

Inverness hosts Veterans Day Parade and 11th Hour Memorial Service

“Citrus County Honors Our National Guard and the Reserves”

The Twenty-ninth Annual Veterans Day Parade and 11th Hour Memorial Service will be held in the City of Inverness on Thursday, November 11, 2021 honoring our nation’s veterans with a special salute to our National Guard and the Reserves. The Grand Marshal for the parade is Brigadier General (ret.) Thomas J. Sellars.

Brigadier General (ret.) Sellars enlisted in the Massachusetts Army National Guard in 1974, received his commission from the Massachusetts Military Academy in 1977, and graduated from the U.S. Army Field Artillery School in 1978. After serving as the Commanding General of the Massachusetts Army National Guard, he retired honorably with 37 years of military service in 2011, followed by service as the Assistant Adjutant General, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Military Division until retiring from state executive service in 2014.

Brigadier General (ret.) Sellars served in numerous important command and staff positions to include: Field Artillery Battery Commander; Commander, 42nd Infantry Division (Mechanized) Artillery; Commanding General (Land Component) Massachusetts Army National Guard; Commander, Joint Force Headquarters; Joint Task Force Commander (Domestic Response); and Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations Massachusetts Army National Guard. During his wartime service in Iraq, he served as a key senior staff member at the U.S. Embassy on the Political, Military and Economic Development Team.

His military decorations and awards include: Distinguished Service Medal; Legion of Merit; Meritorious Service Medal w/ four Oak Leaf Clusters; Joint Service Commendation Medal; Army Commendation Medal w/three Oak Leaf Clusters; Air Force Commendation Medal; Army Achievement Medal w/two Oak Leaf Clusters; Iraq Campaign Medal; and many federal and state awards including the Massachusetts Medal of Merit w/two Oak Leaf Clusters.

Brigadier General (ret.) Sellars earned both a Bachelor and Master Degrees in Business Administration from Anna Marie College and a Master of Science Degree in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College.

PARADE LINE-UP TIME AND LOCATION

Line-up for parade participants will be between 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. at the Citrus High School parking lot. Parade participants should enter the line-up staging area from Highland Blvd. Parade marshals will direct parade participants to their assigned march serial location. There is no entry fee. **For the safety of parade spectators and participants, the throwing of candy or any objects along the parade route is strictly prohibited.**

PARADE TIME AND ROUTE

The Veterans Day Parade will begin at 10:00 a.m. The parade will proceed from the Citrus High School parking lot along W. Main St. (S.R. 44) to N. Pine Ave. to Courthouse Sq., pass by the Reviewing Area on the north side of the Old Courthouse Heritage Museum and terminate in the county courthouse parking lot on Martin Luther King Ave. Following the parade, Citrus County Transit will provide a shuttle service to transport participants from the parade's termination point to the line-up staging area.

PARADE CERTIFICATES

Certificates will be awarded to parade participants for the following categories: Best Veterans Service Organization; Best Veterans Service Organization Color Guard; Best Veterans Service Auxiliary; Best Veterans Service Auxiliary Color Guard; Best Junior Military Group; Best Junior Military Color Guard; Best High School Band; Best Middle School Band; Best Community Organization; Best Theme; Most Patriotic Entry; and Judges’ Choice.

PARTICIPANT/DISTINGUISHED GUEST PARKING

Parking will be reserved in the lot located adjacent to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. and Old Courthouse Sq. for vehicles picking up parade participants at the end of the parade route and for Memorial Service participants and distinguished guests.

SPECTATOR PARKING

Parade spectators may view the parade along the route. Spectator parking is available at the following locations.

- + Public parking lot, N. Pine Ave and Dampier St.
- + Public parking lot, N. Pine Ave. and W. Main St.
- + Public parking lot, N. Seminole Ave. and Tompkins St.
- + Courthouse Annex parking lot off of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Ave.
- + County Courthouse parking lot off of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Ave.
- + On street parking where permitted along N. and S. Apopka Ave.; N. and S. Osceola Ave.; N. and S. Pine Ave.; N. and S. Seminole Ave.; Citrus Ave.; S. Park Ave.; Tompkins St.; Dampier St. between North Apopka Ave. and Martin Luther King Ave.; Dampier St. between N. Pine Ave. and North Apopka Ave.; Emery St.; Grace St.; and Highland Blvd.

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOLLOWING THE PARADE

An 11th Hour Memorial Service honoring the service of our nation's veterans will be held at the north side of the Old Courthouse Heritage Museum following completion of the parade.

The Veterans Day Address will be presented by the Veterans Day Parade Grand Marshal Brigadier General (ret.) Sellars. Music for the service will be performed by members of the popular Nature Coast Community Band. The Crystal River NJROTC Color Guard will parade the Colors. Fred Daniels, Past Chairman Veterans Appreciation Week will present a POW/MIA Unseen Guest tribute. The Nature Coast Young Marines will conduct a Fallen Heroes tribute. To conclude the ceremony, the Daughters of the American Revolution Fort Cooper Chapter will lay a wreath at the memorial monuments on the Old Courthouse Heritage Museum grounds followed by a rifle salute by the Marine Corps League Detachment 1139 Honor Guard and the playing of Taps by the Nature Coast Community Band.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS POST 4337 LUNCHEON RECEPTION

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4337 and its Ladies Auxiliary will host a luncheon reception immediately following the 11th Hour Memorial Service for veteran service organization commanders, dignitaries and their guests. Post 4337 is located on State Road 44 East, Inverness.

OPERATION WELCOME HOME VETERANS LUNCH

Operation Welcome Home will host a lunch for veterans and their spouses immediately following the 11th Hour Memorial Service at the City of Inverness Depot located on W. Apopka Avenue, Inverness. The lunch will include a brief program with remarks by Citrus County Commissioner Ruthie Davis Schlabach.