

LIVING VETS HONORED AT MIDDLE ISLAND PARK

War on Terror service members also recognized

BY JOE WERKMEISTER
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As she listened to the names of fellow veterans read aloud during a ceremony Saturday, Ebonnie Goodfield reflected on the “moving” gesture.

Oftentimes, she said, veterans struggle with their identity after returning home from service.

“We lose who we are,” said Goodfield, 32, one of two keynote speakers at the Longwood Veterans Day Commemoration Ceremony at Bartlett Pond Park in Middle Island.

Goodfield, a 2009 graduate of Longwood High School in Middle Island who served in the Navy, was one of more than 100 veterans from the local community to see their names engraved on monuments reflective of the war in which they fought.

Most names were added to the Longwood Global War on Terror Memorial, while others were added to monuments for Vietnam, World War I and even one name — Marshall E. Smith — from the Civil War.

Remembering the living, too

Rather than honor veterans posthumously on monuments, the Longwood Alliance that spearheads the project aims to highlight all service members from the community, many of whom recently served.

“Just the idea that their name is always remembered, even if they didn’t perish, that service is so important to remember,” said Gail Lynch-Bailey, president of the Longwood Alliance, a volunteer community group.

In 2007, a monument dedicated to World War II veterans was first unveiled at the park. It’s grown ever since and an annual ceremony has been held at the site since 2009 on Veterans Day.

The ceremony began precisely at 11 a.m. in remembrance of the day’s roots as Armistice Day for the end of World War I.

One by one Saturday, the veterans in attendance whose names were added to a monument had their name read by Longwood School District Superintendent Lance Lohman. The veterans shook hands with school leaders



More than 100 newly engraved veterans names were unveiled at memorials in Bartlett Pond Park in Middle Island on Saturday. Most of the names added were for those who served in the War on Terror.



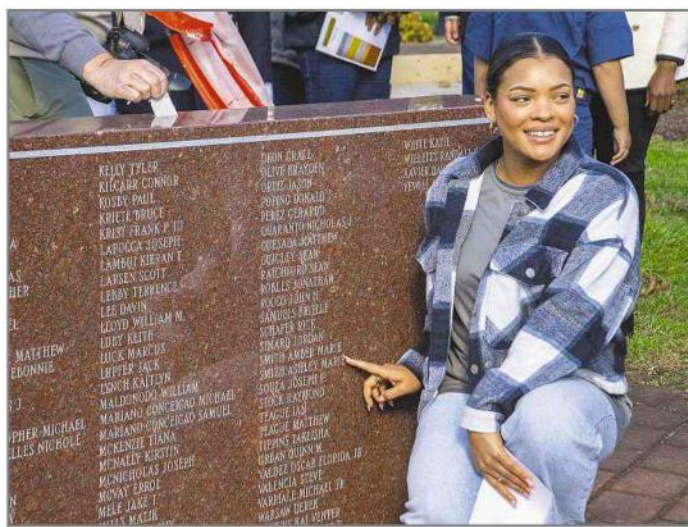
Navy veteran Ebonnie Goodfield was one of two speakers.

and elected officials and took turns posing for photos in front of their monument. Other veterans in attendance also got an opportunity to announce their name to the crowd of more than 200 people.

Afterward, Lynch-Bailey pointed to where the names initially ended on the War on Terror memorial after its unveiling in 2012. “Then we added a few. The war wasn’t over,” she said. “And then the war wasn’t over. And the war wasn’t over.”

Both sides of the monument are now nearly filled with more than 400 names.

Retired Army Col. Kevin Hicks, a 1985 Longwood High graduate who was wounded by gunfire in Afghanistan, delivered the first keynote address. He spoke about the importance of



Air Force vet Amber Marie Smith points to her name and the name of her sister Ashley Marie Smith on the War on Terror monument.

mental health for veterans and highlighted resources available for those who may be suffering, such as the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and a mental health organization called Give An Hour. He also pointed to a pair of Suffolk-based organizations: The Response Crisis Center and Long Island Behavioral Medicine.

Mental health is important

“We’re trying to raise awareness throughout the service that behavioral health is as important or more important than physical or spiritual health,” he said.

Amber Marie Smith, 32,

whose name was added to the War on Terror monument alongside her younger sister Ashley Marie Smith, said she was trying “to find herself again” after her service in the Air Force. She said she struggled with mental health issues.

She grew up in Medford, and now attends Suffolk County Community College to study business administration. She said her mom, who is also a veteran, signed up her and her sister to be included on the monument.

“It’s super nice to see the community support us,” she said.



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THIS DATE IN HISTORY

1927 Josef Stalin became the undisputed ruler of the Soviet Union as Leon Trotsky was expelled from the Communist Party.
1942 The World War II naval Battle of Guadalcanal began. (The Allies would win a major victory over Japanese forces.)
1948 Former Japanese premier Hideki Tojo and several other World War II Japanese leaders were sentenced to death by a war-crimes tribunal.

2001 American Airlines Flight 587, headed to the Dominican Republic, crashed after takeoff from New York’s Kennedy Airport, killing all 260 people on board and five people on the ground.
2020 The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, a broad coalition of top government and industry officials, rejected President Donald Trump’s claims of election fraud, saying that the election was “the most secure in American history.”