

CIVICS SUMMIT

OCTOBER 24, 2025

PRESENTED BY



HELD AT



SEAL OF CIVIC READINESS PROGRAM
ALIGNED WITH NYSED CIVIC STANDARDS

OPERATIONDEMOCRACY.ORG



OUR GOALS

- Elevate Civic Education to State and National Prominence
- Establish a Credible Pathway to the Seal of Civic Readiness
- Instill Civic Readiness through an in-depth exploration of democracy in action, as seen through the events and legacy of Normandy.
- Build a Clear Menu of Civic Learning Opportunities
- Inspire Patriotism and Civic Duty Through History

WHERE WE ARE TODAY

- Operation Democracy Civics Summit: In-district high school program with Veterans Luncheon, held in November.
- Flags for Freedom: Memorial Day/June event honoring graduating seniors with flag ceremonies.
- The Normandy Curriculum: K–12 curriculum with flexible implementation, includes assemblies and classroom lessons.
- Normandy Delegation: June 4–9 student trip to Normandy for 11th–12th graders (independently funded)

WHERE WE ARE GOING

- Dual-Enrollment Program in Development: Discussions underway with a NYS Private University to establish a dual-enrollment program, offering high school students the opportunity to earn college credit while still in school.
- Curriculum Implementation Support: Endowment-funded instructional teams will train district educators directly, ensuring consistent and high-quality implementation of the curriculum.
- Expansion of Civic and Patriotic Education K-12: Continued growth and enhancement of programs focused on civic responsibility and patriotic education.

contact

MARGARET MARCHAND - (516) 528-4976 - Margaret@operationdemocracy.org
LAUREN THEMIS - (516) 815-4431 - Lauren@operationdemocracy.org

operationdemocracy.org

Civics Summit

Partnerships:

- Holy Child Acedemy
- Patton Foundation
- Stand with Vets
- Camp Patton
- American Legion
- AVA
- Locust Valley American Legion
- Bayville American Legion
- Walk Among Heroes

Cost:

Our Goal is free attendance for students and staff

- Complimentary lunch and waters provided throughout the day
- Transportation would be at the cost of each district
- All materials and handouts provided through Operation Democracy and it's partners

Date: October 24, 2025

Subject:

Civics Seal of Readiness Summit: Empowering Students with a True Understanding of Civil Liberties, Rights, and Responsibilities as Defined by the Constitution. Becoming a Civic-Minded Citizen Through Service to Country in All Forms

Goal:

To ensure that students graduate with a strong understanding of their civic responsibilities, including service to their country and community, as well as their rights under the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the law. They will be able to apply this knowledge within the U.S. and in a global context - Think Locally Act Globally

CIVICS SUMMIT AGENDA

Nassau Community College CCB Multi Purpose Room

- 8:30 Arrival & Registration
- 8:50 Welcome and Introductions: Cathy Soref, Margaret Marchand, Lauren Themis of Operation Democracy
- 9:00 National Anthem: performed by Holy Child Academy Select Choir
- 9:10 Opening Speaker: David Spinnato, East Meadow Union. Free School District - Flags for Freedom
- 9:20 Film Presentation: Sixth of June
- 9:35 Keynote Speaker: Helen Patton, The Life and Legacy of the Most Famous General, General George S. Patton

During the breakout sessions, Teachers, Administrators and Superintendents kindly report to Lounge Room 210 for the Seal of Civic Readiness Presentation

- 10:25 Breakout Session 1: (30 minutes)
- 11:00 Breakout Session 2: (30 minutes)
- 11:45 Break for Lunch
- 12:15 Film Trailer: Mother of Normandy
- 12:30 Keynote Speakers: Jean Quetier, Maurice Renaud, Doug Stebleton, Jeff Stoffer
- 1:00 Moderated Q&A Panel: Cold Spring Harbor Students & Superintendent
- 1:30 Farewell & Departure

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Helen Patton

Helen Ayer Patton is the granddaughter of General George S. Patton, the legendary World War II commander known for his leadership in the European theater. A filmmaker, author, and humanitarian, Helen has dedicated her life to preserving the memory of the Greatest Generation while fostering reconciliation and understanding between former allies and former enemies.

