

U.S. Sen. Johnson, U.S. Rep. Grothman: Honor WWII veteran Joe Demler at Port Washington post office renaming ceremony

Posted on Sunday, Sep 19, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

OSHKOSH — On Saturday, September 18, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman of Wisconsin's 6th District, and the mayor of Port Washington hosted a ceremony to rename the Port Washington Post Office in honor of World War II veteran Joe Demler.

Senator Johnson said, "Joe Demler served courageously in the Battle of the Bulge, where he was captured and then survived the horrors of a Nazi prisoner of war camp. Throughout his life he truly lived by his motto 'every day is a bonus' and proudly shared his story of service through the Honor Flight organization. There was a quiet dignity about Joe and the others who served in World War II. It's why we revere the Greatest Generation. It's fitting this post office where Joe worked for decades will bear his name so future generations will know his story of service and sacrifice."

Congressman Grothman said, "Joseph Demler demonstrated immense courage by joining the military after high school to defend our country and the western world against tyranny in World War II. He repeatedly showed bravery throughout his military career and embodies what it means to be a true American hero. It is a privilege to honor him at the Port Washington Post Office Renaming Ceremony."

Joe Demler served in the 137th infantry during the Battle of the Bulge, where he was captured by German troops and taken as a prisoner of war. Doctors told him he was days away from death when he was liberated from a Nazi camp in April 1945

weighing less than 70 pounds. He became known as the “human skeleton” after Life magazine published his photo. Upon his discharge from the Army in November 1945, Joe began working for the U.S. Postal Service in Milwaukee before transferring to the Port Washington Post Office, where he worked for 37 years. Joe coined the motto “every day is a bonus,” which became the motto of the Stars and Stripes Honor Flight, an organization he helped organize. Throughout the rest of his life, Joe participated in countless Honor Flights and proudly shared his story of service. He passed away in February 2020.

The bipartisan bill was introduced in the Senate by U.S. Sens. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) and Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.). The [bill](#) was signed into law by President Trump in December 2020, officially renaming the Port Washington Post Office the Joseph G. Demler Post Office. The Demler family was in attendance at Saturday’s ceremony.