



**Robert Byrnes Donohue**

## BYRNES, ROBERT

Everyone agreed that our participation in the Mamaroneck Harbor Festival was a great success again this year. Numerous visitors stopped by to view our display and many of them praised the improvements to Kemper Memorial Park that have been made so far. A true community spirit was evident throughout the day.

Proudly on display this year was a newly donated photograph of Robert Byrnes (Donohue), courtesy of the Donohue family in Ridgefield, Connecticut. Although the name on American Legion Post 90's Memorial on Prospect Avenue is Robert Donohue, on the Kemper Monument the name is that of Robert Byrnes. The story behind this discrepancy is an interesting one.

Robert Byrnes was taken in by Patrick and Mary Donohue after his mother passed away. Robert was only a year old when his father asked the Donohues if they could care for the child since he felt he could not adequately care for him alone. The Donohues agreed, and Robert became a member of their family.

According to the 1930 census, Patrick and Mary had eight children of their own, six sons and two daughters, ranging in age from 4 to 22. They were also caring for their nephew, Eugene, (who in World War II newspaper accounts is listed as their son) and two boarders, 11 year old Robert Byrnes and 11 year old Geraldine O'Brien. Their residence was listed as 77 Clay St.

Although he was never legally adopted, it is clear that Patrick and Mary thought of Robert as their son. As a matter of fact, the surviving members of the family firmly believed that Robert had been legally adopted. The family scrapbook has photos of him in boot camp and with his girlfriend and later wife, Ann Mariano of Port Chester. In the newspaper accounts during WWII, not only is Eugene listed as one of their sons, so is Robert. There are several stories in the local paper about how Mrs. Mary Donohue had seven sons serving in the military in WWII, one of whom was Robert.

Robert was in the 109<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. The 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division landed in Normandy, France on July 22, 1944. It immediately entered the hedgerow struggle north and west of Saint-Lo where they faced desperate opposition. Robert was a Technician 4<sup>th</sup> class and assured his family that his duties would keep him out of harm's way. Tragically, this was not the case and he was mortally wounded while on duty in France. He died on July 31, 1944 and is buried in the Normandy American Cemetery. At the time of his death, the Donohue family lived at **226 Mamaroneck Avenue**. It is unclear when they made the move.

We didn't immediately notice the irony, but a short time later we realized that **226 Mamaroneck Avenue** was the exact location of our booth. Of all the places along Mamaroneck Avenue where we could have been, that was the space we had been assigned. Perhaps it was merely a coincidence, but it also seemed like an appropriate way for this young soldier's photo to find its way home – to a caring community and a place where people were still grateful for what he had done.

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### Why do Memorials Matter?

*"... because the farther you get from an event, the easier it is to forget it"*

*"... to honor people who died for a cause and to say thank you"*

*"... to remember and to show respect"*

These are some of the things that students said in response to the question: "Why do memorials matter?"

The question was posed during classroom discussions led by MHS social studies teachers as part of their day of remembrance on the tenth anniversary of 9/11. Naturally, many of the discussions focused on the 9/11 Memorial in New York City and the Memorials in Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C., but students also cited **Kemper Memorial Park** as an example of a commitment to never forget. It was another indication of Kemper Memorial Park's value as a touchstone for curriculum development and a tool for teaching students other important lessons as well.

## Memorial Day 2011

Our participation in this year's Memorial Day ceremonies included both the Richard M. Kemper Essay Contest awards ceremony on May 25 and the Village of Mamaroneck Parade on May 30.

The winners of this year's essay contest were: Ilana Gratch and Tild Maliqati, who each received prizes of \$250 from The Richard Kemper Foundation for Promoting Human Rights. Their names have now been added to those of past year's winners on the plaque displayed in the main lobby of Mamaroneck High School. A \$100 prize was also awarded to Anna Hill for creating the best poster to promote the contest that has been held annually for the past eleven years.

After the winning essays were read and the prizes were presented, a short closing ceremony was held in Kemper Memorial Park. Pictured at the ceremony (top right) are World War II veteran Sheldon Evans and MHS social studies teacher Mary Cronin as MHS senior Danny Fiddelman plays taps. Special thanks go to Danny, who has performed at our Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies since he was in eighth grade.

The Kemper Memorial Park Preservation Fund Banner was proudly displayed at this year's Village of Mamaroneck Parade. Pictured at right are Jane Schumer, Buff Kizer, Carleen Kizer and Vicky Amon.

Our contingent also included two convertibles chauffeuring World War II veterans: Irene Stone, Sheldon Evans, Bill Byrne and John Esposito.



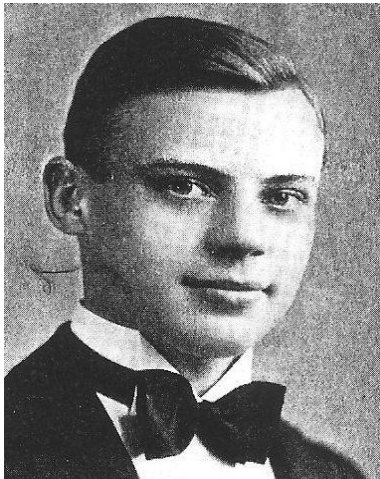
"Photo courtesy of Peter Kizer"

## New Display at Mamaroneck High School

The next in our series of displays at Mamaroneck High School will debut in November and focus on **The Fall of the Philippines**. It will feature two beautiful prints, courtesy of Bill Fraser. The first print, by artist Robert Taylor, portrays the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese on December 7, 1941. It is signed by six pilots, one of whom was Ken Taylor, whose accomplishments were immortalized in the movie, "Tora, Tora, Tora".

