

Courtdale Hometown Heroes Appreciation Sunday

Courtdale United Methodist Church

By David Jolley

June 30, 2024

Earlier this year, the Borough of Courtdale conducted a Hometown Heroes campaign to recognize and thank the people who have and continue to serve our country and our local community. We cannot thank our hometown heroes enough for their service, whether here in the United States or on foreign lands, the oceans and seas world-wide.

It took plenty of hard work, but a team of people representing the borough managed to get the banners produced, delivered, and installed on the telephone poles on Courtdale Avenue in time for Memorial Day. Thank you to **Mayor Jacki Degnan, Randy Bush, Tom Zdancewicz, Courtdale Fire Chief Tony Yuscavage, George Whibley, Courtdale Assistant Police Chief Greg Johnson, and Harry Johnson** for their extra effort in this regard. We also recognize **Tom's Tree Service** for donating time and equipment to make this happen, as well as **A&B Outdoor Living** for their donation.

The borough hopes to do another order and have additional hero banners installed by Labor Day. So, if anyone is interested, please contact Mayor Degnan.

As the only church in the borough, today we are bringing together people of all faiths and backgrounds to officially express our appreciation to these special people who put country, community, and others above self. Men and women of a variety of faiths and ethnic backgrounds answer the call to service, and we thank them all – as well as their loved ones who also sacrifice so they could serve.

We take time this morning to say “thank you for your service” to everyone recognized with Hometown Hero banners – and to all veterans and current military personnel who through their efforts made and continue to make the world a safer place for everyone.

Recognized on Courtdale Hometown Heroes banners, we lift prayers of honor and appreciation for:

- 1. George Burkhardt – YN2, United States Navy, Korean Conflict**
- 2. Donald Finney – SP4, United States Army, Vietnam, Purple Heart**
- 3. Mathew F. Ford – T/Sergeant, United States Air Force, Vietnam**
- 4. Jerome Leedock – Corporal, United States Army, World War Two**
- 5. John M. Lechak – Sergeant, United States Army, World War Two**
- 6. John R. Reilly – E4, United States Air Force, Vietnam**
- 7. David J. Holly, Sr. – Corporal, United States Army, Korean Conflict**
- 8. Carl Jolley – Fireman-First Class, United States Navy, World War Two**
- 9. Donald Jolley – Corporal, United States Army, Korean Conflict**
- 10. Edgar J. Jolley – Corporal, United States Army, World War Two & Korean Conflict**
- 11. Francis Jolley – Corporal, United States Army, World War Two**
- 12. James Jolley – Corporal, United States Army, Korean Conflict**
- 13. Lee Jolley – United States Air Force**
- 14. Theodore Jolley – Staff Sergeant, United States Army Air Force, World War Two, Killed in Action***
- 15. Samuel Jones – Seaman First Class, United States Navy, World War Two**
- 16. Kevin Martin – Deputy Chief, Veterans Administration Police Department, Luzerne County K9 Unit**
- 17. Joseph J. Matello – Lance Corporal, United States Marine Corps**
- 18. John W. Mitchell, Jr. – Specialist E5, United States Army, Vietnam**
- 19. John. P. Orloski – Sergeant, United States Marine Corps, Korean Conflict**
- 20. Zachery Whibley – Specialist E5, United States Navy, Operation Inherent Resolve**

*In addition to these hometown heroes, I call your attention to the framed “In the Service of Our Country” recognition plaque on the wall at the back of the sanctuary. The top of this recognition piece reads: “And that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth...”

Before you leave here today, please take a moment to read the names of those brave heroes from Courtdale who served proudly during World War Two. Many of these people are also represented by their loved ones honoring them with Hometown Heroes banners.

We take a special moment now to remember our little borough's three Gold Star Heroes who gave their lives during World War Two to protect our freedom:

1. **William Condos** ★ **Private First Class, United States Army 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, January 22, 1943, Commemorated in Perpetuity at North Africa American Cemetery, Carthage, Tunisia**
2. **John James** ★ **Private, United States Army, 18th Infantry Regiment, First Infantry Division, October 11, 1945, Commemorated in Perpetuity at Netherlands American Cemetery, Margraten, Netherlands**
3. **Theodore Jolley** ★ **Staff Sergeant, United States Army Air Forces, 374th Bomber Squadron, 308th Heavy Bomber Group, January 13, 1946 (one year after being listed as Missing in Action), Commemorated in Perpetuity at Manila American Cemetery, Taguig City, Philippines**

Their ultimate sacrifice will never be forgotten. General John J. Pershing said of them, "Time will not dim the glory of their deeds." And that is indeed so, as here we are eight decades later honoring and remembering them.

Please be in the spirit of prayer.

Dear God,

We know you are with us now and always Lord, and especially so today as we express our appreciation, honor, and love for our Courtdale Hometown Heroes. They gave and continue to give their best when called upon to serve and protect us. Bless them for their unselfish service to protect our freedoms, our safety, and our country's heritage for all of us.

Grant, we pray, the creative vision to see a world that, weary with fighting, affirms the lives of every human being and so moves beyond war. We pray

that today will be one of joy, affirmation, recognition, and reverence, and we pray the days that follow will mirror the gratitude expressed today.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.