

State Health Commissioner Spent the Afternoon at the New York State Veterans Home in Oxford Celebrating its 125th Anniversary

Commissioner Also Recognized the Legacy of the Woman's Relief Corps

ALBANY, N.Y. (September 14, 2022) – State Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett today presided over the celebration of the 125th Anniversary of New York State's Veterans Home at Oxford, which has provided New York's veterans and their families with care and compassion for 125 years.

"Since its inception 125 years ago, our State's Veterans Home at Oxford has been a cornerstone of care for New York's veterans and their loved ones," **State Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett said.** "Through the efforts and compassion of the Woman's Relief Corps, this veterans home became a place where family members did not have to be separated when they were unable to care for themselves. I am honored to be able to celebrate the legacy of the Woman's Relief Corps, the 125th Anniversary of the Oxford Veterans Home, and the men and women who have served our nation and call this place their home. Along with our other three veterans homes in Batavia, Montrose and St. Albans, we continue to provide compassionate and quality to veterans throughout New York State."

In the 1890's, the Woman's Relief Corps, the auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, persuaded New York State to establish and maintain a home, which a veteran could enter accompanied by his wife without separating them in their advanced years. Before the establishment of the home, veterans could be admitted to the New York State Soldiers and Sailors Home at Bath, New York, but no provision was made for the wives of such veterans and they were left to care for themselves.

On April 18, 1897, with the support of the Grand Army of the Republic's auxiliary, the Woman's Relief Corps Home opened its doors to serve the veterans and their spouses, so that they could remain together in their advanced years.

Over the decades, there have been many changes, including the current structure, which was opened in 2009 and offers every veteran a home-like environment in private rooms. However, the one constant has been the State of New York's commitment to ensuring that New York's veterans are provided the highest quality of care in state-of-the-art facilities with dedicated, caring, and compassionate staff.

The 125th anniversary celebration was an outdoor event and involved historical displays including the 1897 registrar's book, wedding certificates, military uniforms, a Civil War cannon, and military vehicles among the many artifacts and photos.

Administrator of the Veterans Home Kurt D. Apthorpe said, "The Veterans Home at Oxford has a long and storied history, and to this day, 125 years later, we continue to exemplify New York State's commitment to veterans. I am privileged to serve our veterans, their families, and the surrounding community."

Supporting the 125th anniversary celebration were the 137th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment Civil War re-enactors, U.S. Army New York National Guard 204th Engineer Battalion, the Veterans Home at Oxford Resident Council, and numerous local advocates and veterans.

Commissioner Bassett was joined at the event by a representative of congresswoman Claudia L. Tenney, Assemblyman Joseph G. Angelino, Acting President of the NYS Veterans Home Board of Visitors Mary Lou Platt and Oxford Town Historian Vicky House. Oxford Home employees and veterans also shared their personal stories.

About the New York State Veterans Home at Oxford

The [New York State Veterans Home at Oxford](#), operated by the Department of Health, provides skilled nursing care and short-term rehabilitation to eligible veterans, their dependent spouse, and Gold Star parents. The New York State Veterans Home at Oxford's mission is to provide the highest quality skilled nursing home care and services to New York State veterans and their families in a family-oriented environment through proven and innovative programs, services, and activities. The Veterans Home at Oxford currently cares for over 100 residents, employs over 300 workers, and is a large contributor to the local economy. Since the establishment of the Veterans Home at Oxford, three additional Veterans Homes were built and continue to serve Veterans and family members under the operation of the NYS Department of Health.

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