

Kemper Memorial Park Preservation Fund Newsletter



Special Memorial Day Edition – May 2020





Because we were compelled to cancel this year's Memorial Day ceremonies in Kemper Memorial Park, we wanted to give you an idea of how beautiful the park currently looks. We hope these photos will make you want to stop by to see for yourself.

Among the new plantings is a dogwood tree that was recently donated by Kit Ritz, the sister of Randell Dobbs, who is one of our honorees.

Kit adored her brother and she remembers how everything changed for him after Pearl Harbor was attacked. She states,

"Randy was in his senior year of high school and decided he wanted to enlist in the Army and become a paratrooper. He was only seventeen, but he was able to convince our mother to sign the papers. He enlisted while in Larchmont and left shortly afterward for basic training. At some point Randy was transferred to Fort Benning, GA to train as a paratrooper. He came home for a three-week furlough and stayed at the apartment at 17 Addison Street with our Mother, myself and our younger brother, Don. I remember vividly going with Randy and a friend, Bobbie O'Brien, to Penn Station to see him off. He was being sent to Camp Polk, LA to train for overseas fighting in the South Pacific; that was the last time I saw him.

Randy was stationed in New Guinea first and later landed on Leyte Island in the Philippines. Randy's last letter to us was written on or about Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1944 (this date was later listed as his official date of death). He had just turned 19 on October 15th. We were notified by telegram that Randy was missing in action on December 19, 1944 and later received a letter indicating that he had been killed.

A buddy of Randy contacted us after the war and came over to Larchmont to tell us what happened: The 11th Airborne Company was being led through a ravine or river terrain and was ambushed by the Japanese. Randy was injured and two of his buddies wanted to pull him out. He said for them to get out – he would be okay. He was eventually found dead from a gunshot to the head.”

Soon, a plaque bearing Randell Dobbs's name will accompany the young dogwood tree. When you see it, we hope you will take a moment to think about the young man to whom it is dedicated. His story reminds us of the sacrifices that were made for us and remembering that is one small way to express our gratitude.

