

# A GRATEFUL NATION

**By Thomas R. Sulier**

On the thirteenth day of November in the year of our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-One at the thirty-two-acre Boothe Memorial Park in the Town of Stratford, Connecticut, a community assembled to dedicate the Stratford Veterans Museum (S.V.M). Its mission is to honor the selfless service and sacrifice of the men and women of the Town of Stratford who served in the United States Armed Forces.

During the ceremony, Old Glory was respectfully raised up, while through pure happenstance a nearby church bell rang out and richly resonated through the museum grounds at that very moment. At that historic moment it seemed as if time stood still during that glorious and beautiful Fall morning. The Honor Guard of the V.F.W. Post 9460, Stratford, Connecticut, saluted the American Flag, while a resounding rendition of the National Anthem was led by 99-year-old Jim Morgia, Captain, U.S. Army, Retired. Afterwards S.V.M. Vice President George Grom served as Master of Ceremonies. The blessings of the deity were invoked by Father Nick Pavia, of Our Lady of Peace Church. Thereafter comments followed by Stratford Mayor Laura Hoydick, Councilman Jim Connor of Stratford's 8<sup>th</sup> District, plus S.V.M. Treasurer Bill O'Brien, Councilman of Stratford's 9<sup>th</sup> District. This was followed by comments of thanks by S.V.M. President Bob Mastroni and a resounding rendition of "God Bless America", was sung by Jeanine Morgia Sansone who led the attending crowd.

Thus, the Stratford Veterans Museum was officially opened.

The purpose of the museum is to remind the visitors who walk through it, of the great gift of Freedom that we enjoy every day. As members of a grateful nation, we ought not forget or lose sight of the men and women of the United States Armed Forces. Also, of the personal sacrifices they have made on our behalf, and of the loved ones they left behind if there were called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice. We should never forget or discount the pain that these individuals and their families experience and cannot heal. One of the greatest things that a human being can do is to serve others. This museum testifies to the reality of the cost of doing so, while reminding us that the cost of liberty is a never ending Vigilance!