The second print, by Keith Ferris, is of the bombing of Clark Field outside Manila on December 8, 1941. It is autographed by Japanese ace Saburo Sakai, who participated in the raid, and Sam Grashio and Joe Moore, who flew for the Americans. Grashio and Sakai actually encountered each other on that fateful day and Grashio's plane was hit (thankfully, not fatally) by Sakai's guns. Grashio ended up flying the last mission out of Bataan on April 8 and became a prisoner of the Japanese upon the Fall of Bataan on April 9. He wrote a memoir about his experiences on the Bataan Death March and in the prison camps, *Return to Freedom: The War Memoirs of Col. Samuel C. Grashio, USAF (Ret.)*

The display will also feature a letter from Richard Kemper's cousin, Charles, about the Bataan Death March as well as profiles of two Kemper Park Honorees: Lt. Irving J. Brokaw, who was reported *Missing in Action* on May 7, 1942, and awarded the Silver Star for gallantry during the Battle of Bataan, and Electrician's Mate, 3cl, Richard John Shea, who was killed on May 6, 1942, defending Corregidor.



## James Allen Callaghan

While doing research on the 99 honorees of the Richard M. Kemper Park, it became sadly obvious that, for some reason, names that should have been on the Monument weren't. One of these names was that of Lt. James Allen "Bud" Callaghan (pictured at left in his Iona Prep graduation photo).

Callaghan served in the 871<sup>st</sup> Bomber Squadron, 487<sup>th</sup> Bomber Group, Very Heavy. On December 18, 1944, he was the bombardier/navigator (pictured in the photo below – top row, far right) on the *Dixie Darlin'*, a B-29 that had been sent from Isley Field, Saipan, to bomb the Mitsubishi aircraft plant in Nagoya, Japan. On its way there, the *Dixie Darlin'* experienced mechanical problems and the plane turned back to Saipan. At the time, it was approximately 100 miles west of Iwo Jima. If the airfield at Iwo Jima had been open, chances are they would have been able to land safely. As it was, they never made it back. (The invasion of Iwo Jima began on February 19, 1945, and the island was not declared secure until March 26, 1945). Callaghan was declared "Missing in Action" on December 18, 1944, and declared officially dead one year later on December 19, 1945. Callaghan's body was never recovered and he is remembered on the **Tablets of the Missing** at the Honolulu Memorial in Honolulu, Hawaii and at Arlington Cemetery



"Photo courtesy of the Larchmont Historical Society"

James Allen Callaghan grew up at 199 Larchmont Avenue in the Village of Larchmont. He had an older sister, Louise, and two younger sisters, Jane and Helen. Callaghan graduated from Iona Prep in 1938. His classmates included Monsignor Harry Byrne, brother of Larchmont resident, Bill Byrne, and James Colbert, father of comedian Stephen Colbert.

In September of 1942, he enlisted in the Army. On his enlistment record, he cites that he is single, with dependents. His father, a broker according to the 1930 census, had died from a heart attack at Grand Central Station around 1938-39 and one can only surmise that "Bud" had taken on the responsibility of his mother, Mary, and his younger sisters.

In 2006, the Callaghan family requested that the name of James Allen Callaghan be added to our local war memorials, including the monument at Richard M. Kemper Park. We are honored to be able to fulfill that request.

## Monument Work Underway

We are pleased to announce that the Polchinski Monument Company of Hawthorne, New York has been contracted to do the repair work and new engraving on the Kemper Monument. The total job consists of two different types of work: preparation and rehabilitation of the damaged/incorrect letters and sandblasting all the rehabilitated letters along with the new names that will be added to the monument. The remedy to repair all of the damaged/incorrect letters (misspellings) requires a process of overfilling them with granite dust and epoxy. Once dry, these letters must be hand tooled or ground to a smooth texture, level with the front face of the Monument. There are 58 characters or letters that must be treated in this fashion. The second stage of the work requires the preparation of the stencil, the accurate placement of this stencil (properly placed over the rehabilitated letters) and the subsequent sandblast engraving of all the rehabilitated letters and the two additional names. The names to be added are: **Callaghan, James Allen** and **Marshall, Warner Jr.** The two names that are currently misspelled and will be corrected are: **Carino, Pasquale** and **Roma, Frank J.**

Needless to say, this type of time-consuming, specialized work is costly, but it is merely a small payment on the large debt that we owe to those who gave everything. Your contributions enable us to continue this valuable work and you can be certain that every dollar you contribute goes directly toward the restoration and beautification projects that we undertake in Kemper Memorial Park.



**80 North Chatsworth Avenue  
Larchmont, NY 10538**

**[kempermemorialpark.org](http://kempermemorialpark.org)**

## **2011 Veterans Day Ceremonies**

### **American Legion Post 90**

**Friday, November 11—11 a.m.**  
Veterans Memorial on Prospect Avenue  
(Between Mamaroneck Ave. and Mt. Pleasant Ave.)  
Village of Mamaroneck  
Flag Retirement Ceremony Afterwards

### **American Legion Post 347**

**Friday, November 11— 6 p.m.**  
American Legion Post 347 Hall  
Flint Park  
Village of Larchmont

### **Mamaroneck High School**

There will be a brief ceremony in recognition of Veterans Day on **Tuesday, November 8, at 3:15 p.m.** at the Richard M. Kemper Park, Mamaroneck High School, Boston Post Road. Speakers will include: Dr. Robert Shaps, Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Elizabeth Clain, Principal of Mamaroneck High School as well as representatives from the Board of Education and the MHS faculty.