



SENATOR WEBER HONORS VETERANS – 4TH ANNUAL VETERANS RECEPTION

BY: Keith S. Shikowitz, Editor in Chief/Investigative Reporter



In the United States we honor many different people and groups for various reasons, winning a championship in sports, performances in movies and plays, doing charitable works. These things get a lot of fanfare and publicity. One group that is generally honored only at particular times of the year like Memorial Day and Veterans Day are the people who put their lives on the line so we can enjoy the freedoms that we have. Our veterans. Well Senator Bill Weber has seen fit to honor them in the middle of no particular holiday. He sponsored his 4th Annual Veterans Reception at the Nyack Seaport on June 17, 2026.

Weber began the festivities by thanking the distinguished veterans and esteemed guests. “I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for gracing us with your presence tonight for our 4th Veteran Appreciation Reception, together we honor and pay tribute to the extraordinary men and women who have fearlessly served our great nation in safeguarding the principles and values we hold dear. The first year we held this reception, I made the mistake of doing the National Anthem first, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and then the Invocation. Thankfully this was pointed out to me, so now I know it's God and country, so we do them in that order.”

He got a little comedic, “We did have everyone eat first because I can't stop 225 people from getting your food.”

He continued, “Joining us today is, to do the invocation is a Korean War Veteran. I think most of you know him, Reverend Warren Brandt, who served in, the Navy during the Korean War. He's looking good and he's, he's ready, ready for another 50 years.” Everyone stood for the invocation.

When he finished, Weber introduced a man he called a good friend of ours, someone that needs no introduction, Vietnam Veteran Hall of Fame member as well, New York State, Roy Tschudy to lead the group in the Pledge of Allegiance

“Good evening everybody. First, I think we should give a nice round of applause to Senator Weber. The second thing, I've been like many of you to many of these events throughout many years and one thing I've always seen that people are remiss on is to give a round of applause to all the servers, the people who worked so hard to put this together. I think as a courtesy, we should thank you. With the greatest respect, I appreciate so much that you would ask me to do this. However, today we have with us. The 2026 Veteran of the Year, my friend Ray Furlong. He gave that honor to Furlong.

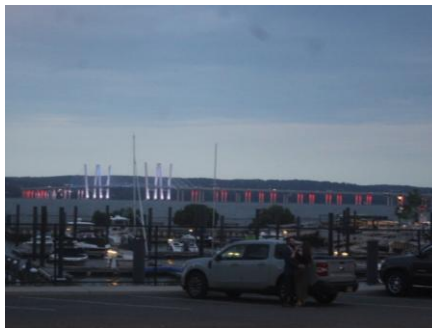
The final preliminary was Ava Aston singing the National Anthem.

Weber came back to the mike and asked for everyone to have a brief moment of silence to remember the veterans and loved ones we've lost since our last reception in last June.

“Thank you, everyone. Each year, as we plan for this event, we know we're going to have a filled room. I think anyone who's been here the last number of years know we have about 225 people that we maxed out in this room. We limit the amount of people like elected officials that we have and non-veterans and families so that we can maximize the room for our veterans, but I'd like to right now, introduce Clarkstown Supervisor George Hoehmann to say a few words to acknowledge the elected officials and dignitaries that are here tonight.

<https://youtu.be/VmNmfpAff-g>

When Hoehmann finished, Weber announced a couple of things. “I'd like to let everyone know that after tonight's event, we have a little more program. We're going to have dessert, and I've been instructed that no one is allowed to leave until they have dessert. The cake, so we're going to have to, but, we've arranged again, as we always do, to have the Tappan Zee Bridge lit up, red, white, and blue.



It's a beautiful event, and we appreciate the bridge, being lit up for us, every year so far. You can see we have a large stack of Girl Scout cookies that the girls did, they were donated by the Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Dominic Phillip. Dominic was very instrumental in getting. He's a former New York State veteran Hall of Famer. He's worked with the volunteer coordination of Operation Cookie Drop to provide 220 boxes of cookies here tonight. We want to thank Dominic and the Girl Scout and Hudson generosity.

