



## Vets' Grave Marker Restoration Mission Kicks Off May 13



Hundreds of veterans' grave markers scattered across Potter County have become difficult, if not impossible, to read. The Potter County Veterans Service Committee has embarked on an ambitious plan to rectify the situation. Members Bill Simpson, Paul Heimel and Dawn Wooster are recruiting volunteers to "adopt" these headstones and be responsible for their maintenance so that these veterans are never forgotten.

A kickoff event is scheduled for 9 am Saturday, May 13, at the Eulalia Cemetery on Rt. 6 west in Coudersport. After a brief veterans memorial ceremony, volunteers will fan out across the cemetery to clean the stones. Those interested in joining the work bee on May 13 or otherwise supporting the project at the Eulalia Cemetery should contact cemetery board president Steve Erway ([steven.erway@northwest.com](mailto:steven.erway@northwest.com)).

A nationally known Floridian known as the "good cemeterian," Andrew Lumish, is advising the local committee. Lumish has been quietly going about his one-man public service mission of cleaning veterans' grave markers for several years. Over the past year, he has been featured in *Reader's Digest* and several national television newscasts.

A separate component of the plan is development of a website and database pinpointing the location of each veteran's grave and listing information on military veterans buried in Potter County. Goal is to display online both photographs and biographical sketches of veterans buried in Potter County.



Andrew Lumish

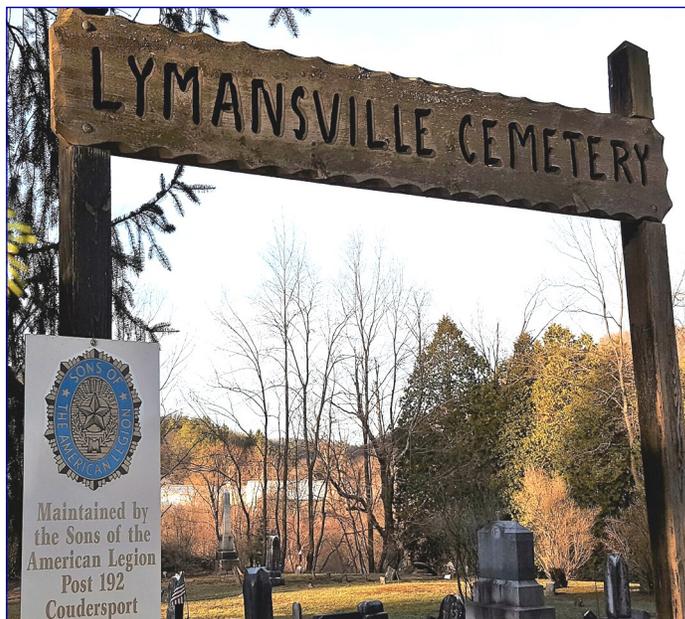
The committee has acquired dozens of grave restoration kits, including an environmentally safe cleaning solution. Start-up expenses have been covered through donations to a veterans service fund administered by the county commissioners, as well as a donation from Mike Pepper, owner of Cornerstone Business Solutions. Detailed instructions will be provided to cemetery caretakers and volunteers to assure that markers are not damaged. Volunteers will be encouraged to "adopt" one or more grave markers and passing along that responsibility to future generations.

The committee is compiling a list of potential volunteers and others interested in being regularly updated on the project. Those seeking to be included on the list are asked to call or email Dawn Wooster at 814-274-8290, extension 207, or [dwooster@pottercountypa.net](mailto:dwooster@pottercountypa.net).

# Restoring Veterans' Honor at Lymansville Cemetery

Who's buried in the Lymansville Cemetery? Many of the records from the county-owned burial grounds on the border of the Maple View property in east Coudersport were destroyed in the 1992 Maple View Rest Home fire. A quarter-century later, the Potter County Veterans Service Committee and members of the Potter Post 192 Sons of the American Legion set out on a mission to identify and restore the grave markers of military veterans who are buried at Lymansville.

A work bee on April 18, combined with research conducted at the Potter County Historical Society Museum, set the tone. Among the more notable accomplishments was the uncovering and restoration of Major Isaac Lyman's marker. Major Lyman was an important figure in the founding of Potter County and served with valor during the Revolutionary War. He died at Lymansville (now Ladona) in 1827. Matt Grossman and Tom Taylor from the Sons of the American Legion scrubbed a stone believed to be Major Lyman's and were thrilled to reveal his name confirming their find.



Potter County's Lymansville Cemetery is maintained by members of the Sons of the American Legion in Coudersport. The cemetery, located off Rt. 872 next to the Potter County Veterans Center, has a fascinating history, as detailed in the article below.

## 'Our Cemetery'

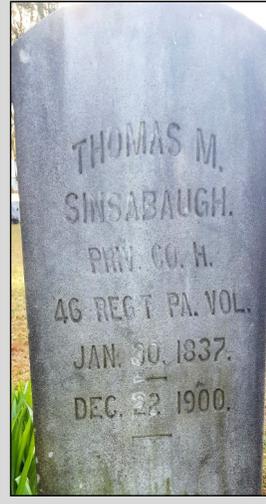
Lymansville Cemetery draws its name from the village – sort of a suburb of Coudersport – that was located at the intersection of Rts. 6 and 872. The area is still sometimes referred to as "Ladona," but it was originally named for one of Potter County's founding families, the Lymans.

