



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: News Media

From: Bamberg County Administration

Date: November 13, 2023

Re: Bamberg County and City Celebrate Veterans Day and the Grand Opening of Veterans Park

Bamberg, South Carolina (November 2023) – On November 11, 2023 at 11 a.m., Bamberg County Council joined Bamberg Mayor Nancy Foster and Bamberg City Council at Bamberg Veterans Park to commemorate Veterans Day and to celebrate the grand opening of the park, a collaboration between the county, city, and state that has been years in the making.

The Honorable Mayor Nancy Foster presided over the ceremony that featured:

- Presentation and retirement of the Colors by Bamberg-Ehrhardt JROTC Color Guard
- Invocation by Reverend Evert Comer
- Patriotic musical selections from 1st Lieutenant Jordan D. Smith
- Special guest speaker Major General Van McCarty, South Carolina's 29th Adjutant General
- Recognition of all veterans in attendance with a medley of the official service songs from each military branch
- Quilts of Valor "Wrapping" Ceremony
- Official dedication of Bamberg Veterans Park with a prayer by City Councilman Corey Ramsey
- Benediction by City Councilman Corey Ramsey
- Lunch

Additionally, Bamberg County Council adopted two resolutions at their last meeting: one to honor South Carolina Veterans and one to honor the South Carolina National Guard. Both resolutions were framed and included Bamberg County 125th Anniversary Challenge Coins; County Administrator Joey Preston and Vice Chairman Evert Comer presented the SC National Guard Resolution to Major General McCarty and the

Veterans Resolution to Bamberg County Veterans Affairs Director Craig Walker. Preston also said Bamberg County will add a memorial brick to the Bamberg County Memorial Trail in honor of McCarty.

During his Veterans Day message, Major General McCarty, a 1982 graduate of The Citadel with more than 36 years of service including his current post as South Carolina's 29th Adjutant General, thanked everyone for coming out despite the cold and rainy weather conditions. He quoted an old military adage, "If it ain't raining, we ain't training," which drew laughter from the audience. McCarty also acknowledged and congratulated Bamberg City and County Council on the park dedication and Veterans Day celebration, stating, "Things don't generally happen by themselves; someone has to make them happen." McCarty said, "It's an honor to be in beautiful Bamberg County. This is what America and Veterans Day is all about...small towns where people know each other, work together, and help each other."

Reflecting upon the original Armistice Day on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918, McCarty noted that despite the intention of that day to mark the end of all wars, there are still "about 30 ongoing wars across the world today," acknowledging our nation's imperfections and inability to always get it right as was the case with the Vietnam War. The Major General recognized Vietnam War veterans and apologized for how some of them were treated when they returned home from combat and then ardently thanked them for their service. Additionally, he recognized Marines in attendance, wishing them a happy 248th birthday and emphasized the importance of also thanking the family members and spouses of service members.

Bamberg Mayor Nancy Foster said one of the highlights of the program is the "wrapping" of veterans by the Quilts of Valor Foundation. Including one veteran who had a homebound ceremony, ten veterans were honored with a quilt. Members of the Anderson Quilts of Valor Foundation made the trip to Bamberg to personally present and wrap the veterans with their handmade, 100% cotton quilts that were meant to be "treasured but also used." The 2023 Bamberg Veterans Day Program QOV honorees are: Millard Bessinger, Larry Comer, Raymond DeRienzo, Marion Ray Dobson, Doris Moore Fisk, Michael Grant, Maurice Kirkland, Ronald Meeks, Pamela Rice, and Abraham Williams.

"Despite the cold, it is a privilege to be here to welcome and thank our veterans...and we must also thank God that we still have the ability to FEEL something whether it's a chill in our bones or gratitude to those who have put it all on the line for our country," said Vice Chairman Reverend Evert Comer, who is also a United States Army Veteran.

During his Veterans Park Prayer Dedication, City Councilman Corey Ramsey said, "Just as the fathers of this nation said all men are created equal, we dedicate this ground to

be one of hope and peace, and we boldly declare we will have a bright and prosperous future.”

Bamberg County Administrator Joey Preston said Veterans Park is a “beautiful haven that will serve as a symbol of unity and gratitude and stands as a testament of the collaborative efforts of various government entities and businesses that have come together to create a space that honors the service and sacrifice of our veterans.” He elaborated, “Before this park became the tranquil haven we see today, it was the result of the dedication and cooperation of Bamberg County, the City of Bamberg, Bamberg Board of Public Works, Bamberg County Forfeited Land Commission, SC Parks and Recreation, the Bamberg C-Fund Committee, Representative Justin Bamberg, Senator Brad Hutto, SC DOT, Keck and Woods Engineering, Alliance Consulting Engineers, Craig, Gaulden, and & Davis Architecture, STANTEC Planners, Walls Landscaping, Evans Electrical, and yes, even the IRS. Together, they made it possible to clear and revitalize this space, transforming it into the Veterans Park we are proud to call our own.”

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For more information on this press release, email info@bambergcounty.sc.gov.