

# Hundreds honor veterans in a nearly century-old parade

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World War II veteran Jack Myers, 102, sported a huge grin Sunday as he looked through the backseat window of a historic Army vehicle.

Visitors lining Brunswick's historic Potomac Street held small American flags and seemed to be unfazed by the few drops of rain that sprinkled down midafternoon.

Old military Jeeps, Corvettes and firetrucks crept past City Hall and up the hill to the sound of revving engines and honking horns.

Parade participants, including elected officials, waved and tossed handfuls of candy to hundreds of spectators who, regardless of their ages, jumped out of their seats to collect the treats.

Sunday's Veterans Day parade in Brunswick, which is one of the oldest in the country, was the city's 93rd.

Vietnam War veteran and Brunswick native Walter Routzhan said he was glad to see more visitors at the parade on Sunday than in previous years.

Routzhan served in Vietnam as an ammunition specialist and a door gunner from 1969 to 1971. He is a member of the American Legion.

He said he's seen spectator numbers for the parade dwindle over the years.

"When I was a small child,



Staff photo by Katina Zentz

**Jack Myers, a World War II veteran, reacts at the podium after singing the national anthem Sunday during the opening ceremony for the 93rd Brunswick Veterans Day Parade. Parade-goers gathered for the annual parade that occurs the Sunday before Veterans Day. See more photos, Page A4.**

these streets were lined up [with people]," he said. "By 10 o'clock in the morning, the place was packed."

The opening ceremony of the parade was held in Square Corner Park.

Rick Weldon, president and CEO of the Frederick County Chamber of Commerce and a Navy veteran, on Sunday was one of the parade emcees.

He told the crowd that the one thing that binds the Brunswick and surrounding community together is that, every year, "we gather to celebrate military service men and women."

Weldon introduced Myers, a former U.S. Army corporal who arrived in France in 1944. Myers later that year fought in Ardennes in the Battle of the

Bulge and earned a bronze star, Weldon said.

Myers then sang the "The Star-Spangled Banner."

The parade featured 98 separate registrants, which included social clubs like the American Legion, the Brunswick High School marching band and the Kena 500, which

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Staff photos by Katina Zentz

A vehicle passes by as visitors look for candy Sunday during the 93rd Brunswick Veterans Day Parade.



Jack Myers, a World War II veteran, sits in a vehicle during the parade.



Gary Wigfield displays an American flag in his hat during Sunday's parade.



Shelton Yeomans, 18 months, holds a pair of American flags.

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is a group of people driving motorized mini Corvettes from Shriners International.

U.S. Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-6th) told the audience that Brunswick's ethos was made of community, service and pride.

"Our service members every day stand up and are there for us, and we have to have their backs," she said.

Along Potomac Street, families brought fold-out chairs, snacks and bags for candy and other goodies handed out during the parade.

Susan Meslovich of Brunswick said she comes from a family of veterans.

"And I got rejected because of a leg problem," she laughed.

Meslovich, whose family is originally from Anaheim, California, has lived in Brunswick for more than 30 years.

She said her family has come to the parade since first learning about it decades ago.

Therese Ayers, Meslovich's sister, served in the Women's Army Corps from 1976 to 1979.

Ayers said she was a "peacetime vet," which meant there was not an active war when she served.

However, she said, "I served during a time when ... it wasn't encouraged for women to join."

"People looked down on us," Ayers said. "Men could leave basic training. Women couldn't. We had to have a parent pick us up."

She said that now, women in the service get more respect.

Ayers said it was great "to see us go from when we were a member of the Army, but we were a member of 'this man's Army,' to where we're equal to them on equal standing now."



Blitz, front-center, lounges on the street Sunday as visitors wait for the start of the 93rd Brunswick Veterans Day Parade.