She is the founder of several commemorative and cultural initiatives, including The Patton Foundation and the Patton Alliance, which use history, education, and the arts to connect past lessons with present civic responsibility. Deeply engaged in Franco-American relations and remembrance culture, Helen has lived and worked extensively in Normandy, where she has led numerous efforts to honor the sacrifices of Allied soldiers. Through public speaking, film, music, and educational outreach, she strives to promote peace, resilience, and leadership rooted in historical awareness. Her work continues the Patton family legacy, not as a glorification of war, but as a call to protect the values of freedom, unity, and democratic responsibility.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Maurice Renaud

Maurice Renaud is a French Citizen who is a respected and revered civic and remembrance leader in Normandy, recognized for his lifelong dedication to honoring the memory of the Allied soldiers who liberated Sainte-Mère-Église and for carrying forward the legacy of his parents, Alexandre and Simone Renaud. He serves as President of the Amis des Vétérans Américains (AVA - Friends of the American Veterans), an organization founded by his mother, Simone, to maintain Franco-American ties built in the wake of World War II.

From his earliest years he lived through the events of D-Day (June 6, 1944) while his father was mayor and his mother devoted herself to caring for wounded civilians and soldiers—Simone Renaud became known as the “Mother of Normandy.” Maurice has carried on their work, hosting veterans, helping them reconnect with the battlefields, preserving memorial sites, and ensuring that the stories and gratitude are passed on to future generations.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Cathy Soref

Cathy C. Soref is a longtime Locust Valley resident and a dedicated civic leader who serves as Honorary President of Operation Democracy. Her commitment to preserving history and educating future generations has been central to rekindling Operation Democracy's mission—spreading the ideals of freedom, democracy, and peace through community engagement, remembrance, and education. She has been deeply involved in the connection between Locust Valley and Sainte-Mère-Église in Normandy, helping lead delegations and ceremonies that honor the sacrifices of World War II and reinforcing the bond established in 1947 when Locust Valley adopted Sainte-Mère-Église as its sister town through Operation Democracy. Cathy's efforts include stewarding the D-Day ceremony annually, educating students, and ensuring that the legacy of those who fought is never forgotten.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Jeff Stoffer

Jeff Stoffer Is the Director, Media & Communications — The American Legion Editor — The American Legion Magazine

Jeff Stoffer is the Director of Media & Communications for The American Legion, the nation's largest wartime veterans service organization, where he also serves as Editor of The American Legion Magazine. A nationally recognized journalist, media strategist, and veterans advocate, Stoffer has led the organization's print and digital transformation, dramatically expanding its reach, relevance, and impact among veterans, their families, and the public.

Under Stoffer's leadership, The American Legion Magazine has published award-winning investigative features, first-person narratives, and historical retrospectives—many of which explore the sacrifices of American service members during World War II and their ongoing legacy in communities across the globe. One of his most notable contributions is his work highlighting the story of Simone Renaud, known as “The Mother of Normandy.” Stoffer played a central role in bringing her story to a wider audience—through both feature writing and documentary media—revealing how a French mayor's wife became a lifelong caretaker of American graves and a beloved bridge between French civilians and American veterans.

Jeff Stoffer has traveled extensively to Normandy, accompanying national commanders of The American Legion and documenting commemorative ceremonies that honor the Allied liberation of France. His storytelling efforts continue to preserve the personal and collective memories of World War II veterans, including powerful pieces on Sainte-Mère-Église and its historic link to American paratroopers. In doing so, he strengthens transatlantic bonds and ensures future generations understand the price of freedom.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Jean Quetier

Jean Quetier served as Mayor of Sainte-Mère-Église, the iconic town in Normandy celebrated as the first to be liberated on D-Day, June 6, 1944. A dedicated public servant and proud Norman, Quetier devoted his tenure to honoring the legacy of liberation while guiding his community toward the future.

Under his leadership, Sainte-Mère-Église strengthened its reputation as a living symbol of freedom and Franco-American friendship. Quetier oversaw important restoration efforts, expanded the town's commemorative programs, and welcomed veterans, families, and visitors from around the world to share in the town's history.

