



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery: 1 Year Later

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO July 30, 2012

| ISSUE: **VETERANS**

A wise observer once commented, the days may be long, but the years go by quickly.

In many ways, it is very hard to believe already a year has gone by since over 2000 people gathered with great honor and dignity to dedicate the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

On that beautiful Finger Lakes summer day in late July 2011, many generations from all across America came together to honor our veterans, and to thank them for their great service to our beloved Nation.

The Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery is the final resting place for our veterans and their families, and is located on the hallowed ground of the former Sampson Naval and Air Force bases, where over one million sailors and airmen trained in preparation for battle to defend the United States of America. This resting place is in Romulus, New York, a tremendously beautiful setting on the eastern shore of Seneca Lake, and within the shadow of the nationally recognized birthplace of Memorial Day in Waterloo.

This place of honor is a permanent, lasting memorial to those who gave so much and sacrificed so much to keep us free from tyranny and oppression. It is a place where we honor all those who served in the armed forces, and is an expression of thanks for their dedication

to our Nation. It is a place where we pay tribute, give thanks and display gratitude to those who have insured that because of our freedoms, we are the greatest Nation on earth. Those who have borne the cost for our freedoms deserve such a place of dignity for their final resting place.

Under the able direction, leadership and tireless effort of Bill Yale, a retired veteran of the United States Navy, and experienced in the maintenance and operation of national veterans cemeteries, the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery has experienced an incredibly successful first year. Bill's great attention to detail is insuring full and complete compliance with every federal regulation, and he is dedicated to operating the cemetery under strict military standards.

During this past year at the Sampson Memorial Cemetery, official protocols were established, the first burial ceremony took place, the first Memorial Day Ceremony at the cemetery was initiated, and over 70 veterans have been interred.

Among those genuine American heroes who are buried at the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery are veterans who landed on the beaches of Normandy and witnessed first-hand the flag rising on Mount Surabachi at Iwo Jima in WWII.

Interred at the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery are those who traveled the dangerous jungles and rice patties of Vietnam, and stormed the Desert Sands of the Persian Gulf in Southwest Asia.

Soon to be interred among these heroes will be another hero, a veteran who served in the Vietnam War and was awarded the Silver Star, the third-highest combat military decoration that can be awarded to a member of any branch of the United States Armed Forces for valor in the face of the enemy.

In the future, the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery will be the final resting place for those men and women who are today fighting terrorism in Afghanistan, Iraq and around the world.

My thanks to Bill Yale, New York State Assemblyman Brian Kolb, the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery Committee, the Seneca County IDA and Director Bob Aronson, Seneca County Manager Mitch Rowe and the Seneca County Board of Supervisors for all of their great work this past year.

Together we proudly remember the sacrifices of those citizens, who when their country called, answered that call, both here at home and in far off places around the world.

And should anyone ever ask you where can we find American heroes: please tell them that just a few short miles from you, in the heart of the Finger Lakes, there is a place where heroes are gathered to be known forever as Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

For more information on the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery contact Bill Yale, Executive Director of the Sampson Cemetery at 607-379-0197 or visit the website at www.sampsonveteranscemetery.com.