

Hogan chooses Leonardtown for first public appearance

Posted by [Dick Myers](#) On 11/11/2014

Governor-elect Larry Hogan at the wreath laying ceremony at the WWII memorial.

Leonardtown, MD -- Governor-elect Larry Hogan was greeted like a rock star Tuesday in Leonardtown during his first public appearance since his stunning victory in Democratic Maryland. Hogan walked in the Leonardtown Veteran's Day Parade, the largest in Maryland, greeting parade goers along the way, and then spoke during the ceremony on the town square that followed.

Hogan has launched a "Thank You Tour" from one corner of Maryland to the other and he said that it was fitting that he began that tour in the Mother County of Maryland. Hogan is no stranger to Leonardtown, having visited often during the campaign. His daughter and son-in-law Jaymi and Ben Sterling live in the county. Hogan said he was going to attend a birthday party for his son-in-law later in the day at the Front Porch Restaurant, formerly known as the Sterling House.

Hogan said Ben Sterling's family is known in Leonardtown as the Sterling seven for having sent seven sons and daughters to World War II, including Benjamin Harris Sterling, who earned a Bronze Star for his valor.

"It is truly an honor to be here in Leonardtown with the veterans who have served in the Armed Forces," Hogan said. He added, "No one deserves more thanks than our veterans who have put themselves in harm's way to serve their country."

Seated in the front row of the audience were members of the families of Army SPC Raymond J. Faulstich, Army Cpl. Matthew P. Wallace and Army Sgt. Ryan Patrick Baumann, who gave their lives for their country during the Global War on Terrorism. Hogan thanked them for their sacrifices.

Also seated in the front row was Hogan's father, Larry Hogan, Sr., former Congressman and Prince George's County Executive. The senior Hogan was presented with a symbolic token by Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot.

Hogan's state-wide tour is one of bi-partisanship and conciliation. Congressman Steny Hoyer picked up on that theme by noting that the Pledge of Allegiance calls for "One Nation, Under God, Indivisible..." Hoyer observed, "He's a Republican, I'm a Democrat," but he said veterans there were "all Americans and all Marylanders. We ought to pledge to them that we will honor that pledge --- Indivisible."

Franchot picked up on the same theme by telling the story of his 93-year-old father telling of serving in World War II. Franchot said his father said, "In an odd way it was a wonderful time to be an American." Franchot said that was because Hitler was expected to win but was defeated, according to his father, because "everyone was on the same sheet of music."

Franchot said after that conversation his father asked him what was wrong with politicians today: "Can't you do what we did."

Also speaking were three incumbent St. Mary's County Democratic leaders who went down to defeat in the election a week ago -- Sen. Roy Dyson, del. John Bohanan and Commissioner President Jack Russell. Del. Tony O'Donnell (R) also spoke.

Patuxent River NAS Commanding Officer Capt. Heidi Fleming, who is a Leonardtown resident, said she wandered around the square the day before and took some time to look at the World War I and II memorials. She told the stories of two men named on the memorials who lost their lives in service to their country. "Each name on the monuments tells a personal story," she said.

Of Veteran's Day, she said, "It is a cherished and solemn day." To the families of the young men who lost their lives, Capt. Fleming said, "We salute your loved ones for the freedom we have today and the sacrifices they made."

During the ceremony speeches were given by three of the four Leonardtown E.S. 5th graders who won a contest on "What Veterans Day Means to Me." Reading their winning essays were Nakilah Harrison, Elle Lazare and Austin Guy. Emma Guy was unable to attend.

Music, an "Armed Forces Salute," was provided by the Leonardtown H.S. Marching Band, Matthew Pearson, director.

Following the formal presentation a wreath laying ceremony was held at the WW II memorial with the dignitaries and family members of those who gave their lives for their country participating.

The ceremony on the town square followed what is the largest Veterans Day Parade in Maryland, with several thousand participants and upwards of 10,000 spectators for the more than 90-minute event. Parade participants gathered at St. Mary's Ryken H.S. and proceeded on Fenwick Street to Washington Street, past spectators lining both sides of the street.

Announcers for the parade were Leonardtown Mayor Dan Burrell (who also MC'd the ceremony), Mary Washington, and Captain Manuel Picon.

The parade was organized by Connie Pennington. It is sponsored by the town and county.

The Bay Net photos by Ron Bailey and Dick Myers

Below: Larry Hogan's daughter Jaymi Sterling walked in the parade with her father. Photo by Ron Bailey.