

"The Flagman's Mission Continues" Needs Volunteers to Line Funeral Route for Fallen Roxana Serviceman

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ROXANA/WOOD RIVER - The Flagman's Mission Continues is seeking volunteers to help honor Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ryan Epley, a 25-year-old from Roxana who died while serving in active duty.

Epley was a Blackhawk Pilot in the Army, stationed in California at the time of his death. The Flagman's Mission Continues plans to line the funeral route with American flags. They need volunteers to set up flags at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2023, and take down flags at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 3, 2023.

“Ryan was a kind soul that loved unconditionally,” [Epley’s obituary](#) reads. “He made anyone he met feel welcome and comfortable. He was the life of a party and could make anyone laugh. Ryan was beyond his years in knowledge and compassion. He truly was a wonderful young man. He was a true officer and gentleman.”

The Flagman’s Mission Continues organization regularly lines the funeral routes of fallen military members, firefighters and police officers. They hope to line Epley’s route with 600 flags.

Jeff Hastings, president of the organization, asks volunteers to wear work gloves and walking shoes. He added that anyone who can walk and carry approximately ten pounds will be able to help, though the organization prefers volunteers over age 12.

Volunteers will meet at Pitchford Funeral Home, located at 2555 Vaughn Road in Wood River. Hastings estimated it will take about three hours to set up and take down the flags.

“This is a community project giving you the opportunity to honor a fallen hero,” Hastings said. “We cover an eight-state area with about 45 or more missions a year.”

For more information about The Flagman’s Mission Continues or the plans to line the funeral route for Ryan Epley, contact Hastings at 618-409-0323.