

**MAYOR ZIMMERMAN'S REMARKS AT THE VETERAN'S DAY CEREMONY
NOVEMBER 8, 2009**

Welcome

Ordinary people accomplishing extraordinary things. Simply put, that's who our veterans are.

Young and old – rich and poor-black and white – and nearly every category in between, they are the men and women who served or still serve in our Armed Services.

Some have endured great hardships, separation from family or drastically altered lifestyles. Some have experienced the horrors of war. Some have suffered either physically or mentally from what they have seen or where they have been. All have sacrificed something so that we could enjoy the freedoms we have today.

Veterans put aside their personal lives to serve their country and protect our freedoms. Then they come back and move back into every day life. Many go on to be our teachers, our police, our fire fighters and our civic leaders. The courage, the training and the ability to see issues through to their completion in the face of moment to moment changes are all values and skills our veterans have honed.

Our veterans don't ask us for much, just proper care for the wounded, respect for what they have done and most importantly support for those still in harm's way.

Our nation as a people do honor and respect our veterans and as such have designated the eleventh day of the eleventh month of each year as Veteran's Day. We honor our veterans today to show them the respect they deserve for the sacrifices they have made.

I, regrettably am not a veteran. Growing up I always wanted to be a fighter pilot in the Air Force. Unfortunately my physical handicap kept me from applying to the Air Force Academy. My father was an Army Veteran though and is currently active in the Coast Guard Auxiliary. He served in the Army towards the end of the Korean War as an MP in Ft. Huachuca, Arizona. I can't tell you how many Sunday morning breakfasts as a kid we would beg to hear the old stories about this Sergeant or that Captain or about peeling potatoes. Yet with all the stories about how tough it was, after getting his pilot's license at the age of 58, my dad joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary. My Dad turned 80 last month. He still maintains the rank of Lieutenant Senior Grade, which he is quick to remind me is the same as Captain in other branches of the service. He still flies search and rescue missions for the US Coast Guard off the coast of southern Florida at least once a week.

My maternal grandfather and his twin brother both served during World War II. Mike was in the Army and Angelo was in the Navy. It is family lore that they looked so similar at that age that they joined different branches because they could only be told apart by their uniforms. Both were very proud of their service. Both told story after story about their time in service. Both went on to lead productive and useful lives after their service but never forgot to remind anyone within earshot that when their countryman needed them, they stood up to fight.

As you can tell I am pretty proud of the veterans in my family. I am just as proud of the veterans from any family. As far as I know, at the moment, our small community has two members on active duty and they are Billy Moore and Anneliese Germain. Billy is a Marine and has served multiple tours in Iraq. Anneliese is a member of the Army Medical unit. As a community we thank Billy and Anneliese for their service and pray for their safety. In honor of Billy Moore and Anneliese Germain and all of those who have served before them, please join me now in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag:

Thank you.

Now please join me in a moment of silence for all of those who have lost their lives in service to their country as well as those who served, returned home safely only to have their lives cut short this past Thursday by a gunman at Ft. Hood.

Thank you.

One final note. This park that is used to honor our veterans on Veterans Day and Memorial Day and is an important part of Rocky Hill. We stand here today at Panicaro Park in a memorial area dedicated to George Panicaro, a member of Rocky Hill that lost his life serving our country. I am proud to announce today that the Mayor and Council have requested, and received, a grant from Somerset County to renovate this memorial area over the course of the next year. I have, with the consent of Council, begun appointing a citizen based design committee to put together a plan that will include a lighted flag pole, benches, new landscaping and possibly a 9-11 monument. It is our intent to make this small but important area a beautiful place to come and reflect on the service of our friends and neighbors.

To all the Veterans that are in attendance today.....thank you for service.

Thank you all for coming.