

NORWOOD NEWS

Local Officials Honor Veterans at Woodlawn Cemetery

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By DAVID GREENE



Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz and Councilman Andrew Cohen sit at a distance as Senator Jamaal Bailey address the smaller than normal crowd on Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2020 to honor service personnel on Veterans' Day 2020.

Photo by David Greene

A number of different events are scheduled throughout November to honor and assist America's veterans, ranging from health seminars to legal discussions covering veterans' rights. Last week, local, elected officials gathered at Woodlawn Cemetery for the annual,

wreath-laying ceremony at the monument dedicated to those who served and died in World War I, the so-called “war to end all wars.”

Unlike years past, this year, the 25 or so attendees at the event wore face masks, had plenty of hand sanitizer available, and remained socially distant during the proceedings, hyper-aware of the rising coronavirus cases reported across the city.

Sadly, absent were those who would be recognized – service men and women from World War II and the Korean and Vietnam Wars. At previous events, many would often be seen covering their grey or balding heads with caps representing the carrier group or ships they served on as younger men and women. Instead, this year, they remain isolated by a pandemic that poses as great a threat to them as any Nazi or Japanese soldier. To date, 26,159 people have died in New York State from COVID-19, and 65 percent of those were over 70 years of age.



Wreaths honoring those in each of the four branches of United States Armed Forces were laid by elected officials during a commemorative ceremony at Woodlawn Cemetery on Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2020 for Veterans’ Day.

Photo by David Greene

In attendance, to mark Veterans' Day on Wednesday, Nov. 11, were New York State Senator Jamaal Bailey, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Councilman Andrew Cohen who joined Quamid Francis, the deputy chief of staff at the New York City Department of Veterans' Services and Mitch Rose, president of Woodlawn Cemetery, in remembering all who served.

The officials placed a wreath at the foot of the monument, where a plaque is embedded in the bedrock that reads, in part, "In memory of the heroic men who gave their lives in noble sacrifice."



A plaque embedded into the bedrock at Woodlawn Cemetery shortly after World War I is dedicated to those who fought and died in the so-called "war to end all wars."

Photo by David Greene

The plaque inscription ends with a passage from the Bible that reads, "He maketh wars to cease." The United States suffered 116,516 casualties, and 320,000 more were left sick or wounded following World War I.

To date, Woodlawn Cemetery has identified 6,500 soldiers for whom the cemetery is their final resting place. Between them, they have collectively served in every American conflict since the War of 1812.

Those buried at Woodlawn include Civil War hero; David Glasgow Farragut, the first admiral of the United States Navy; Edward Knox, a member of the 15th New York Light Artillery who was awarded the medal of honor for his bravery at the Battle of Gettysburg; and Lucy Bainbridge, a nurse during the Civil War who cared for wounded soldiers of the Union Army on the front lines in Virginia.



Mitch Rose, president of Woodlawn Cemetery, speaks during a commemorative event at cemetery on Wednesday, November 11, 2020 to mark Veterans' Day.
 Photo by David Greene

According to Bronx historian, Lloyd Ultan, if standing on Central Avenue inside the cemetery and facing east, one would be overlooking the actual battlefield of The Battle of Gun Hill, the Revolutionary War battle that took place on January 25, 1777. On that day, freedom fighters carried a cannon up Gun Hill and were able to push British troops east, back into Queens.

The Woodlawn Cemetery & Conservancy is open to the public and often hosts walking tours and other events, and is located at 4199 Webster Avenue. For more information visit their website at www.woodlawn.org.

*Síle Moloney contributed additional reporting to this story.