

The Stamford Historical Society Inc.

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Project Honoring WWII Participants to be Unveiled at Nov. 7 Press Conference

(Stamford CT, Nov. 7) Mayor David Martin will be among the participants at a press conference to announce the completion of the Stamford WWII "Service Roll" project. The Service Roll was originally a large, triangular shaped, temporary outdoor wooden structure that displayed over 10,000 names of men and women who enlisted or were drafted from Stamford into the Armed Forces during WWII. At that time, the intent was to erect a permanent memorial once the war was over. However, with peace, other priorities developed and the Service Roll, which was never intended to endure years of exposure to the elements, began to deteriorate. All names of those who paid the supreme sacrifice were kept and later inscribed on the granite monoliths in today's Veteran's Park. The remaining nameplates were offered to veterans and their families, after which those remaining were lost when the structure was demolished in the 1960's. To honor all those who served, the Stamford Historical Society embarked on the daunting task of recreating the list of names that was at risk of being totally lost from public memory. After hours of data entry and painstaking research, the Society has completed this project.

Several years ago, thousands of 3 x 5 cards were donated to the Historical Society, each bearing the name of a person in the military during WWII. After studying them it became apparent that these were the source of names that were utilized in creating the Service Roll. If an individual was killed in action, a gold color star was affixed to the card. "That's when we realized we had to do something to honor these men and women. So we decided to essentially recreate [on a computer and paper] the Service Roll."

The trouble was, that aside from the cards, Burke and Marcus learned that there wasn't a single source to use for reassembling all of the names. Not even the US and/or CT State governments had a complete list of those who enlisted were were drafted from Stamford. That's when Dan Burke, Historical Society volunteer stepped in to spearhead a massive effort that was like finding needles in a haystack. He had to search multiple sources, including city directory entries, veteran discharge papers, names from several local neighborhood service rolls and simply untold hours, reading the Stamford Advocate covering the war years. "... We couldn't let these individuals be forgotten. They were our heroes." Says Burke.

The Service Roll names are on the Historical Society's website at stamfordhistory.org Of course, with a project of this size, one can never be 100% sure it's really complete. If anyone knows of someone who served from Stamford whose name is missing from the list, they are requested to come forward with documentation and contact the Society at stamfordhistory.org.

In addition to Mayor David Martin, Stamford Town Clerk Donna Loglisci, Stamford Historical Chairperson Pamela Coleman, Dan Burke and Ron Marcus will be in attendance, offering a few comments.

The press conference will be held at 10 AM, Friday, November 7, 2014 in the lobby of the Stamford Government Center, 888 Washington Blvd., Stamford, CT 06901.