

NEWS



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Orange County Executive

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For Immediate Release

11-9-11 THIS WEEK IN ORANGE COUNTY BY EDWARD A. DIANA

As many of us take time off from work and school on Friday, November 11 to recognize Veteran's Day, I think it's important that we also take time to reflect on the meaning and intent of the day, as well as the contributions of our nation's veterans. It is thanks to the hard work and sacrifices made by our brave men and women in uniform, both past and present, that allow us to enjoy the freedom and liberty we cherish so dearly. It is because of them that the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth – the land of the free and the home of the brave! The next time you see a service man or woman in uniform, no matter what day it is, I hope that you will take a moment to express your appreciation for all that they've done to keep our nation safe from harm.

Did you know that Orange County is home to more than 25,000 veterans of all ages? For veterans of the current War on Terrorism to World War II's "greatest generation", the Orange County Veterans Service Agency has a staff dedicated to helping these men and women receive the programs, services, and support they now need. Under the leadership of Director Tony Zippo, (a five-year veteran of the United States Navy, who served two tours of duty in Vietnam as an explosives expert) our team helps veterans through the often overwhelming and complicated paperwork necessary for processing claims and pensions. This year, \$41 million in benefits and compensation will be processed for veterans living in Orange County.

In addition to providing this critical assistance, Director Zippo and his team strive to help veterans in many aspects of their daily life where a need has been identified. For some, that means a ride to a medical appointment. Last year, Veterans Services provided more than 2,400 people with rides to VA health care services.

Tragically, some of these brave men and women who have sacrificed so much for our nation find it challenging to put food on their table for themselves and their loved ones. For those Orange County veterans who find themselves in that difficult position, we are fortunate to be able to help them out. The Orange County Veterans Food Pantry, with great support from our friends at ShopRite Supermarkets and the Food Bank of the Hudson Valley, provides home delivery of food and household items to 160 veterans and/or their families. More than 100,000 pounds of food will be delivered to those veterans in need this year.

Local businesses also have an opportunity to give back to our County's veterans by participating in the Veterans' Discount Program. Now in its third year, there are more than 400 participating businesses that offer discounts on products and services to veterans who show their Orange County discount card. Veterans can obtain the card by bringing proof of military service to the County Clerk's Pistol Permit office located at the Sheriff's office at 110 Wells Farm Road in Goshen.

To learn more about these and other programs and services provided by Orange County's Veterans Service Agency, visit the Orange County website at www.orangecountygov.com, call Director Zippo and his team at 291-2470, or make an appointment to visit their offices located at the beautiful Orange County Veterans Cemetery at 111 Craigville Road, Goshen.

If you treasure your freedom and your rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness – thank a veteran!

Until next week, wishing you good health and happiness,

Edward A. Diana, County Executive