



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

LOCAL NAVY RESERVE COMMANDER TOM WATT WILL BE MASTER OF CEREMONIES AT SAMPSON VETERANS MEMORIAL CEMETERY DEDICATION JULY 30th

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO July 20, 2011

| ISSUE: **VETERANS**

Commander Tom Watt, USN (Ret.) will serve as Master of Ceremonies at the official dedication ceremony for the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery on July 30th. In addition to his 20 years of service to our Nation including a year of duty in the Arabian Gulf, Mr. Watt is the Supervisor of Sampson State Park.

“For years, Tom has ensured that Sampson State Park continues to be one of the most beautiful parks in our region and a testament to the proud tradition of the former Sampson Naval and Air Force Base, one of the most historically significant military history sites in New York State,” said State Senator Mike Nozzolio, who has worked extremely hard along with members of the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery Association for over a decade to establish the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery. “It has been a pleasure working with him to make this lasting memorial honoring our Nation’s veterans a reality, and I am honored that he has agreed to serve as Master of Ceremonies on this momentous day for our servicemen and women.”

As Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Watt will preside over the dedication ceremony and introduce featured speakers, including keynote speaker Rear Admiral Richard West, USN (Ret.), a distinguished and accomplished naval veteran whose 38-year military career has encompassed a wide range of operational experience, high-level assignments, and leadership positions. Admiral West has deep roots to the Sampson Naval Base and the Finger Lakes Region. He was born while his father, World War II Navy veteran Dana L. West was serving as a Recruit Company Commander at the former Sampson Naval Base. Dana West will be one of the first servicemen to be buried at the cemetery.

Since 2003, Mr. Watt has served as manager of Sampson State Park, which is adjacent to the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery. Both the park and the cemetery are located on the site the former Sampson Naval and Air Force Base, where over a million sailors and

airmen trained in preparation for battle to defend our Nation. The Sampson base served as a naval training station during World War II and was later used as an Air Force Basic Training Center. The Veterans' Cemetery is also a short distance from Waterloo, New York, the Nationally-recognized birthplace of Memorial Day.

The dedication ceremony will take place on Saturday, July 30th at 11:00 a.m. at the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery, just south of Sampson State Park along Route 96A in Romulus. That portion of Route 96A has been officially renamed the "Sampson Veterans Memorial Highway" to further memorialize all veterans, and in particular the men and women who trained and served at the Sampson Air Force and Naval Base.