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Letter: Monuments and Ceremonies Commission Thanks Memorial Day Participants

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To the editor:

The Darien Monuments and Ceremonies Commission would like to thank all who participated in the Memorial Day Ceremony at Spring Grove Veteran's Cemetery.

These include the Rev. Monsignor Edward R Surwilo for his always inspiring Invocation and Benediction, and our Grand Marshal Patricia Parlette for her shining example of positive thinking and good cheer. Bruce Sargent for the loan of his pristine 1953 Packard Caribbean convertible to drive Ms. Parlette down the Post Road.

Our speaker, Matt Pavia, delivered a wonderful speech which served to make relevant the sacrifices made by

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those who died for our country. Rhea Bhat, senior girl scout and Tate Hanson, senior patrol leader of the Boy Scouts presented the Gettysburg Address and General Logan's Order No. 11 in a dignified and meaningful manner and made us proud of them as representatives of our Darien youth.

Chris Andrade and the Tudor Singers showed once again why they are so well liked in the area as ambassadors of the Darien High School. TAPS was performed flawlessly by a member of the Darien High School Band.

The cemetery was resplendent with the National Standard on every grave thanks to the efforts of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. The C-130 flyover was very well received by all in attendance, thank you United States Air Force 103rd Wing.

Our local elected officials lead by the First Selectman Jayme Stevenson and accompanied by state Rep. Terrie Wood and Rep. Matt Blumenthal, as well as representatives from our first responders, Chief John Hessmer of the Noroton Fire Department, Lt Shaun Volin from the Noroton Heights Fire Department and Darien Police Chief Ray Osbourne were also on the dais.

The members of the Monuments and Ceremonies Commission and Lucy Berry, chairman of the Veterans Street Sign Committee completed the platform attendee list.

First Selectman Stevenson gave a poignant reading of the names of the Darien wartime deaths as Commissioner Allan Bixler tolled the bell which was brought to the ceremony by the Noroton Heights Fire Department.

The chairs on the reviewing stand and platform were brought by the Noroton Fire Department. We thank both departments for their continued assistance. The Darien VFW Post #6933 can always be counted on to support our efforts as a commission and this day was no different.

They were our Official Honor Guard and performed the Military Salute before TAPS was played. The podium we use each year is loaned to us by the VFW. Thank you to all VFW members for their dedication to these programs. Special thanks also to the Darien Police Department Honor Guard which was in attendance at the cemetery for the entire program.

Programs such as these do not occur without the cooperation and hard work of so many individuals. Without Terry Gaffney at the helm the Memorial Day Parade we would not have been as successful. He worked tirelessly to be sure every part of the parade would go off without a hitch, communicating parade rules, regulations and procedures to all participants so there would be no doubt as to the order of the day. Thank you, Terry, for your attention to detail.

I would like to extend a huge thank you to the members of the Monuments and Ceremonies Commission and several local citizens for their efforts in helping to set-up the platform and reviewing stand in the early hours of Memorial Day, prior to the parade and ceremony.

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Linda O'Leary and Karen Dunn in the Selectman's Office made much of this day possible with their hard work, thank you both. The secretary of the Monuments and Ceremonies Commission, Karen Polett, along with her contacts in the media, have kept us in the public eye and we thank her and all the media outlets for doing this for the town.

Last but certainly not least, thank you to all the citizens of Darien, young and old, who made the effort to come to our ceremony and honor the fallen. It is apparent from your reactions to our program that you value the lives lost in wartime and cherish the legacy their sacrifices have granted us.

Remember to say their names, so they may not have died in vain.

David Polett

Chairman

on behalf of the Darien Monuments and Ceremonies Commission