When the U.S. Rt. 6 corridor was expanded to extend across all of northern Pennsylvania, the project involved relocation of the original Lymansville Cemetery, which was located smack dab in the middle of the proposed route. "Potter's Field" had already been established as a cemetery for the indigent on the county's Maple View property, so that was extended to become the new Lymansville Cemetery.



Matt Grossman (left) and Tom Taylor located the indecipherable marker of a Revolutionary War veteran Major Isaac Lyman, and brought it back to life. One of his sons, Edwin Lyman, served in the Civil War.

## Lymansville Cemetery (continued)



An initial cleaning of the grave markers for Civil War veterans Cassius C. Warren and Thomas M. Sinsabaugh showed impressive results. Volunteers will soon return to the Lymansville Cemetery to finish the job.

Markers for three of the cemetery's four Civil War veterans were also identified and cleaned — Uriah F. Glase, who died in the historic Battle of Fredericksburg (Va.) on Dec. 13, 1862; Thomas M. Sinsabaugh, and Cassius C. Warren.

Sinsabaugh was wounded on May 25, 1862, in the First Battle of Winchester (Va.) and was taken prisoner. He also fought in the battles of Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, Kennesaw Mountain, Atlanta, and Peach Tree Creek. Pvt. Sinsabaugh was among the soldiers under the command of Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman in his 1864 March to the Sea. After the war, he became an engineer and settled in Sweden Valley. He died on Dec. 22, 1900.

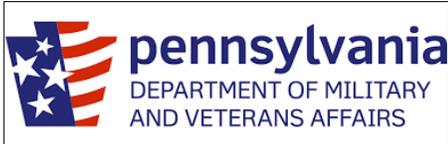
Sons of the American Legion have been voluntary caretakers of the cemetery for many years. Post 192 annually places flags at the veterans' graves in advance of Memorial Day. Research will continue and an ongoing veterans' grave marker maintenance plan will be developed.



Representing the Sons of the American Legion were (from left) Tom Taylor, John Welsh, Matt Grossman, Dick Chapell and Ted Parsell.

# News & Notes

## Veterans Never Have to Pay For Assistance



Sadly, there are some sharp operators out there who are intent on taking advantage of Pennsylvania's military veterans. Brig. Gen. Tony Carelli, the state's adjutant general, reminds vets and their dependents that they never have to pay for help when they're seeking benefits. "We continue to see businesses, individuals and organizations who offer 'free' help, but

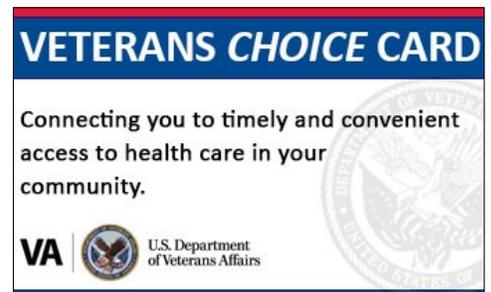
in the end they issue a bill under the guise of financial planning or some other service rendered," Gen. Carelli pointed out. Legitimate organizations such as the Pa. Dept. of Military and Veterans Affairs offer assistance for free. Each county has a certified Veterans Affairs representative, too. Also offering free help are organizations such as the American Legion, VFW and Disabled American Veterans. Among the available benefits are burial allowances and related help with grave markers and headstones, the Disabled Veterans Real Estate Tax Exemption Program, emergency assistance, pensions for blind and paralyzed veterans, the Educational Gratuity Program, disability pensions, federal health care benefits and survivor benefits.

Details can be found at [dmva.pa.gov](http://dmva.pa.gov).

## Health Care 'Choice Program' Tweaked

Three years after passing a Veterans Choice Program that had multiple flaws, Congress has approved an amended version. Goal of the long-debated act is to bring health care to qualified military veterans when they can't access VA medical facilities due to delays or other obstacles.

The 2014 Choice Program allowed veterans to see private doctors if the waiting list at VA clinics was a month long, or if the veterans lived more than 40 miles from a VA facility. More than 7 million appointments have been scheduled with community providers for medical services ranging from diagnostic tests and physical therapy to heart and cancer care. The amended act streamlines the process between the VA and community providers, and reduces the burden on veterans and the local or regional providers who serve them.



## American Legion Post 192 Honors Citizen of Year



Winner of this year's American Legion Post 192 Citizen of the Year Award is Potter County Commissioner Paul W. Heimel (right). Legionnaires chose him for the special honor because of his advocacy and support for military veterans at the local, state and federal levels. He serves on the Potter County Veterans Service Committee; the Military and Veterans Affairs Committee for the County Commissioners Assn. of Pa.; the National Veterans and Military Service Committee, and has most recently been named an ambassador for the Education Center at the Wall, a museum and learning center to be built on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Post 192 Adjutant Ted Parsell presented the award.

**Potter County Veterans News** is a publication of the Potter County Veterans Affairs Department. Copies are available for download from the county's website, [pottercountypa.net](http://pottercountypa.net). For more information, contact Paul Heimel at 814.274.8290, Ext. 203.