

The Patriot Ledger

Weymouth parade honors veterans

By **Katherine Isbell**

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WEYMOUTH — Residents lined the streets between Jackson Square and the Ralph Talbot Amphitheater Sunday morning, braving the chilly temperatures, waving American flags handed out by volunteers and cheering as the town's Veterans Day Parade made its way past them.

This year, Veterans Day observances are even more meaningful than usual. This Veterans Day marked the 100th anniversary of the armistice that ended World War I, on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918.

The parade's honorary chief marshal was Sgt. Michael Chesna, who was killed in the line of duty this summer. He served in the U.S. Army, with two tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. His wife, Cindy, and their two children rode in a car in the parade. Weymouth resident and U.S. Navy veteran Sherman Smith, who served in World War II and died this year, was the parade's honorary chief of staff.

Members of local veterans' groups and civic organizations walked in the parade, as well as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the Weymouth High School and Middle School marching bands, Weymouth cheerleaders and members of the town's sports teams.

A ceremony followed the parade at the Ralph Talbot Amphitheater, which is named for the Weymouth native who was killed while serving in the U.S. Marine Corps. during World War I. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism.

Marine Corps. Lt. Col. Thomas McGee spoke at the ceremony, reflecting on the spirit of service and selflessness in our country's service members. He also recognized the military heroes that came from Weymouth, from the American Revolution to the present day.

"It's just an honor and a responsibility carrying on the legacy of all of our veterans from this area who have fought for all that this nation stands for," McGee said.

Also in attendance at the ceremony were multiple members of the town council and school committee, as well as State Representative James Murphy, who read a Veterans Day proclamation from Gov. Charlie Baker.

"Weymouth is a home for heroes, and it always will be," said Mayor Robert Hedlund.

"Just as President Wilson charged, I submit that when we act together in the name of peace and justice for all, we have no real foe," McGee said.

The object of the event, George Pontes, the town's veterans' agent explained, was to honor our veterans and remember to do so each and every day.

"It's a day that the entire community has a chance to thank their friends, family and neighbors, and recognize their service and heroism," Pontes said.