

## **KOREAN WAR COMMEMORATIVE PARK**

AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE KIRK-ASTOR NEIGHBORHOOD

From 1999 to 2001, Route 441 in the area of Rte. 490 was expanded from a divided four lane highway to a divided six lane highway. This included closing the entrance point to Rte. 441 at Kirk Drive and creating a new entrance point for both Kirk and Astor Drives at the end of Astor Drive. The entrance point from Glen Road, which had been opposite Kirk Drive, was also relocated to a new point opposite the new Kirk - Astor entrance. This resulted in the creation of a new triangular piece of land between the new sound wall, the Kirk-Astor entrance and Rte. 441.

With the highway improvements nearing completion, a group of veterans who had served in the Korean War (1950-1953) adopted the roadside maintenance of Route 441 from Route 490 to the Village of Penfield as their community service project. Over the next ten years, each Spring, Summer and Fall the veterans walked the highway and picked up litter and debris from the roadside. In connection with this service project, a road sign was erected on Rte. 441 at the 490 W exit ramp dedicating Rte. 441 as the Korean War Memorial Highway.

In conjunction with this service project, the veterans also requested permission from the NYS DOT to build and maintain a Korean War Commemorative Park on the vacant triangle of land on Rte. 441 at the new entrance to the Kirk-Astor neighborhood. Permission was given in May 2001 to the Korean War Veterans Association Monroe County Chapter No. 1, Inc., Donald Cofsky [of Penfield], President. Work was immediately started which involved the installation of flag pole surrounded by pavers and a decorative garden. The pavers were painted red and blue in the yin and yang emblem of South Korea. Around the emblem are the names and service dates of the Korean War Veteran's who are members of this chapter.

The Commemorative Park was dedicated on July 28, 2001 and included remarks by the Consul General of the Republic of Korea, Brighton Supervisor Sandra Frankel and elected representatives from New York State and Monroe County.

For many years the Veterans planted annual flowers and performed weeding, watering and trimming at the site with the assistance of John Leyland <sup>1</sup>. After 2010 this activity began to diminish as the years were taking their toll on the physical abilities and number of living members. As had been discussed with the neighborhood, the Kirk-Astor Park District <sup>2</sup> took over the grass mowing while members of the Kirk-Astor

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<sup>1</sup> JOHN LEYLAND, 48 Astor Dr., for many years mowed the grass at least once a week, watered the lawns and flower beds as needed and provided the heavy maintenance work the park required. When asked one day why he was so devoted to this cause, he commented he had never been in the military so it was his way of thanking those men and women who had served.

<sup>2</sup> The KIRK-ASTOR PARK DISTRICT was formed in 2008 under the guidance of James Weller, 85 Kirk Drive, to take over the maintenance of the lands owned by the State of New York which abutted the neighborhood along Rte. 441 and Rte. 490. Prior to 2008, these lands were irregularly maintained by the NYS DOT. Many neighbors, in particular John Leyland of 48 Astor Dr., mowed the grass and trimmed the weeds at the entrance to the neighborhood. The Park District was formed to collect a tax of about \$50 per annum

Neighborhood Association took over the weeding and trimming. In 2015, after three years of repeated requests to the Town of Brighton, the Kirk-Astor Park District took over full maintenance of the site including mowing, trimming, mulching and the maintenance of the pavers, the flags and the flag pole.

2001 - before Korean Veterans Commemorative Park



This was a vacant parcel at the new entrance point to Kirk-Astor-Brightford Hts. Sealand Construction, lead contractor for the new Rte. 441, placed its trailer on the vacant lot where a house known as 205 Linden burned down in the late 1990's. The State acquired the lot at 205 Linden Ave. after the fire and rounded off the front and side of the lot to provide the new entrance point to the neighborhood.

July 2001 prior to the dedication ceremony



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from each household on Kirk and Astor with the proceeds used to contract for the weekly mowing and trimming of the site and the eventual improvement of the vacant lot (formerly 205 Linden) which is the entrance point to the neighborhood.



Dedication Ceremony - July 28, 2001



Dedication Ceremony - after unveiling of the sign