



**American Legion Post 90
Mamaroneck Historical Society**

**American Legion Post 347
Larchmont Historical Society**

**Veterans of Foreign Wars, David Potts, Jr. Post 1156
Kemper Memorial Park Preservation Fund**

May 15, 2007

Mr. Frank Presti
533 Palmer Avenue, Apt. 2
Mamaroneck, New York 10543

Dear Mr. Presti,

We are contacting you because our research shows that John J. Bellom, who lost his life during World War II, once lived at 533 Palmer Avenue and his parents lived there at the time of his death. Bellom served in the U.S. Merchant Marine and when the ship "Edith", was hit by a torpedo, he, as the radio officer, stayed on the sinking freighter to radio for rescue. The lives of all of the crew members were saved except for two: Bellom and one other.

As you may know, during World War II, it was the custom throughout America to hang Blue Star banners in the windows of those serving in the armed forces. Although the Bellom home had only one Blue Star on its banner, it was not uncommon to see homes in our community with two, three and four Blue Stars. If a Blue Star was replaced by a Gold Star, it meant the individual who was serving his country had made the supreme sacrifice. Gold and Blue Stars were displayed in every neighborhood. One local resident recalls how, when he was home on leave, he made it a practice to drive through Larchmont and Mamaroneck to take note of the homes with the Gold Stars. It was his way of keeping track of those who had been lost.

May 25, 2007, marks the 60th anniversary of the dedication and donation of the Richard M. Kemper Park, a World War II Memorial located on the Mamaroneck High School campus. The Memorial Park is named after Lt. Richard Kemper, who was killed in action in Normandy on August 6, 1944, and was donated to the Mamaroneck School District by the Kemper family. John J. Bellom's name is one of the 99 names engraved in the granite monument at the heart of the Memorial Park. To honor these individuals, American Legion Post 90 (Mamaroneck), American Legion Post 347 (Larchmont), the Mamaroneck Historical Society, the Larchmont Historical Society, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Kemper Memorial Park Preservation Fund are jointly sponsoring a commemorative project. Gold Star Banner placards (9" x 15") have been printed to present to the relatives of each one of those heroes and to the current residents of the homes where the original Gold Star Banners hung 60 years ago. Enclosed is a photocopy of the design. For your information, we are also enclosing copies of the research that has been done by the Kemper Memorial Park Preservation Fund on John J. Bellom.

We are hoping that you would like to have one of these Gold Star Banners placards at your home to help honor "Our 99" and to heighten awareness of, not only the sacrifice these individuals made, but what their sacrifice meant to this community. These were our neighbors; they attended our schools and churches, shopped in our stores, played in our parks and enjoyed our social events. We would especially like to see these banners displayed from Memorial Day to July 4, 2007. However, the banners are designed to last for two years and we are encouraging residents to display them for this period of time.

Please join us in helping to recognize their contributions to our country and its way of life.

In the next few weeks, a representative from one of the sponsoring organizations will contact you to see if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Edward T. Murray
Post Commander
American Legion Post 90, Mamaroneck

Anthony Mucci
Post Commander
American Legion Post 347, Larchmont

Donald March
President
Mamaroneck Historical Society

Barbara Newman
President
Larchmont Historical Society

Bill Capodanno
Post Commander
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Jan Northrup
President
Kemper Memorial Park Preservation Fund