Known for his humility, warmth, and steadfast respect for the past, Jean Quetier often spoke of remembrance as a duty owed to future generations — a reminder that peace must be actively preserved. His vision ensured that Sainte-Mère-Église remains not only a historic landmark but also a vibrant, united community grounded in gratitude and hope.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Doug Stebleton

Doug Stebleton is an award-winning documentary filmmaker whose work deeply explores historical narratives, cultural heritage, and the human spirit. With over two decades of experience, Stebleton has built a reputation for crafting compelling, visually rich stories that engage audiences on both intellectual and emotional levels.

Among his notable projects, Stebleton directed the acclaimed documentary *Mother of Normandy*, which tells the extraordinary story of Simone Renaud, the revered French woman known for caring for American soldiers' graves in Sainte-Mère-Église after World War II. Through intimate interviews, archival footage, and stunning cinematography, the film brings to life Simone's legacy and the enduring bonds between Normandy and the United States. This project has been praised for its heartfelt portrayal of sacrifice, memory, and reconciliation.

Having returned to Normandy for over 20 years, Stebleton is recognized as part of the living history there, actively engaging with the community and veterans to preserve and share the stories that define the region's role in World War II. His deep connection to Normandy enriches his work, allowing him to capture the spirit of remembrance and resilience that continues to inspire.

Stebleton's filmmaking style combines meticulous research with a deep respect for his subjects, aiming to preserve history while inspiring future generations. His documentaries have been featured in international film festivals and broadcast on major platforms, contributing to public understanding of complex historical events and personal stories. Beyond *Mother of Normandy*, his body of work reflects a passion for stories that bridge past and present, honoring courage and resilience in communities worldwide.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Col. Edwin “Andy” Anderson

Col. Edwin “Andy” Anderson, USA (Retired)

Born July 26, 1951 in Albany, Georgia, Andy Anderson began his military career through Army ROTC at the University of Georgia in 1969. After earning his bachelor's and an MBA, he was commissioned into the Army Corps of Engineers in October 1975.

His first assignment was as a combat engineer platoon leader and company executive officer in Neu Ulm, Germany. He quickly moved into command positions: in 1980-82, he commanded a company in the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg. In 1982, he joined the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) as the Group Engineer and “New Equipment Officer.” He went through the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1983.

Over his career, Col. Anderson held significant leadership roles in special operations training and doctrine. For example, he served as commander of Company A, 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, and later as Battalion XO, among other positions. He was deeply involved in the development of SF-Assessment and SF-Qualification processes, especially during his command of the 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) and as Director of Training & Doctrine at the Special Warfare Center and School. His last operational assignment was as the J3 (operations officer) of the Combined Joint Task Force — Horn of Africa in Djibouti, where he supported Global War on Terror operations.

After retiring in November 2005 following 30 years of active service, he remained active in veteran affairs, especially with the Special Operations Warrior Foundation. He also runs a consulting firm, **Precision Solutions Group, Inc.**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Glenn Ivers

Glenn H. Ivers is an American writer whose debut full-length book, *Angels of Bastogne: A Remembrance of World War II*, brings to life a gripping episode of the Battle of the Bulge through the eyes of a U.S. Army doctor and two Belgian nurses.

Ivers graduated from Colgate University in 1973 with a degree in English literature. Shortly after, he served in the Peace Corps in Liberia from 1974 to 1976, an experience that deepened his appreciation for personal stories in historical and humanitarian contexts.

For many years, Ivers worked in the human-services sector in Central New York and produced three one-hour documentary films in the 1990s that garnered Telly Awards. His interest in narrative and real-life stories led him eventually to writing historical narrative nonfiction. In 2002 he learned the wartime story of Dr. Jack Prior and the Belgian nurses Renee Lemaire and Augusta Chiwy — which became the foundation for *Angels of Bastogne*.

Published in 2022, *Angels of Bastogne* is based on true events: the siege of Bastogne, Belgium, in December 1944, during which a U.S. Army doctor and two Belgian nurses worked under fire in a makeshift aid station. Ivers regards the book as “narrative nonfiction”: the timeline and characters are real, but much of the dialogue is imagined based on extensive research. The book has been praised for bringing attention to the medical personnel and civilian volunteers whose courage played out behind the front lines.



