

**September 13, 2015**  
**Shelburne Veterans Memorial Dedication**  
**Gary von Stange, Chair, Shelburne Selectboard**

**Good afternoon. I am honored and humbled that Colonel Ockert and the Shelburne Veterans Memorial Committee asked me to speak at this dedication ceremony.**

**On behalf of the Town of Shelburne, thank you all for coming today. Thank you to the Norwich University Band and to its director Lieutenant Colonel Todd Edwards. Thank you to our local Boy Scouts Troop and their Scoutmaster, my friend, Jim Brangan. Thank you to musicians Lori, Serena and Joanne Magnan, Steve Dates and Bruce McCrae. Thank you to Reverend Leopold Bilodeau, United States Marine Corp. Chaplain. Thank you to our Guest Speaker Lieutenant Colonel Michael Palaza.**

**In particular, I offer the town's thanks to the Shelburne Veterans Memorial Committee who have worked so hard to bring us this memorial.**

**This is a proud moment in our town's history. Today, the Town of Shelburne not only thanks and honors our Veterans for their service, we also dedicate a particular place, a section of our Town Parade**

**Ground, to recognize and remember veterans who have served our country in times of war and in times of peace.**

**Today, I ask all of you to look around. Look at your neighbors. Look at the people alongside you. Today, in the beautiful town of Shelburne, we stand in the midst of patriots and alongside families and friends of those who have so nobly served our country.**

**The Town of Shelburne is proud to support this memorial. We are a town that recognizes the importance of our Veterans. We are a town that embraces those who have served. This town, our community, has voted to support this memorial. And with the support of so many, we have successfully laid 368 bricks, each one of which represents a hero connected in some way to the Town of Shelburne.**

**Today we make those who have gone before us proud. Our values, our love of and demand for liberty and justice, stand safe today because of the brave men and women who were and remain ready to face intense, severe and perilous challenges. The Town of Shelburne thanks each and every one of them.**

**There is a confidence, an intimacy and an appreciation that can be felt at this hallowed place. You might be**

**related to someone remembered here. You might be a friend or a neighbor. Here in Shelburne, we can now share in the kinship made possible by this memorial. And when you visit here, and I hope you do often, you will be surrounded not only by the spirit of this town, you will also be surrounded by the spirit, the fight and the courage of those whose names are inscribed on these bricks.**

**In particular, I encourage Shelburne students to visit this memorial often. In this memorial, you will find true heroes. You will find a memorial emblazoned with plaques that read United States of America Department of the Navy, United States of America Department of the Army, the United States Marine Corp., the Department of the Air Force, the United States Coast Guard and the United States Merchant Marine.**

**You will find a memorial of inlaid bricks for soldiers from as far back as Drummer David Nichols from the Revolutionary War, from the Civil War, WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam including Medal of Honor Recipient Colonel Donald Cook, U.S. Marine Corp., the Cold War, the Persian Gulf War, Afghanistan, Iraq. And above all of these bricks, often rippling in a strong Vermont wind, is our American flag. I ask you to come back, come back often, come to connect, come**

**to learn, come to consume the spirit of this place, come to share in its sacredness, and come to respect. And together, let us preserve the integrity of this special place for the future.**

**We will use this memorial as a place to assemble, to come together, a place to heal, a place to learn. We dedicate this memorial so that our children and their children will learn lessons of freedom from their parents and their parents' parents. We dedicate this memorial as a place to acknowledge and respect those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom. We dedicate this site as a sacred place in Shelburne where people will gather to think and to remember.**

**I never served in our military. I am not a Veteran. But my father was. My wife's mother was. They and others taught us the importance of respecting our Veterans. So I ask you, please spend some time to think about the freedom you enjoy today and every day. And should you cherish that freedom as I do, then please thank a Veteran, please thank a Veteran living here in Shelburne.**

**To all our Veterans, to our Veterans memorialized here, and to those who contributed to bring this magnificent memorial to fruition, on behalf of the Town of Shelburne, thank you.**