

NEWS RELEASE

County of Warren, New Jersey



Warren County Honors 21 War Era Veterans

(BELVIDERE, NJ, September 26, 2020) – A global pandemic could not stop Warren County from honoring its service men and women who served during wartime, as the Board of Chosen Freeholders conducted its 17th Veterans Recognition Ceremony.

After rescheduling twice due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ceremony went ahead with the participants wearing face masks and socially distanced on the plaza of the Warren County War Memorial next to the Courthouse in Belvidere.

The 21 veterans honored – 11 of them posthumously – came from the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard, and served in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq.

“We are humbled that you’re here, and grateful that you’re here,” Freeholder Director Richard D. Gardner told the veterans and their family members. Of the 21 honorees, 15 attended or were represented by a loved one for posthumous



The 2020 Veterans Recognition Ceremony begins at the Warren County War Memorial next to the Courthouse in Belvidere.

recognition to receive the Warren County Distinguished Military Service Medal, a replica lapel pin, and a certificate of merit from the freeholders, while those unable to attend will receive those items by mail.

This brings to 2,218 the total number of war era veterans who have been recognized since the program began in 2003 with an award to Julius Hausold, age 108, who was Warren County last surviving World War I soldier at the time.

“It’s such an honor for me to be here,” Gardner said, noting, “This is my final time as an elected office-holder to be in this great ceremony.” The longest-serving freeholder in more than a century who is retiring at the end of the year, Gardner was a freeholder when the recognition program began. “I will never forget giving the medal to a World War I and II vet, Julius Hausold,” Gardner remarked.

Freeholder James R. Kern III noted that 2020 has been “a difficult year” but “This program is too important not to do.”

Many Americans don't realize the sacrifice involved for members of the military, since such a small percentage of the population serves, Kern said.

"You don't know where they were going to send you when you took that oath. But you were ready to go. And I thank you for taking that oath and protecting what is the greatest country on earth,"

Kern said, noting the freeholders will continue to conduct the recognition program "as long as there are veterans to honor."

Freeholder Jason J. Sarnoski pointed to "all the turmoil going on in our country right now," adding that when people talk about freedoms and rights, "You went and you fought so that everyone has those rights."

Sarnoski added, "I'm here to honor you for that and thank you for that."

Assemblyman John DiMaio, who was on the freeholder board with Gardner when the freeholders began

the recognition program with assistance from the Warren County War Memorial Corporation, quoted an old saying that "A good soldier doesn't offer to go out and slay. A soldier offers to be slain for his country or her country." Reflecting on those words, DiMaio added that those in the military are willing to sacrifice their lives "for a greater cause, for our freedoms. Think about that."

NJ Veterans Services Officer Sibley Smith, Jr., a self-described "military brat" whose father was a veteran, told those assembled, "You once stepped into a world of service, some whether you wanted to or not." Smith said it is with a sense of gratitude that he works to help veterans, adding, "It is my way of saying thank you."

The ceremony also included a remembrance of the 75th anniversary this month of the end of World War II with the signing of Japan's surrender, and special recognition for Gardner. War Memorial Corp. President Dennis L. Smith and Secretary/Treasurer Milly Rice presented Gardner with a plaque thanking him for his support of veterans over the years.



The freeholders present the award – a medal, replica pin, and certificate of merit - to Paul Avery of Blairstown.



Freeholder Director Richard D. Gardner is recognized by the Warren County War Memorial Corp. for his years of support, at his final Veterans Recognition Ceremony before retiring from the freeholder board.

The largest number of honorees, 11, served in the Army, while four were Navy veterans, three served in the Air Force, two in the Marines and one in the Coast Guard. One posthumous honoree served in World War I, eight served in World War II, one in Korea, 10 in Vietnam, and one in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The honorees were:

Elizabeth J. Ancey, Army, World War II
Walter Ancey, Army, World War II
James Ancypowic, Army, World War II
Paul L. Avery, Army, Vietnam War
Robert C. Brennan, Navy, Vietnam War
John D. Bronico, Coast Guard, Vietnam War
Donald J. Butler, Air Force, Korean War
Don DeBacco, Army, World War II
Gregory K. Goble, Marines, Vietnam War
Robert D. Grosinski, Army, Vietnam War
Lewis Kenneth Hann, Army, World War II
Albert W. Kieselmann, Air Force, Vietnam War
Curtis Landsberger, Army, Operation Iraqi Freedom
Allan G. Melillo, Army, Vietnam War
Gilbert S. Mitchell, Army, World War I
Edward Howard Richline, Navy, World War II
Herbert William Saunders, Navy, World War II
Paul N. Tremper, Air Force, Vietnam War
Orlando Vega, Army, Vietnam War
Carl F. Woronowicz, Navy, Vietnam War
Carl L. Woronowicz, Marines, World War II



Warren County accepts applications for the recognition program throughout the year and anticipates having another ceremony in 2021. To be eligible, honorably discharged veterans must have been a Warren County resident either when entering the service or be a current resident, and have served during one of the recognized wartime periods. For recent conflicts, service in the war theater is required, and proof of service such as the DD214 discharge certificate must accompany the application.

Applications are available on the Warren County website at www.co.warren.nj.us/veterans.html or by calling the Public Information Department at 908-475-6580.

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