



CITY OF PEEKSKILL

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

John G. Testa
Mayor

Peekskill Honoring “Forgotten” Vietnam Heroes in Special Memorial Day Celebration.

City Will Unveil Names of Five Brave Sons of Peekskill Killed In War Who Were Not On Monument. At Least One Family of the Deceased Will Be Present.

One Casualty Was Close Friend Of Governor George Pataki. Ceremony Will Take Place 9:30 a.m. Monday Morning At Monument Park At Intersection of Orchard Street and Highland Avenue.

For Immediate Release

Friday, May 27, 2005

**Contact: Mayor John Testa
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PEEKSKILL, NY—Five names will be added to the stone marker that stands in Peekskill’s Monument Park this Monday, May 30. They were all born in Peekskill. They all died in Vietnam. And each of their names was left off of the City’s military monument when it was installed decades ago.

When that monument was built, it held 11 names of soldiers from Peekskill who died in the war—a heavy price for a fairly small city to pay. But because of incomplete records, unsettled times, and numerous other factors, the names of five residents never made it onto the monument.

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At 9:30 a.m. Monday morning, May 30, that will officially change. That's when the City of Peekskill will officially rededicate its monument. On it, newly carved, will be the names Michael John Amato, Barton Sheldon Creed, John Thomas Lockhart, Michael Louis Poggi and Frank John Guichaud. Though their backgrounds, ranks and services varied widely, all served in the Vietnam War and died in Southeast Asia. The body of one has never been found. Each has a place on the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Though the men have been gone for many years, memories of them live on in their families, friends and peers. Barton Creed's brother, George, and Michael Amato's father, Orlando, noticed the missing names on the monument and asked for them to be included. Peekskill Mayor John Testa decided that was the right thing to do and began the process by asking Department of Parks and Recreation foreman Dave DiGregorio to look into the matter.

With the information collecting power of the Internet available, DiGregorio quickly discovered that not two but five names of Vietnam War dead from Peekskill had failed to make it onto the memorial. He asked Mike Lepore, Manager of Peekskill's Carter's Funeral Home, if he knew someone who could work on the memorial. Lepore volunteered to have the work done for free.

"At a time when our troops are again fighting overseas, it is especially important for us to acknowledge the contributions of the generations that sacrificed so much before us," Mayor Testa says. "These were brave sons of Peekskill and deserve to be remembered and included on the City's monument," Testa added.

So where there were once 13 names on the Vietnam portion of the monument, there are now 16. Awaiting their official unveiling, the new names look strangely crisp and fresh on the weathered stone, since nature has not yet had a chance to chip at their edges and begin wearing them down. Together, the names demonstrate the long history and wide diversity that has been a part of Peekskill's character since it was founded more than 350 years ago.

Vietnam was a long war, and more than a decade passed between the first and the last casualties. They served in many different branches of the military, and came from varied backgrounds as well, according to the Vietnam Memorial database:

Michael John Amato was 20 years old, single, white and male. A Lance Corporal in the regular marines, he was born on January 30, 1947. He served for two years until He was killed in battle by small arms fire in Quang Tri, South Vietnam, on May 13, 1967. His body was recovered. Michael's father, Orlando, is planning to attend the event on Monday.

Lt. Commander Barton Sheldon Creed's remains have never been found. He was born on April 3, 1945. A regular officer in the Navy, his tour of duty in Vietnam began on March 13, 1971. He was declared a "casualty" October 2, 1978, and is presumed to have died while imprisoned. Creed was flying a fixed wing aircraft that crashed on the land, according to the Database. His body was never recovered. The database only says "Hostile, died while missing." Creed was a close friend of Governor George Pataki when they were young.

Frank John Guichaud, a Private First Class in the Marine Corps, was born on Dec. 16, 1947 and was 19 when he died, killed by a mine or explosive device in Quang Nam, South Vietnam. He had been in the military one year when he died on May 24, 1967. His body was recovered.

John Thomas Lockhart was a specialist, level E5, in the regular army when his helicopter was shot down in Laos on March 11, 1971. He was killed in the crash. He was born on March 27, 1950, and was 20 years old when he died. His tour of duty began on April 14, 1969, so it's likely he was just over a month away from going home when he was killed. His body was recovered.

Michael Louis Poggi was a Sergeant in the 25 Infantry Division. Born on August 30, 1948, he was 20 years old when he was killed, most likely in a firefight, in Tay Ninh, South Vietnam. His tour of duty began on August 20, 1968, and ended on March 29, 1969. His body was recovered.

“We hope and pray we will never need to add names to this monument again,” Testa says. “But we are truly privileged to have this chance to honor those who gave their all for America.”

There are 11 other Vietnam War dead honored on the monument. They are: Oliver C. Chase, Jr., Harold McDonald, William T. Dorsey, Chester J. Moshier, John B. Hudson, Douglas R. Mowbray, William M. Kelley, Jr., Lawrence E. Osborne, John F. Martin, Bruce Reed and Robert H. Irwin.

For more information, contact Mayor John Testa at 814-734-4105.

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