

Hunterdon County Raises New KIA Honor Flag At Historic Courthouse

Special Recognition For Thirteen Troops Killed In Kabul August 26th

At a solemn ceremony that included Veterans, Hunterdon County officials refreshed the County's KIA Honor Flag in front of the Historic Courthouse in Flemington on Thursday, with a special recognition for the thirteen members of the military killed at the airport gate in Kabul, Afghanistan on August 26th.

Commissioner Zach Rich, who serves as the Board's Veterans liaison, said in remarks, "Those thirteen brave Americans were doing their duty as called upon, and they join the pantheon of all the many others killed in action throughout the years; the minutemen, the rough riders, the doughboys, the greatest generation, those at the Chosin Reservoir, in Vietnam, Lebanon, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Iraq, and so many other places.

We honor all their memories, and we know their loss is the high price of American freedom."

Thirteen chairs draped with American flags were arrayed on the courthouse steps as a symbolic gesture honoring the memory of the service men and women killed in action in Afghanistan. Eleven Marines, a Navy corpsman, and an Army Sergeant were killed by a terrorist suicide bomber while protecting those attempting to leave Afghanistan, on August 26th.

Rich noted the ceremony was being appropriately held on October 7th, "Because it is 20 years ago today that America first responded to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, by initiating Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan."

Rich pointed out that, "State law requires counties and municipalities to display the KIA Flag in the place of honor at our principal building or facility. We are proud to say that Hunterdon County was one of the first government units in the state to follow that law in 2018. And we are equally proud to once again raise that standard in honor of those who gave all."

Rich has arranged for the Board of Commissioners to distribute KIA Honor Flags to municipalities and Veterans Organizations in Hunterdon County at no cost.

National Guardsmen Sergeant Kevan Preston and Specialist Manuel Ramirez of Battery B, 3rd of the 112th Field Artillery Regiment conducted the ceremonial flag raising.

Hunterdon County Sheriff's Officer Maria Dulmer performed the National Anthem, Ron Lawrence, a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force and a member of NJ TAPS, performed taps, and Pastor Nathan Tuckey, of the South Ridge Community Church in Clinton, provided the Benediction.

Commissioner Board Director Susan J. Soloway, Deputy Director John E. Lanza, County Clerk Mary Melfi, Surrogate Susan Hoffman, and Sheriff Fred Brown also participated in the ceremony honoring those killed in action while defending the nation.