

# The Trail of Honor at Lasdon Park, Arboretum and Veterans Memorial

*A walk through our nation's history*



Welcome to Lasdon Park, Arboretum and Veterans Memorial, a magnificent 234 acre property consisting of woodlands, grassy meadows, rolling lawns and formal gardens with flower, shrub and tree specimens from all over the world. Lasdon is also the site of the Chinese Friendship Pavilion that was a gift from the People's Republic of China to the residents of Westchester. The Veterans Memorial is a pathway, known as The Trail of Honor, and is dedicated to the veterans of Westchester County, from The American Revolution to Desert Storm. On this trail you will walk among the natural surroundings and wildlife featured in Lasdon Park as you journey through our nation's past. At the entrance to the trail, you are welcomed by the flags of the six branches of the military: the Merchant Marines, Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard and Air Force, arranged by date of organization. As you proceed on the path into the woods, you will come across a row of bronze busts, all of which sit atop stone cairns, covered with stones from the 44 towns in Westchester. The busts are copied from similar works done by sculptor and veteran Niels Anderson (excluding the War of 1812, made by Barbara Lepak). Anderson placed these originals on display at Franklin Delano Roosevelt Veteran's hospital, where he himself was treated. Each portrays a soldier from every American war, from the weathered militiaman of the Revolution to the sand-blown tank driver of Desert Storm.

As you proceed to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, you will gradually encounter three large bronze statues and a black obelisk, with the Muscoot Reservoir in full view. The statues feature three figures: two soldiers, one cradling the other in his arms, and a nurse rushing to attend to the wounded soldier. Inscribed on the obelisk are the 217 names of the soldiers from Westchester who were lost in the Southeast Asia conflict. Nearby is a piece of black granite inscribed with the names of eight nurses that were killed while serving in Vietnam. Surrounding the obelisk is a path made up of 5,900 paving stones, each one representing ten soldiers who were killed in the Vietnam War. As you continue through the woods, another obelisk will present itself. This monument commemorates the veterans of the Korean War, a war that is regrettably forgotten by many, but holds a special place on this trail.

We hope as you continue to the end of the trail and witness each of the fifteen memorials you will remember that our freedom truly is not free. These brave men and women from Westchester paid the ultimate price to ensure the freedom of our great nation, and we owe them our deepest respect and gratitude. Thank you for your visit, and we hope you visit once again.



## Merchant Marines

The Merchant Marines monument is the first to present itself on this trail, and recognizes our Nation's oldest naval division. Its creation dates back to the beginning of the revolution. Originally used by private trading companies, merchant marines were quickly recruited by the continental army after a group of Merchant Marines used a small sloop to defeat a large British ship called the HMS Margarett. Since then, the Merchant Marines have served in every American conflict, bringing supplies and arms to our troops overseas and defending those valuable cargoes from the beginning to the end of their voyages. Recently they have served on transport ships for our troops in Iraq and defending supply lines headed for our ground troops from dangerous opposition. Their bravery at sea shows the true strength of our naval fleets, and they continue to be an invaluable asset to our military.



## The Revolutionary War

The first of eleven busts, which comes into view, is dedicated to soldiers of the American Revolution. It portrays a worn serviceman who is the representative of our nation's founding war for independence. He is wearing the common rugged winter uniform that most of the soldiers put together in order to keep warm. The American Revolution began as a simple request by American colonists for representation when being taxed, yet the British responded by forcing further taxes and restrictions on the colonies, resulting in a revolution. Through the sacrifices of many brave colonial volunteers, a new nation of freedom was born. Across from this memorial is a red maple and plaque dedicated to the late U.S. Congressman Hamilton Fish Jr., a good friend to all veterans, who has been honored with a lasting place on this trail.



## The War of 1812

Next on the trail is a bust dedicated to the War of 1812. The bust depicts a serviceman in the American military at the time of the United States' first declared war, which began as a territorial conflict between the British and French. When the British Navy began to dwindle in force, British ships began to capture American vessels and force their sailors to join the British Navy. As a result, Congress declared war on the British Empire in 1812. After a year of unsuccessful attacks on British forts in Canada, Americans soon turned the tide during the Battle of Baltimore, a battle that inspired the National Anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner." Right after this battle, the British attempted to take New Orleans, but unbeknownst to both sides, peace had already been declared overseas by British and American representatives.



