

WWII Veterans receive tribute

Photos

Photos



Dustin Racioppi/ NorwichBulletin.com

Back row from left, Canterbury First Selectman Brian Sear, Franklin First Selectman Richard Matters, Scotland First Selectman Clark Stearns, Sprague First Selectman Catherine Osten, and Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz, honor World War II veterans, seated in front, from the four towns Wednesday at the Scotland Volunteer Fire Department.

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Scotland, Conn. —

Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz held a ceremony Wednesday at Scotland Volunteer Fire Department to say thank you and present letters of appreciation to World War II veterans from Scotland, Sprague, Franklin and Canterbury.

“At least they appreciate us,” Army veteran Gerard Bastien of Sprague said. “This was beautiful.”

Bysiewicz has been making her rounds throughout the state saluting those she called “the greatest generation” and presenting them with the Connecticut Wartime Service Medal.

Statewide tour

After realizing last year that World War II veterans in the state were dying at a steady rate, Bysiewicz started coordinating with towns to conduct ceremonies such as the one in Scotland. After Wednesday, Bysiewicz will have completed 44 of the state’s 169 towns.

“Being the daughter of a World War II veteran, I thought time was of the essence, and say thank you while we have the opportunity,” she said.

Though appreciative, most of the crowd remained modest.

“There are people who deserve the honor much more than me, but I’m happy to be here,” Sprague Navy veteran Mary Stefon, 84, said.

And others simply were happy to be there, such as Alexander Osiper, who married his wife during the war and will celebrate his 63rd wedding anniversary next week.

“We’re alive. We’re all Americans. God bless us,” he said, triumphantly raising his arms.

If you go

Saturday is Northeast Connecticut Veterans’ Awards Day. More than 200 veterans from Brooklyn, Eastford, Hampton, Pomfret and Woodstock will be honored with Connecticut Wartime Service Medals at 11 a.m. at Hyde School in Woodstock.

At a glance: Veterans honored

Canterbury: Clarence Beauchene, Ernest Beauchene, Priscilla Botti, Alfred Cote, Valentine Galasyn, Arthur Grab, Lewis Gray, Channing Huntington, Arthur James, William Francis Koji, Arthur LeBeau, Ralph Leupold, Joseph Lisee, Donald Francis McManus, Floyd Merriam, Joseph Momut, Edward Nill, Alexander Osiper, Wallace Francis Peterson, Alexander Pitre, Edward Raymond, Alexander Rudyk, Stephen Rudyk, William Stearns, Kenneth Veit, Francis Wisniewski.

Franklin: John Babie, Raymond Desbonnet, Stephen Dubina, Andre Gladue, Henry Konow, Alfred Landry, Louis Lizotte, Joseph Morse, Pauline Palmquist, John Pillar, William Sawicky.

Scotland: Clayton Blay, Joseph Kos, Alexander Kolesnik, Theodore Lemire, Raymond Segar, William Spicer.

Sprague: Laurent Arpin, Gerard Bastien, Edward Butrymowicz, Ernest Chamberlain, John Charron, Aime Douville, Harlan Harrison, Bernard Henault, Albert Hoffman, Alphonse Martin, John McLaughlin, Philip Michaud Sr., Herbert Savage, Mary Stefon.