

## **Press Clippings 11/12/2021**

**---Elgin Courier-News 11/12/2021**

### **Veterans Day ceremony in Elgin focuses on the history behind the day while honoring all who served in the military**

**By Mike Danahey**



American Legion Elgin Post 57 rifle post offered an outdoor salute Thursday as part of the city of Elgin's Veterans Day ceremony at The Edward Schock Centre of Elgin. (Mike Danahey / The Courier-News)

Speakers at Elgin's Veterans Day ceremony noted the historical significance of the Nov. 11 date and their hope that events like the one held Thursday in the Schock Centre's Heritage Ballroom will spur more people to ask veterans about their military service.

"It's great for all of us to be together again," Elgin Mayor Dave Kaptain said, a prelude to his comments on both the current COVID-19 pandemic and this country's first great pandemic, the 1918-19 influenza pandemic that had its roots in World War I.

The latter was unknowingly transmitted by WWI soldiers and would end up killing about 50 million people around the world — 675,000 in the U.S. alone.

Speaking to a crowd of about 150, Kaptain said Veterans Day might be a good day on which to honor both those who lost their lives while in the military and in doing battle with the deadly viruses then and now.



About 150 people gathered in the Heritage Ballroom in The Edward Schock Centre of Elgin Thursday morning for the city of Elgin's Veterans Day ceremony. (Mike Danahey / The Courier-News)

"This is a solemn time," he said. "I'm so thankful that all of us survived and that we are able to be here today to honor veterans."

Local historian Jerry Turnquist spoke of the origins of Veterans Day, which was originally known as Armistice Day, marking the anniversary of the truce ending WWI that went into effect on the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918.

More than 4 million U.S. troops fought in the war that was to end all wars, including his grandfather, Oscar Turnquist, he said, and more than 116,000 Americans would end up losing their lives in the conflict.

According to some estimates, about 10 million people served in various military units in that war and another 10 million civilians would die because of it, Turnquist said.

This year also marks a century since the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was unveiled at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, he said. The memorial was created for unidentified soldiers who died in WWI, but later became a monument to all unknown troops who died in American military conflicts, he said.

Veterans Day honors all who served all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces at anytime, anywhere, in peacetime and during wars, Turnquist said. The 2020 U.S. Census found there

are about 18 million people living today — 7% of the nation’s population — who are military veterans, he said.

About 4,000 of those veterans call Elgin home, he said.



The **Larkin High School Band**, under the direction of Nicholas Lambert, performed at the city of Elgin's Veterans Day ceremony Thursday in the Heritage Ballroom of The Edward Schock Centre of Elgin. (Mike Danahey / The Courier-News)

Growing up in Elgin with a number of family members having served in the military, Turnquist said he spent a good amount of time attending veteran-related events. He heard stories from vets over the years, and urged those still living to reach out to local schools and other organizations to share their experiences, he said.

Teacher Katie Finn and para-educator Sara Moeller brought eight students from **South Elgin High School's transitions program for young adults** to the ceremony for just that reason. “This was an awesome opportunity,” Finn said. “The ceremony made me proud, and it reminded me of the difficult choices those who serve in the military make for our country.”

**---Daily Herald 11/12/2021**

## **Girls volleyball: Worden returns, leads South Elgin to record season**

**By Craig Brueske, Daily Herald Correspondent**



**South Elgin's Alyssa Worden** is the 2021 Daily Herald Fox Valley All-Area Girls Volleyball Captain. *John Starks | Staff Photographer*

Last spring, Alyssa Worden made the difficult decision of bypassing her sophomore high school volleyball season at **South Elgin** to play club.

"It was one of the best decisions I've ever made," said Worden, who got the opportunity to play up for the renowned Sports Performance U-18 club team.

"My teammates were not just from our region," said Worden. "I had the chance to learn from players like Ella Wrobel (Plainfield North), Zayna Mayer (Wheaton Warrenville South), Morgan Rank (Metea Valley) and Ellie Watson (Sandburg) -- all (NCAA) Division 1 athletes."