CIVICS SUMMIT

*Fostering a civics mindset
in the next generation*

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Civics Summit brings together the principles of our rights and responsibilities for citizens. Teaching students to foster their critical thinking and empowering them to discern information, and to make informed decisions. These skills will prepare them to live as productive citizens of both the United States and the global community.

- History must be preserved and passed on. American public education should equip students with a deep understanding of their history, civic responsibilities, and the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.
- A comprehensive civics education includes a clear grasp of the roles and responsibilities of government, as well as the inalienable rights of all citizens.
- Initiatives such as Operation Democracy, with its four programs centered on World War II, particularly the lessons of Normandy, and honoring veterans, aim to instill a profound love of country in students.



*Bring Our Programs
to Your District*

THE NORMANDY CURRICULUM
CIVICS SUMMIT
VETERANS DAY - A WEEK OF EVENTS
FLAGS FOR FREEDOM



TO DISCUSS OPERATION DEMOCRACY PROGRAMS IN YOUR DISTRICT PLEASE CONTACT:
MARGARET MARCHAND (516) 528-4976 LAUREN THEMIS (516) 815-4431

operationdemocracy.org

Bring The Operation Democracy Programs to Your District

On September 23, 2023, the Locust Valley Central School District in Locust Valley, New York, held the first Remembrance Bowl on US soil. Partnering with Patton Legacy Sports, educators district wide dedicated their entire 2023 summer to building a K-12 curriculum that would immerse students and staff in the WWII history of D-Day and the Liberation of Normandy.

What began as an inspired vision to host a game in commemoration of the 1944 "Game That Never Happened" grew into The Normandy Curriculum - an unprecedented engagement of every discipline with every student learning either through the arts, music, science, math, literature, athletics, and history.



In recognition of the traditions being built around the Remembrance Bowl played in Normandy during the D-Day Commemorations each year, Locust Valley High School hosted a jersey signing ceremony in which players from both participating teams signed each other's jerseys they would be competing in, and then shared a meal together in camaraderie. Locust Valley's honored dignitaries and local veterans were also present in this and many of the week-long activities which included assemblies, luncheons, ceremonies and the game itself.

Last month Cold Spring Harbor's schools implemented The Normandy Curriculum, and continuing in the footsteps of Locust Valley's first stateside Remembrance Bowl game, CSH hosted the second stateside game of the Remembrance Bowl at their 2024 Homecoming versus Island Trees.

contact

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Collaborators with Patton Legacy Sports and Locust Valley Central School District were Operation Democracy (active in continuing the Sister City connection between Locust Valley and Sainte-Mere-Eglise) and the AVA Next Generation (continuing the "Mother of Normandy," Simone Renaud's imperative to continue finding ways to pass down the lessons of history to future generations). Additional contributors were Jeff Stoffer (American Legion National Headquarters Director of Media and Communications), Doug Stebleton (co-author with Jeff Stoffer of Mother of Normandy: The Story of Simone Renaud and producer of the coinciding film).





CIVICS SUMMIT

**STUDENTS WILL MEET
WITH DIGNITARIES,
JOURNALISTS,
HISTORIANS, AND
DOCUMENTARY
PRODUCERS WHO WILL
SPEAK ON SUBJECT
MATTER RELATED TO
CIVICS AND THE
CONSTITUTION**

Operation Democracy invites all Social Studies coordinators, Assistant Superintendents of Curriculum and Instruction, and High School Principals to share this event with all 11th and 12th grade students interested in attending a Civics Summit that will focus on civic education aligned with the NYSED Seal of Civic Readiness. Join us and learn about civics, civil liberties, rights and responsibilities of citizenship in America and leave with hours towards the Civic Seal of Readiness requirements.

- KEY NOTE SPEAKER
- 2 BREAK OUT SESSIONS
- BOX LUNCH PROVIDED
- PRE-REGISTRATION SENT UPON DISTRICT'S COMMITMENT
- MAXIMUM 35 SEATS PER DISTRICT
- HELD AT NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- FREE FULL DAY CONVENTION
- BUSSING NOT INCLUDED

ADMINISTRATION WELCOME

There will be a breakout session dedicated to admins about the curriculum and programs offered by Operation Democracy.



