



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Klein Hosts 4th Annual Veterans Day Breakfast

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Senator Klein Honors Hundreds of Bronx & Westchester Veterans

BRONX, NY - On Sunday, November 14th, Deputy Majority Leader and State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) hosted his fourth annual Veterans Day Breakfast at Villa Barone Manor, honoring hundreds of veterans from the Bronx and Westchester. Every year, Klein holds the complimentary breakfast before the Throggs Neck Veterans Day Parade to pay tribute to local veterans and their families.

“This is the fourth year that I've hosted hundreds of veterans with a warm and hearty breakfast at Villa Barone Manor before the Throggs Neck Veterans Day Parade. It is truly my honor to welcome the veterans and their families from throughout the 34th Senate District, to celebrate their deep commitment to our

nation and to thank them for their honorable service," said State Senator Jeff Klein.

Veterans and their families enjoyed a breakfast spread of eggs, bacon, toast, orange juice and coffee. At the breakfast the four Grand Marshals of the Throggs Neck Veterans Day Parade - Tom Costello, Robert W. Booth, Russ Schaller and Bob Branizza - were honored with distinguished service awards. Philip Wise, who served as a Corporal in the United States Marine Corps during the Vietnam War, was also honored.

Tom Costello, raised in the Country Club section of the Bronx, attended Georgetown University on a football scholarship. In 1943, he enlisted in the Army and was sent to Anzio, an area on the southwest coast of Italy. Costello took part in the famous offensive against the well-fortified German Army. On April 26, 1944, he and many of his fellow servicemen were captured. His camp was liberated near the end of the war. When he returned home he earned a law degree, married and moved to City Island where he and his wife raised a family of five. Costello is a long time member of the Hawkins Post.

Robert W. Booth joined the Navy in 1944. While on board the USS Frank Knox, he and his crew shot down a Kamikaze plane and rescued six flyers. Booth was on board the USS Frank Knox in Tokyo Bay during the surrender. He was discharged from the Navy in May 1946 with the rank of Gunners mate Third Class. He is a Post Commander and Post Chairman of the Hawkins Post.

Russ Schaller grew up on City Island and enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1943. In April 1944, he arrived in Chalgrove, England to prepare for the Normandy invasion. The mission of his 33rd Photo Recon Squadron was bomb damage assessment, troop movement, railroads and bridges along the Seine. The unit won Battle Stars in five campaigns. After the war, Russ returned to City Island where he married and raised a family of six. He retired from Verizon after many years and serves on the Executive Board of the Hawkins Post.

Flight Officer Bob Branizza of the United States Army Air Corps attended Manhattan College. After Pearl Harbor, he joined the Air Corps as an aviation cadet. He was assigned to the 448th Heavy Bomb Group in Seething Airfield in Norfolk, England, arriving in time to have his first mission on D-Day, June 6th. The fifth and last mission was on June 21st in Berlin. He was hit but managed to keep the aircraft

under control and bail out his crew. Branizza, 89, is a widower and father to his son, Bob and daughter, Jean. He is a civil engineer (NYU) and a 60 plus member of the Hawkins Post.

Philip Wise was born in Harlem in 1948. He attended New York University and joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1966. Philip earned the rank of Corporal and received the combat action award, good conduct medal, National Defense medal, Vietnam Service award, Vietnam Campaign medal and many more honors. He is the Executive Director of the Bronx River Soldiers Veterans Association, a member of Catholic War Veteran of the USA, member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Lowerre Post Veterans Association.

Klein's breakfast concluded with the SUNY Maritime College Chorale performing "Star Spangled Banner," "Armed Forces Salute," "John Kanaka," "The Maui," and "Proud of our Veterans."