<https://youtu.be/EIwObdPfc-g>

Ed Day, County Executive came to the podium. “The good thing about coming up after George Hoehmann is that there's very little for me to say.”

He looked at Hoehmann and said, “Make sure you're re-elected, by the way.”

“The second thing you goes out to everybody in this room whether you served this country in uniform, whether you was part of the family that stayed home, or worry about you or a loved one being overseas. That's something I'm seeing now with my with my with my son. Where's Dominic? My son Michael has served the same way, Special forces. I think it's important, and I thank Senator Weber for a reason. It's important that we have an opportunity to thank you all on a regular basis, to do the very best we can for all of you on a regular basis, to actually get the job done always for you.”

“This is where Susan comes in. I know the rumor is that with the old-time veterans be difficult. A lady laughed out loud, “That must be the wife of one of them.” “We lost Jerry, which was difficult for all of us. The reality is we had to find someone who could fill his shoes and hopefully at that time. Susan came to our attention. There were some who doubted her ability. I felt very resolute about what she could do, what she would do. The bottom line is that I'm very proud of the fact that have Susan here in Rockland County doing the right thing for all our veterans each and every time. And that's something that's very, very important, as I said I mentioned earlier. With that, I want to acknowledge, acknowledge the veteran of the Year.” Day explained.

The award of recognition of Susan Brennan I could not have been more satisfied and happy. Susan has grown this job to the point where she's doing the right thing on a regular basis and making us look good and most importantly, doing the right thing for all of us if we serve this country. Over the last day. Thank you, we have, we also have, an award to be given out.



Now Susan, I think I'm going to ask you to hold this. He handed her a poster sized declaration for the Veterans Hall of Fame.



<https://youtu.be/jeuXkSysSaA>

“I was resistant to accept the award because I feel like I simply do my job, but reflecting on receiving this award, I'm very thankful that I did accept, because I do find that I have a lot of people to thank. Given the platform, I think it allows me to do that. First of all, we have elected officials that in this county not only are accessible for us as veterans, but they listen to us and they're proactive. Thank you so much for your Veterans Advisory Council. It's a fabulous thing that you do. Thank you, Senator Weber.”

She said that Ed Day, her boss, goes along with whatever she asks for. As a veteran, if she asks him for something, we get it. So, thank you for helping us and being always, always connected with us. Some days as a veteran service officer it's challenging. She wanted to thank her VSA staff, some of which are here tonight, and her partner in crime, Howard Gerber, because they keep her as sane and rational as she can be. “Believe me, they keep me off the ledge and I'm starting a lot of fights. Thank you because you definitely keep me grounded.”

“Now I want to recognize those people that really, really make a difference in my world because my job is not possible without a community that helps support veterans. I really like those people to stand right now, those people that accept my call or my email. Sometimes it's Friday at 4:30 when we get that homeless veteran walking in, and the bureaucracy is there. Sometimes their service is there and sometimes there isn't. I just don't know how I would navigate this and help people if it wasn't for you. So, if you are a veteran, a leader, an individual that I've called or emailed and said, hey, I have a veteran and I need some help, can you stand right now? Half of you stood. That's the way it goes. It really does take a community, and I've got to tell you, we've got a fantastic veteran community, and I really feel blessed because you make my job easy. Thank you.”

After Brennan finished, there was a raffle for some quilts that were hand made by the Heritage Quilters of the Hudson Palisades. Weber came back to the podium. He thanked John Mulgrew for conducting the raffle drawings.

“I want to thank The Heritage Quilters of the Hudson Palisades for really going above and beyond, and we thank you for doing that every year. I want to just come back to where I talked about earlier. We're here to show our appreciation to all veterans, but I do want to acknowledge we have a World War II veteran here tonight.”

The veteran he was referring to is 99-year-old Marty Hyman.



He mentioned a couple of Korean War Veterans and concluded the program.