Features

Bloomfield Veterans Cemetery Dedicates Road In Honor of Jack Matthews

Bloomfield Veterans Cemetery Dedicates Road In Honor of Jack Matthews Bloomfield, MO - On Veterans Day, the Bloomfield Assistance League along with Jack Matthew's family gathered to dedicate a road in his honor. Matthews is a World War II Veteran and was the driving force in efforts to bring the Missouri Veterans Cemetery to Stoddard County.

A road on the north side of the property now bares his name as does a plaque at the front door of the administration building.

Mr. Matthews worked diligently beside Jerry Elder, Frank Sifford, and Ray Coats to acquire land to donate to the state. He made numerous trips to Jefferson City to meet with officials to get the site at Bloomfield.

The ceremony was small due to COVID-19. Col. Ed Gargas began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

US Army Sergeant Blair Moran, president of the Bloomfield Assistance League spoke, "We have gathered here this morning on a very special Veterans Day to honor a very special veteran. Mr Jack Matthews is the reason we are assembled here today at the Missouri Veterans Cemetery because of his outstanding work that he did in making this site a reality."

"All of us assembled here today as baby boomers owe a great deal of gratitude to both Jack and Pauline (his wife) and their generation who sacrificed so much," continued Moran. "That allowed all of us as baby boomers to grow up in a country, free of tyranny that Jack helped defeat while wearing the uniform of our nation."

Matthews did not stop with just forming the Bloomfield Veterans Cemetery, he dedicated his entire adult life to helping veterans. He created a foundation that helps fund programs that assist Missouri State Veterans. He worked through the Dept of Labor on veterans employment and served on the Missouri Veterans Commission for eight years.

Mr. Matthews was unable to attend the ceremony due to health reason, but his wife Pauline and son, retired Army Col. Larry Matthews, were in attendance.

Col. Matthews was presented a plaque from the Missouri Legislature and an appreciation flag from the Bloomfield Assistance League.

He also spoke to the crowd, "I have always told people that the journey is more important than the destination and even though this is a destination, dad fought a hard journey to get us where we are today."

"When dad started this journey, he decided he wanted to try and give something back to the community. There were two cities that wanted this cemetery real bad. One was Cape Girardeau and the other was Poplar Bluff. He worked closely with the Stoddard County Commission and when they donated the land it all fell into place."

Matthews was a WWII veteran and joined at the age of 17. He was sworn into the Army at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis and went to basic training at Camp Robinson in North Little Rock, Arkansas. He then shipped out on a train to Boston and took a troop transport to Glasgow, Scotland. From there, he took a ship across the English Channel into France. He returned two years later and finished high school.

"When you think about what you were doing as a junior in high school," said Matthews, "You probably didn't see the carnage that those young men saw during WWII."

Col. Matthews extended his thanks on behalf of his family, stating that the Bloomfield Cemetery had no better friend than Jack Matthews.

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