

SALUTES FOR ALL VETS



REENA ROSE SIBAYAN JOURNAL PHOTOS

RAY MAHAN, 75, who was a U.S. Air Force combat medic, looks at the plaque his family dedicated to him at the Hudson County Korean War Memorial in Jersey City.



A CROWD GATHERS at the Jersey City-Harsimus Cemetery in Jersey City for a Veterans Day ceremony.

Hudson remembers those who fought for America

By **PAUL KOEPP**
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

On the day World War II ended, Mike Maiellaro painted an American flag on the wall of School 5 in Jersey City.

Seven years later, he was drafted to go to Korea as a military policeman as his brother was returning from fighting with a Purple Heart.

"My mother didn't want me to go when he came back all shot up," he recalled.

Maiellaro was one of the soldiers past and present saluted as selfless heroes yesterday in Veterans Day ceremonies across Hudson County.

Several local politicians spoke at the Korean War Memorial in Downtown Jersey City as about 20 veterans of the "forgotten war" looked on wearing sky blue jackets.

"I'm standing in the shadow of true heroes," newly elected Bayonne mayor Mark Smith told them yesterday.

There are about 125 veterans left in Hudson County's group of Korean War soldiers, officials said.

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U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez paid tribute to all veterans, saying they have made the United States "a beacon of light" throughout the world, especially in places like his parents' native Cuba where freedom is lacking.

Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy, former Jersey City mayor Bret Schundler, state Sen. Sandra B. Cunningham, D-Jersey City, and Jersey City Councilmen Peter Brennan and Michael Sottolano also spoke.

At the recently spruced-up Jersey City-Harsimus Cemetery on Newark Avenue, patriotic songs and reverent speeches rang out for nearly an hour



VETERANS, from left, Enzo Neri, 86, Richard Clerici, 78, and Joseph Caputo, 91, place a wreath by the war memorial at Ellswood Park in Union City yesterday.

before dozens of attendees fanned out across the grounds placing flags at soldiers' graves dating to the Civil War and even earlier.

Eileen Markenstein, president of the cemetery's board of trustees, said the board is working to have the cemetery listed as a state and national landmark.

Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise said the cleanup at the cemetery, which had been abandoned earlier this year, made it a fitting place to honor veterans.

"It was a shame to see it so neglected, but to see it in the condition it's in now is a wonderful thing," DeGise said.

Ceremonies were also held yesterday in Union City, Bayonne and elsewhere in the county.

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