

Mayor's Column

Last Sunday, Trustee Anne Poorman and I had the privilege to participate in the second annual Bronxville Veterans Memorial Celebration. This event honors the founding spirit of Memorial Day by recognizing the men and women from the Bronxville area who serve or have served in the Armed Forces. Thanks to the efforts of Village residents Cindi Callahan and Jane Staunton, Bronxville now has a Scroll of Honor which is a memorial to 1575 residents who have served our country over the years.

This year's exhibit expanded on the war photos and memorabilia provided by local vets to include even more veterans as well as written memories of members of the Bronxville Senior Citizens organization. Of particular focus this year was a new collection of Missing in Action/Killed in Action personal stories. This initiative was a collaboration with Eastchester and Tuckahoe. With the leadership and assistance of Michael Fix, Eastchester Town Historian, the committee identified 175 residents, 85 of whom lived in the Village, who gave their lives in service to the country.

Our veterans' stories are as varied as the wars in which they fought. And I can say most assuredly that we indeed have heroes among us.

Fellow residents experienced the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Battle of Iwo Jima and the taking of Normandy Beach. They were military engineers, doctors, hospital corpsmen, Seabees, aviators, artillery experts, bombardiers, seamen, special forces, paratroopers, submariners and mountain troopers. A remarkable number of Bronxville women also served our country in varied capacities.

One Villager liberated Jewish captives through enemy blockades, another identified that soldiers were contracting hepatitis through battlefield blood transfusions, another was an original WWII "Desert Rat" and three were taken as prisoners of war.

Bronxvillians served our country in all corners of the world from the Phillipines to Germany, Belgium, Italy, France, North Africa, Afghanistan and Iraq. Some survived sinking ships and famous battles; others were killed in action or taken prisoner of war. One young man survived Vietnam and died in the World Trade Center attack.

Our Villagers served directly under such famous leaders as Generals George Patton and Douglas MacArthur, while another was the driver for President Franklin D. Roosevelt. They have won every honor, medal and citation for bravery and valor.

As we approach the Memorial Day holiday, please remember our veterans and never take for granted those who deserve our gratitude most.

The event on Sunday was populated mostly by WWII veterans and their families. My concern is that our generations to follow were not there to learn about our local heroes. We must keep their message alive because it is even more than about character on a battlefield. It is honor in life.

Abraham Lincoln said, "I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives and I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him." After reading their stories and speaking to many veterans, we Villagers can certainly take pride in the men and women who served our country from the Bronxville. So please keep them in your thoughts and prayers, and perhaps send a few thank yous their way as you celebrate the upcoming weekend.