## The Civil War



As you continue on the trail, you will come upon the bust dedicated to the American Civil War. The bust is of an old Union serviceman, one of many who fought during the bloodiest war fought on American soil. The serviceman wears a signature forage cap, a fatigue hat that became the common headgear for Union soldiers.

This gruesome conflict began over whether each individual state should be allowed to make their own rules or if they should follow regulation from the federal government. The southern states wanted to be able to create their own laws, and forcibly seceded from the Union in 1861. After the Confederate states attacked Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, war erupted between the Confederacy and the Union, forcing many Americans to face one another on the battle field until General Lee surrendered his troops in 1865.



## Spanish-American War

The next monument on the trail is in honor of those who served in the Spanish American War. This war fought for control over Cuba and the Philippines out of fear of a Spanish invasion of the United States and to create a hold on South America. The war ignited after

the sinking of the battleship Maine, and with the help of the media, the United States gave Spain the ultimatum to either leave Latin America or face retaliation. Spain and the United States declared war in 1898, beginning ten weeks of one sided victories for the Americans, ultimately annihilating the Spanish troops in South America. Once peace had been declared, the United States gained temporary control over Cuba, as well as indefinite control over Guam, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. The serviceman resembles a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> United States Volunteer Cavalry, a unit later led by future president Theodore Roosevelt that was nicknamed "The Rough Riders".



## World War I

The next two busts along the trail are dedicated to the servicemen of the First World War, also known as "the Great War." The monument features two busts: an infantryman and a pilot, representing the two major fronts of the conflict. World War I was the tragic result of numerous alliances of rival European countries being provoked into war by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary. The conflict is noted for the evolution of immensely lethal weapon technologies such as poison gas, tanks and new aerial warfare through the use of airplanes. Most of the war was fought from the trenches of France and along the Russian-German border between the Allied and Central powers. In 1918 American forces entered the conflict and the trenches, and with the aid of these additional troops the Central powers were defeated.

## World War II



Continuing on the trail you come to the World War II busts standing side by side. The two busts, one of whom is an infantryman and the other being a seaman, both visualize the struggle and hardship that all generations faced while fighting against the rising Nazi threat. In 1939

the allied powers, with the exception of the United States, declared war on a vicious Nazi Germany, whose borders had violently made their way into Poland and Austria. Japan, who had allied themselves with Germany along with Italy, soon attacked Pearl Harbor, provoking the United States to defend itself and come to the aid of the Allied forces. The war raged on both in Europe and in the Pacific, lasting a total of six years before ending in 1945 with the death of Nazi Germany's dictator, Adolf Hitler, and finally with the bombing of Japan through use of the first nuclear weapons.

## Korean War



Next in line on the trail is The Korean War bust. The monument is of a man wrapped in a standard issue blanket, reflecting the cold temperatures that most soldiers experienced while fighting in Korea.

This conflict was fought to diffuse a Communist spread into Asia. After World War II, Russia became the next major threat with their attempt at spreading their influence into Asia. When peace was declared after World War II, Korea was split in half, with the Socialists in North Korea attempting to invade South Korea. The United Nations intervened, defending the infamous 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel from the North Koreans, who were backed by the communist forces of China and Russia. The UN used both swift infantry raids and bombing runs in order to force back the North Koreans from the demilitarized zone, but in 1953 a stalemate was declared. UN forces still occupy the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel to this day.

## Vietnam War



The Vietnam War was fought from 1959 to 1975, during a time of major social revolution and chaos on the home front. The war was another attempt to prevent Russia's influence from spreading into Asia. North Vietnam was attempting to claim South Vietnam, similar

to what happened in Korea, and Americans felt that the war would be a swift victory. However, the North Vietnamese used guerilla warfare to strike at American troops patrolling through their native jungles. After years of fighting on the war front and rallies and protests on the home front, President Nixon pulled out U.S. troops in 1975. The monument shows a machine gunner in a worn uniform, reflecting the exhaustion of the servicemen who fought in Vietnam.

### Desert Storm



This next bust features a tank trooper dedicated to those who served in Desert Storm, also known as the Persian Gulf War and the shortest conflict in American history, lasting only 100 hours of combat time. In August 1990 Kuwait was invaded by Iraqi troops, an action that was immediately met with economic sanctions by the U.N. Six months

later the United States decided to respond to the Iraqi presence in Kuwait with military force, launching Operation Desert Storm, which was made up of troops from the United States, The United Kingdom, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The coalition first launched a bombing run, and then followed with a ground assault to expel the Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Once the Iraqi troops had been pushed back, a cease-fire was called, after only 100 hours of combat involved during the campaign.

