



From The Desk of Mayor Don Ryan

Week of October 30, 2017

On Saturday, November 11, our nation and our village will pause to honor the many veterans who have fought to preserve our freedom. With many of our brave men and women currently defending our freedom in the ongoing war against terrorism and in so many places throughout the world, Veterans Day has an increasingly significant meaning with each passing year.

I believe it is extremely important that the magnitude of the efforts put forth by our nation's soldiers not be overlooked. Veterans Day is more than just a day for special sales at the stores. It is a day when time should be set aside to salute the brave men and women who have fought, or are still fighting for the preservation of our safety and freedom, including so many who have given their lives throughout our history. If not for their devotion to the red white and blue, we would not be able to enjoy the liberty and independence that we hold so precious in our lives today.

Here in Hempstead Village we will celebrate our veterans during our fifth annual luncheon on Thursday, November, 16. This free event is for current or former service men and women only and will be held from 12-2 p.m. at Kennedy Memorial Park (335 Greenwich Street). The festivities will feature a special performance by The American Bombshells, a modern day twist on the Andrews Sisters, who serve as Ambassadors of America's Gratitude, with an All-American show that dazzles in three part harmony. For those service men and women interested in joining us as we honor our veterans for their service to our nation please RSVP by calling 516-478-6286.

I am proud to be the Mayor of a village that has so many dedicated soldiers who have served, or continue to serve our country with the utmost pride and dignity. Veterans Day is for you!

We also need to remember that when we salute our veterans, we are recognizing all those who are serving or have served in the Armed Forces. Many of these individuals have participated in armed conflicts; others have worked behind the scenes or performed peacetime missions. Each one, in their own way, plays a vital role in the defense of our nation and they all deserve our thanks and appreciation.

Whether or not you know a veteran or are one yourself, take the opportunity this year on Veterans Day to honor the courage of our heroes. Let us learn and draw inspiration from their continued courage. They serve gallantly so that we may pursue our goal of world peace.

This Week's Best of Hempstead



This week's Best of Hempstead honors go to Joseph McNeil, a retired Major General in the United States Air Force who led a long and distinguished military career spanning 38 years in active and reserve duty. Major General McNeil has been a resident of Hempstead Village for the past 47 years but is originally from Wilmington, North Carolina. In 1963 he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering physics from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University and soon after he was commissioned as a second lieutenant through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps program. He served on active duty as a KC-135 navigator at Ellsworth AFB, S.D., until 1969. He spent considerable time in Southeast Asia flying Arc Lite support and Young Tiger missions.

His military service has included fighting in Vietnam and he served as Commander of the both the 702nd Military Airlift Squadron out of McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey and the 22nd Air Force stationed at Dobbins Air Reserve Base in Marietta, Georgia. All told, Major General McNeil logged more than 6,600 flight hours and he received more than 15 major awards and decorations, including the Legion of Merit, Vietnam Service Medal with Silver Star and the Air Force Distinguished Service Medal, upon his retirement in 2001.

During his time as a reservist, Major General McNeil developed a civilian management background working in in the areas of corporate finance, investment banking and public services, including 15 years with the Federal Aviation Administration as an assistant division manager in the Eastern Region Flight Standards Division and manager of the New York District Office, where he retired from that job in 2002.

With Veteran's Day the theme of this week's column it is only fitting that we recognize one of our true heroes. Major General McNeil we salute you for all you have sacrificed and accomplished in serving our country with distinction and congratulate you for being named one of Hempstead's best.

Sincerely,

Don

Don Ryan
Mayor of the Incorporated Village of Hempstead