

# The Teaneck SUBURBANITE

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MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCES

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## Pace remembers war dead

BY NAVID IQBAL  
Of Suburbanite

Rain forced Memorial Day ceremonies indoors but it didn't dampen emotions as Marine General Peter Pace, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a 1963 Teaneck High School grad was welcomed home and stirred the crowd of hundreds. "This town gave me and my family many gifts," said Pace, "all the things that we take for granted."

The crowd of nearly 300, including survivors of the 104 slain military servicemen and women, police officers, firemen, Volunteer Ambulance Corps members, veterans, and National Guardsmen, patiently listened in the cramped, dense auditorium of the Teaneck Public Library.

Pace greeted the town in a soft-spoken voice and recalled the bravery of residents who died in battle, including eight from Teaneck killed in Vietnam.

"I didn't know them as individuals," said Pace, who paused several times in his speech and took a deep breath as the crowd stayed still waiting for his next words. "But I knew them from their type. They were white, black, and Hispanic. They volunteered or were drafted. Some believed in the war, some did not. But I do know that on the battlefield all fought for their buddies on their left and right."

Pace said he had arrived in Viet-

nam for the massive Tet offensive in January 1968. He was the third commander his platoon had had in three weeks. The platoon started with 43 men and 14 were left. He came out without a scratch after serving in Vietnam for 13 months. From that experience, he said, he felt he was supposed to repay a debt and he has stayed in the Marine Corps for more than 30 years.

The general was able to recite the names of those who had died under his command, names he said he remembers every day.

The ceremonies in Teaneck followed tradition with the reading of the 104 residents who lost their lives for their country.

"From the Revolutionary War to Iraq," said Louis J. Tiboldo, who led the Patriotic Observance Advisory Board in organizing the event, "more than 800,000 thousand people have given their lives ... to defend [the United States'] values."

Department of Public Works employees packed the corridors outside making sure things went without a hitch.

Tiboldo acknowledged them, the American Legion Post 128, the Jewish War Veterans, the 369th Veterans Organization, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

VFW member and Vietnam vet, Leonard Hennig, JWV representative Mary Hauptman, American Foreign Legion Post 128 Commander Bob Talbot, 369th Veterans Organizations representative Albert Ford read roll call. Hennig's daughter, Karen, with John Searfoss of the American Legion Post 128 read two moving letters that

were left at the Vietnam War Memorial.

U.S. Senator Jon Corzine said that Pace represents the efficiency, bravery, intelligence of all the men and women who have recently served in U.S. military excursions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"He epitomizes the efficiency we've been able to carry out in defense of freedom," Corzine said. "Freedom is not free."

Other Democratic notables in attendance included Assemblywoman Loretta Weinberg (D-37) and Assemblyman Gordon Johnson (D-37).

Mayor Jacqueline B. Kates, who wiped her eyes several times as Pace and others spoke, welcomed the crowd and Gen. Pace and his wife. Also present were Deputy Mayor Elie Y. Katz and Council members Yitz Stern, Paul Ostrow, Deborah Veach and Marie Warnke.

"Memorial Day means to us a time to remember 17, 18, and 19 year old boys and what [they] might have been if they didn't give their lives for this country," said speaker Frank Hall, Teaneck's former mayor and a WWII Marine vet, "and what the country would have been like if they didn't give their lives."

Rabbi Ira Grussgott of the Jewish Center of Teaneck, suggested in his benediction that soldiers would no longer have to die in battle "when all are free from poverty, when all are free from fear, when all are free to worship thee. And to your principles adhere..."

Billy Crier of the Teaneck High School band played "Taps."



STAFF PHOTO BY MICHAEL KARAS

Mayor Jacqueline Kates, Marine General Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and his wife Lynne Pace joining the Pledge of Allegiance during Teaneck's Memorial Day ceremony.