### Female Nurses Monument



The last bust on the trail is dedicated to the hundreds of women who have dutifully attended our nation's wounded soldiers for over 200 years. Without the aid and services of these brave women, many more lives would have been lost to infection, disease, and unattended injuries. The bust stands as a testament

to their continued service and dedication to our troops at large.



### Eight Nurses of Vietnam Memorial

As you follow the path leading to the Vietnam Veterans memorial, this humble monument will present itself. This piece of black granite commemorates the sacrifice of the eight nurses who were killed during their service in Vietnam. The monument is placed next to the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, showing the significance of their

sacrifice during the war to the servicemen they treated. Even though none were from Westchester County, the significance of their story has earned them a place on this beautiful trail.



### Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Next to the Eight Nurses Memorial proudly stand three powerful figures dedicated to all of the veterans of the Vietnam War. This memorial, created by sculptor Julia Cohen, stands as a moving and heavily emotional testament to the tragedy and sacrifice that soldiers

face, both past and present. The monument features a female nurse,

the first Vietnam monument to feature a woman. The area in front of the monument is used for memorial ceremonies done by the Vietnam Veterans of America chapter 49. Each of the 5,900 stones that make up the path represents 10 servicemen killed during the war, which surround a black obelisk featuring 217 names of natives of Westchester County that were killed serving in Vietnam and the surrounding countries. The statues are just slightly larger than life - two servicemen, one carrying his wounded comrade to the arms of the waiting nurse. The 3,000 pound figures are standing on a granite stone surface, and both the nurse and the servicemen are anchored to the stone, in many ways symbolizing the solid loyalty and devotion that these service men and women had towards one another.





### **Korean Memorial**

As you head back onto the trail, you will approach the Korean Memorial. This memorial is the largest in the park, and was built shortly after the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It was erected with the intention of giving special recognition to veterans of Korea, a war that some feel has been overlooked by the American people. The monument is a massive black obelisk inscribed with the names of all the servicemen from Westchester County who died serving in Korea. The monument is a grand reminder of the sacrifice made by the servicemen during this time, and the size is only a minor representation of the enormous dedication that the servicemen possessed. Its presence will certainly never be forgotten or overlooked on the trail, being 10 feet tall and standing as the largest monument in the park.



### **The Combat Infantryman Monument**

The Combat Infantryman's Memorial represents the award given to soldiers who have been under fire while serving their country. The badge commands a great deal of respect, and is awarded for the extreme bravery the recipient has demonstrated. Infantrymen are soldiers who are specifically trained to fight on the front lines while on land, and make up the majority of the armed forces. The medal is awarded to soldiers from every war, although they are more commonly given for conflicts from the last century. The badge is a true recognition of the sacrifice that the recipient made for our country, and with the badge comes the respect and admiration of those they serve.



### **Gold Star Mother's Monument**

The American Gold Star Mothers monument is the final monument on the path, and shows a map of all of the towns and cities in Westchester County. The map has a reflective surface, commonly interpreted as representing the far-reaching effects that war can have, both overseas and at home. The Gold Star Mothers Organization was formed shortly after the end of the First World War as a support group for mothers suffering the emotional trauma of losing their child. In 1928 the society was officially formed, and since then the Gold Star Mothers organization continues to be a nationally recognized organization, with thousands of members nation-wide who perform a vast number of service projects. The white clothing worn by members is a tradition dating back to the formation of the Gold Star Mothers over 90 years ago.

### **Important Patriotic Dates**

National Freedom Day: February 1

Presidents' Day: Third Monday in February

Armed Forces Day: Third Sunday in May

Memorial Day: Last Monday in May

Flag Day / Army Birthday: June 14

Independence Day: July 4

Coast Guard Birthday: August 4

V-J Day (The End of WWII): August 14

Constitution Day: September 17

Air Force Birthday: September 18

Navy Birthday: October 13

Election Day: Tues. after 1st Monday in Nov.

Marine Corps Birthday: November 10

Veterans Day: November 11

Pearl Harbor Remembrance: December 7

**Lasdon Park, Arboretum  
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Route 35, Katonah, NY,  
10536**

(914) 864-7268

**To learn more about Lasdon and other parks managed by the Westchester County  
Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, go to [westchestergov.com/parks](http://westchestergov.com/parks).**