Last August, Worden made another major decision -- she was returning for her junior season at South Elgin.

And return she did.

The 5-foot-9 outside hitter collected 387 kills, 264 digs, 60 aces and 45 blocks while helping lead the Storm to a school-record 31 victories and Upstate Eight Conference championship.

For her efforts, Worden was selected as the Captain of the Daily Herald's Fox Valley All-Area Girls Volleyball Team for the 2021 fall campaign.

"It is a tremendous accomplishment," said South Elgin coach Joni Plach. "All of her teammates and coaches are so happy for her."

Plach realizes a player like Worden doesn't come around often.

"Alyssa makes plays that I haven't seen in high school volleyball matches in my 17 years as a volleyball coach," said Plach. "She sees the court so well. She does things that you can't really teach.

"Earlier in the season, we were playing in a tournament in Sycamore. It was game point, and instead of waiting for the usual three hits, she gets a kill on the first hit."

Plach is a firm believer in her team recording a kill any way possible.

"A kill is a kill -- it doesn't necessarily matter how hard it is if it gets there," she said.

Like the mail carrier, Worden delivers the ball on time in all shapes and sizes.

"Obviously, she's a big hitter," said Plach. "But she does an excellent job of mixing it up. She has that rare combination of finesse and power."

As a freshman, Worden displayed her ability from the outset, recording a team-leading 315 kills and 54 aces during South Elgin's 28-win campaign that included a UEC championship.

"She was super talented coming in as a freshman," said Plach. "That's why we put her on varsity. She did amazing things but mentally, she was still a freshman."

Two years later, Worden has become a true leader for the Storm.

"I think I've improved tremendously since freshman year, both physically and mentally," said Worden. "I took on more of a leadership role this season."

From her spot on the bench, Plach viewed that as a bonus.

"It's like having another coach on the court," the coach said of Worden. "She leads the team onto the court. She encourages her teammates. She leads the team in a positive way as a coach would.

"I used to coach boys' volleyball, and there were times where they'd all be yelling at each other. Alyssa has the maturity and shows leadership on the court without being in your face. Teammates respect her as a player and her ability to help the team."

This season, Worden made it a point of emphasis to help her teammates.

"She took (sophomore) Jazmine Binion under her wing," said Plach. "Alyssa knew what it was like to be the youngest girl on the team."

"I see a lot of potential in Jazmine," said Worden. "I did see a lot of myself in her."

"Alyssa is a very mature volleyball player," said Plach. "She understands she needs her whole team to be successful. She respects all 12 girls on the team. Some kids didn't see much (playing) time, but she respected them as practice players and the fact that they played hard in scrimmages.



"She's a 17-year-old junior but she knows it takes everybody to win matches. One of the things I love to watch is that she gets just as excited when somebody else on her team gets a kill."

Worden has the natural ability to take over a volleyball match from any spot on the court.

"Everybody sees those big hits but she's just as good on serve receive," said Plach. "She exerts just as much effort on defense."

Opponents know all too well about Worden's skill level.

"Alyssa is fun to watch," Bartlett coach Robert Schwantz said following the Hawks' 2-set loss to South Elgin last month in which Worden delivered a variety of hard-hit put-downs along with timely push and tip kills.

"You've got to be down at all times. She's really the only girl (for South Elgin) who can punish the ball, so you have to keep the weight on your toes and balls of your feet."

Easier said than done.

"She's going to go Division 1 -- she's amazing," said Schwantz.

Last month, Worden announced a verbal commitment to attend the University of Iowa in 2023.

"It was a tough decision," she said. "I visited the campus and it just felt like home to me. They have great academics."

Worden, who takes multiple honors classes at South Elgin, plans on majoring in sports psychology while playing in one of the nation's best volleyball conferences -- the Big Ten.

"I am looking forward to going to see her play at Iowa," said Plach, who made sure all 12 Storm varsity players received Iowa volleyball T-shirts after Worden's commitment.

But first Worden will return for her senior year at South Elgin in 2022.

"I love the high school component of volleyball," she said. "It's especially fun to play with your friends in front of cheering crowds."