monument. Clear View Memorials & Monument Co. of Berlin built it.

The memorial will include a memory medallion with a code people can scan by phone to reach www.memorymedallion.com. Searching "Great Glades" brings up names and information on on the Revolutionary War veterans. The list will grow as research continues and the public shares information.

More: Somerset SAR set to dedicate new Revolutionary War Memorial Nov. 11

Brian Fochtman, chairman of Somerset County Commissioners, said the board was happy to support the project when SAR proposed it.

"I did not realize we did not have a Revolutionary War memorial. Without them, the rest of the memorials wouldn't be here," he said.

Fochtman said he hopes the memorial sparks young people's interest in what the men and women did to build this country's foundation.

Veterans Day service

The annual Veterans Day observance followed in Courtroom No. 1, with music, ceremony and a guest speaker.

Retired Marine Master Sgt. Brock Hemminger, director of Somerset County Veterans Services, was the guest speaker. He told of his grandfather, who was 21 when he landed at Utah Beach during the Normandy invasion.

"All he knew was the weight on his back, the cold water and the job ahead of him," Hemminger said.

He said his grandfather suffered an abdominal wound and lay torn open in a French field.

More: NSDAR presents area veteran with quilt in appreciation for his service

"Nobody in our family knows how long he laid out there," he said.

Hemminger said when his grandfather regained consciousness, he heard American voices. He called out. He survived.

"This county has never once sat out of a war. This ground knows sacrifice," Hemminger said. "Every man and woman who wore a uniform gave up something."

He challenged the public not just to remember what veterans did but to put it to work.

The ceremony included musical selections by Danny Conner, A Touch of Brass and Somerset Senior High School Chorale. Mark Weimer, U.S. Navy, Ret., was the master of ceremonies. Kerri Burtner and the Somerset County Honor Guard, made up of members from the American Legion 181, Veterans of Foreign Wars 587 and Marine Corps League Vietnam Veterans of America 587, conducted a flag folding ceremony. The flag was presented to Brock in memory of deceased Somerset County veterans.