

Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum community honors its fallen heroes during Annual Remembrance Ceremony

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- Members of the 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum community joined Gold Star family members in Memorial Park on June 25 to honor the division's fallen heroes during the Annual Remembrance Ceremony.

"We certainly carry the memories of the fallen with us always, but I think we all feel a particular closeness to them in this field where we are today," said Maj. Gen. Scott Naumann, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum commander. "Our fallen heroes preside over us in a way that transcends words – a silent and powerful presence felt by every Soldier who serves."

Naumann said it is appropriate that Mountainfest week – which celebrates the division's legacy and connection with the North Country – begins with a solemn gathering at Memorial Park.

"Today, we reaffirm our commitment to those we've lost and celebrate the enduring spirit of the division," he said.

Naumann welcomed the Gold Star family members in attendance, some of whom he met during the Gold Star evening social last night.

"Their presence here today is not merely a testament to the lives of their loved ones, but a powerful reminder of the profound cost of the freedoms we all cherish," he said. "We are humbled by their sacrifice, and profoundly grateful for their continued support of our Soldiers who serve today and this magnificent community we call home."

The Fort Drum and 10th Mountain Division (LI) community celebrates significant milestones this year – the 80th anniversary of the division's assault on Riva Ridge during World War II, the Army's 250th birthday, and 40th anniversary of the division's reactivation.

"Together, these form a legacy we are privileged to carry forward," Naumann said.

Retired Brig. Gen. Mark O'Donnell, former 1st Brigade Combat Team commander and 10th Mountain Division (LI) chief of staff, served as guest speaker at the ceremony.

"It is a deep honor to be here today with you – the families, Soldiers, the veterans, and leaders – as we remember and reflect on the proud legacy of the 10th Mountain Division, and the men and women whose sacrifice will forever be woven into the fabric of that legacy," he said.

O'Donnell said that memorial ceremonies are an important part of the healing process, but for many Gold Star families it is an opportunity to reconnect.

"They're here for this connection to history and, more importantly, this connection to Soldiers," he said. "If anybody ever questions whether these ceremonies are important so long after the fact, I would just say: Look around you. Look at all the people that still choose to come back. It's big gestures like this ceremony, and it's in small, quieter moments when we stand at their memorials, to have this opportunity to say their names and tell their stories, that ensures the next generation of leaders and Soldiers ... that they understand the freedom that we provide comes at a cost."

O'Donnell joined Naumann for the wreath laying in front of the Military Mountaineer Monument, while Soldiers placed wreaths at the foot of 23 memorial plaques.

The wreath-laying ceremony recognizes the service and sacrifice of 10th Mountain Division Soldiers in campaigns over the past four decades, and it reaffirms that Gold Star and Next of Kin Lapel families will remain a part of the 10th Mountain Division (LI) family.

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Photo Captions:

1 - Member of the 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum community joined Gold Star family members in Memorial Park on June 25 to honor the division's fallen heroes during the Annual Remembrance Ceremony. *(Photo Credit: Michael Strasser)*

2 - Maj. Gen. Scott Naumann, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum commander, delivers remarks at the Annual Remembrance Ceremony on June 25 in Memorial Park. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

3 - Retired Brig. Gen. Mark O'Donnell, former 1st Brigade Combat Team commander and 10th Mountain Division chief of staff, delivers remarks at the Annual Remembrance Ceremony on June 25 in Memorial Park. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

4 – Soldiers with 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), lay wreaths in front of the memorial plaques during the Annual Remembrance Ceremony on June 25 in Memorial Park. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

5 - A three-volley salute by Soldiers with 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), precedes the playing of Taps at the conclusion of the Annual Remembrance Ceremony on June 25 in Memorial Park. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

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