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•Veterans of Foreign Wars Downriver Post 7487 held its annual Memorial Day celebration and ceremony Monday at the "Circle of Honor" monument in Academy Park in Lewiston. Cmdr. Gordon Spencer served as master of ceremonies. Veteran and New York State Sen. Robert Ortz delivered the keynote address. Boy Scout Troop 824 conducted a flag-folding ceremony, and Santino Hall led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ortz said, in part, "We, I believe, have an obligation – not just those who wore the uniform. Those who wore the uniform, I believe firmly, would tell you that their oath to this country didn't end when they took the uniform off. My oath to my country didn't end when the uniform came off. It is a lifetime oath, for me.

"There's a lot of folks who never wore the uniform. You still have an obligation. You are the keeper of the legacy of those who did not come back home."

Ortz paid tribute to the late Col. Bruce Sutherland, former Village of Lewiston trustee and deputy mayor, who passed last December.

"I recently inducted Bruce Sutherland into the New York State (Senate) Veterans Hall of Fame. And I know Bruce is not with us in body today, but certainly in spirit," Ortz said. "I know he was a big part of making this

ring of honor become a reality. Certainly, someone who served his country, his community; and it was an honor for me to be able to induct him into the Veterans Hall of Fame."

He closed by paraphrasing a quote from Gen. George S. Patton. "A lot of times we wonder why we have parades, and we have a day off, and parties on Memorial Day," Ortz said. "It seems like it would trash the solemnity of why we're really having this weekend. But he said, 'Do not mourn the people who have given their lives for this country. We should celebrate that such men lived.' ...

"That always meant a lot to me, because I really do believe that we should celebrate their lives; we should celebrate their service; we should celebrate that they were willing to give it all so that we could have this – and have the opportunity to continue to live free; to continue to live in the best country in the world; to continue to make it the best country in the world.

"That is worthy. It is worthy of reflection, but it is also really a celebration."

Sutherland's wife, Jackie, and former VFW Downriver Post 7487 Cmdr. Bill Justyk carried the memorial wreath in front of the "Circle of Honor" monument. Veterans and grandchildren then placed flowers in the garland. (Photos by Joshua Maloni)

•Members of Lake Ontario VFW Post 313 joined with Youngstown Troop 829, the Old Fort Niagara Honor Guard and members of the community on Monday in a Memorial Day service in the Old Fort Niagara Cemetery. The purpose was to honor the ultimate sacrifice made by those while in military service for the United States of America.

The meaningful program opened with a performance of "The Star Spangled Banner" by musician Lew Custode, and included prayers for peace, offered by the Rev. Cole Webster of St. Bernard's/St. Peter's R.C. parish; and remarks by Post 313 Cmdr. Ed Jackson, a U.S. Army drill sergeant who served in the Vietnam War.

"Today, in front of us we have what is called 'The Solder's Cross,'" Jackson said. "When I was in Vietnam, part of the ritual that we would do was to set up a 'Soldier's Cross.' It would represent the soldiers that we have lost during that last time period that we were out. It could be anywhere from one to 10 to 15 – you'd never know exactly; but it was the only service we had while were there to remember the ones that we have lost.

"This cross here today represents the different conflicts the United States have been in – the coat, from Vietnam, the weapon from the first World War, the Kevlar

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