QUESTIONS and RESERVATIONS please email:
Margaret Marchand margaret@operationdemocracy.org

VETERANS DAY PROGRAM

A WEEK OF EVENTS TO HONOR VETERANS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

(SAMPLE - 2022 EVENTS SCHEDULE)

★ COMMEMORATING ★ VETERANS DAY

NOVEMBER 11

A Week to Honor All Who Served

★ TIMELINE of EVENTS ★

★ NOVEMBER 7, 2022 | MONDAY

- All Teachers and students receive the palm card with American Flag Ribbon with the first Morning Announcement.
- Social Studies or Humanities teachers are given a pocket Constitution for each student. To be dispersed during a lesson of Veterans Day within the week.
- Lesson can be combined connecting the Constitution to the American right for all citizens who are over the age of 18 to vote.
- Library display of books with topics and a message to the students that these books are available to explore.

★ NOVEMBER 8, 2022 | TUESDAY SCHOOLS CLOSED for ELECTION DAY

★ NOVEMBER 9, 2022 | WEDNESDAY

- Students are encouraged to wear the ribbon as a sign of respect to our Veterans.
- Second Morning Announcement: Armed Forces.
- Pocket Constitutions distributed.
- Oral History (Secondary Source) Lunch with a Veteran In the library or cafeteria.
- Armistice Day Lesson in Social Studies.

★ NOVEMBER 10, 2022 | THURSDAY

- Ceremony at Flag outside to commemorate Veterans Day.
- Third Announcement and a school wide moment of silence as the wreath is laid.
- Students are encouraged to wear Red/White/Blue.
- National Anthem sung during announcements.

★ NOVEMBER 11, 2022 | FRIDAY SCHOOLS CLOSED in OBSERVANCE of VETERANS DAY

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Library of Congress <https://loc.gov>
- Armed Forces <https://www.defense.gov>
- Armistice Museum <https://armistice-museum.com/>
- American Legion <https://www.legion.org>

THANK A VETERAN FOR THEIR SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY

FLAGS FOR FREEDOM



For over 10 years, OD has held a Memorial Day solemn and heartfelt Flags for Freedom Ceremony. It is held to honor our graduating seniors. In partnership with local veterans, families, and community supporters, each student receives a powerful gift: an American Flag, a Pocket Constitution, and a copy of the Declaration of Independence. The ceremony's keynote speaker reflects on the meaning of service and sacrifice, followed by a demonstration of the flag-folding tradition—often led by active duty service members or veterans.

As students line up, they are greeted face to face by those who have served, each veteran personally handing a flag to a graduating senior. In that quiet exchange, generations connect through shared values of duty, honor, and freedom.

Our seniors leave with more than a symbol—they carry a flag to honor, protect, and revere wherever life may take them. It is a reminder of the legacy they inherit, and the civic responsibility they now hold.

OPERATION DEMOCRACY'S 8TH ANNUAL LOCUST VALLEY

Flags for Freedom CEREMONY 2023

OUR HONORED GUESTS, VETERANS AND ACTIVE MILITARY MEN AND WOMEN, JOINED OUR GRADUATING SENIORS ON MAY 30TH IN A TRADITION OF RECEIVING THEIR OWN FLAG AS THEY LEAVE LV AS YOUNG ADULTS.

CARRYING WITH THEM THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE FLAG'S IMPORTANCE, CARE AND SYMBOL OF FREEDOM THAT UNITES EACH OF US AS AMERICAN CITIZENS.

CONTACT:
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OPERATIONDEMOCRACY.ORG

Annual Student & Community Delegation to Normandy

80th Anniversary of D-Day

NORMANDY, FRANCE - JUNE 2024



After two years of the Normandy Curriculum in New York schools, Operation Democracy engaged students by sending a delegation to Normandy for the 80th D-Day anniversary. The week-long experience included ceremonies and visits to historic sites, deepening their understanding of sacrifices for freedom. This journey reinforced civic lessons and fostered a commitment to civic responsibility. Operation Democracy plans to continue this tradition to ensure future generations remember the cost and value of democracy.

