Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Community pays tribute to veterans during Fort Drum wreath-laying ceremony

FORT DRUM, N.Y. (Nov. 10, 2022) -- Community members across Fort Drum and the North Country gathered Nov. 10 at Memorial Park for the annual Veterans Day wreath-laying ceremony.

Maj. Gen. Gregory Anderson, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum commander, spoke about the importance of honoring veterans and taking the time to reflect on what their service has meant to this nation.

“Paying respect to our veterans, and homage, is significant,” he said. “It is really our duty, not just of Soldiers, but as citizens, to remember the service rendered by our veterans. I think Abraham Lincoln captured it best in his timeless quote, ‘A nation that does not honor its heroes will not long endure.’”

Anderson said that the Military Mountaineers Monument in Memorial Park speaks volumes about veterans and their selfless service. He said the World War II Soldier on top, reaching down to help a modern-day Soldier, could represent any veteran, and the mountaineer’s firm grasp on the rope signifies the strong bond connecting veterans to current military members.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. David Martel, former 10th Mountain Division senior enlisted adviser, served as guest speaker at the ceremony.

“Today, we recognize our veterans, for it is our day, your day,” he said. “Being a veteran means you are woven into fabric of freedom for this country. You are part of that forever.”

Martel said that behind every person who wore a uniform is a story that deserves to be shared.

“My story is important, not because it is particularly unique, but because it is crucial for those of us who served to share their stories with others,” he said. “It’s called being an ambassador – a Soldier for Life.”

He said that history requires veterans to recall the good times and bad, lessons learned, successes and failures. Martel also asked that veterans remain connected to their friends and colleagues in the service.

Having served 32 years as an infantryman in the Army, Martel gave examples of the random meetings he would have with former colleagues and people who served in the same units. He also stays connected with members of the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment (Golden Dragons), which he said has weekly meetings online with former and current service members to share stories and “just be there for each other.”

“There are some here who are on their first tour and some who are getting ready to get out, and I ask them to share their stories with you,” Martel said. “No matter, you will always be a Soldier for Life. Be proud of your time, tell your story, stay connected.”

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Photo caption: Community members across Fort Drum and the North Country gathered Nov. 10 at Memorial Park for the annual Veterans Day wreath-laying ceremony. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)