

LIBERTY

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ed 22 veterans who commit suicide every day in the United States.

Lajoie of Gardiner started the project after her son committed suicide in 2014, two years after he got out of the Army.

"I wasn't aware of it until it was too late," she said. "They are fighting a battle that can't be seen, due to the stigma of mental health issues."

"I wanted them life-size," Lajoie said. "I wanted people to see what 22 people looks like."

She said the purpose of the installation is to get people talking, to break the silence.

"They fought for our country," Lajoie said, "and we need to be there for them."

Jen Caron of Sabattus received a Hometown Hero Award from Modern Woodmen, a fraternal financial organization, for her work with the Harry Conway American Legion Auxiliary Unit 135. As a junior member, she participates in a variety of events and fundraisers for care packages delivered to active military overseas.

Caron also places flowers and flags at local cemeteries with her class of fifth-grade students.

Retired U.S. Army Lt. Col.



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Maine AMVETS Commander Jerry Dewitt plays taps during Tuesday night's Salute to the American Flag and Retirement Ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park in Lewiston.

Amedeo J. Lauria of Sabattus, the second Hometown Hero award recipient, was awarded for history with the Army that began with his first military tour of duty in 1973.

Since then, he was also trained Army senior ROTC cadets, managed recruiting

operations across New England and assisted with flag etiquette at schools in Regional School Unit 4.

AMVETS State Commander Jerry DeWitt of Poland, the third Hometown Hero award recipient, began his Army career in 1964.

He currently works for Veterans Outreach at Tri-County Mental Health Services in Lewiston, and has held positions as a nurse, social worker and substance abuse counselor. DeWitt also helps maintain Veterans Memorial Park in Lewiston.