

FORTY YEARS AGO THERE WAS AN AIRPORT TWO MILES WEST OF HERE. I HAD AN AIRPLANE, AND I WOULD FLY OVER THIS GROUND MANY TIMES AND LOOK DOWN AT THIS PRISTINE AREA. I THOUGHT WHAT A GOOD PLACE TO DO SOME PARTRIDGE HUNTING, AND ONE DAY I WALKED THRU THE LOWER AREA AND I REMEMBER COMING UPON A LARGE PATCH OF BLACKBERRIES. LITTLE DID I KNOW THEN THAT THIS PLACE WOULD BECOME A VETERANS MEMORIAL SITE.

BEING HERE TODAY GIVES ME A GREAT SENSE OF PRIDE: I AM PROUD THAT I JOINED THE NAVY AND SERVED MY COUNTRY IN WWII. I AM PROUD TO HAVE MY LEGACY STONE PLACED ON THE HIGH GROUND WALKWAY.

I AM ALSO PROUD TO HAVE WITH ME TODAY MY WIFE OF 65 YEARS, MY TWO SONS AND THEIR WIVES, MY GRANDSON AND HIS WIFE, MY BROTHER AND HIS WIFE AND SOME RELATIVES AND FRIENDS.

I WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE YOU WITH THIS THOUGHT:

DO NOT WALK IN FRONT OF ME, I MAY NOT FOLLOW.

DO NOT WALK BEHIND ME, I MAY NOT LEAD.

WALK BESIDE ME AND BE MY FRIEND.

LET FREEDOM RING