

'Kinsmen' who won a war

By Master Sgt. David Moore, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

In 1945, they were young, strong, and had the cause of freedom on their side.

Margaret Jennings-Manzi was an Army nurse healing the wounded on a hospital ship navigating mine-filled waters and Louis Parisi was a Marine fighting in the bloodiest battle of in the Pacific Theater - Okinawa.

On August 16, 2015, the Monmouth County residents were honored for their roles in helping end the greatest conflict in history during a ceremony at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Cemetery sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Veterans Administration, and the non-profit group Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive.

Both Jennings-Manzi and Parisi did their part in keeping the spirit alive with vivid recollections of what it was like to be part of the largest group of Americans who ever united for a common cause.

"There were 15 million very young people, we shared our experiences and became friends with people from all over the country - Alabama, Texas, and California," she said. "We became kinsmen. Kinsmen with one purpose: To win a war."

Jennings-Manzi's first assignment of the war was aboard the U.S.S. Seminole. The ship held 500 wounded service members and found itself under attack multiple times. Over 20 Atlantic



Raymond Zawacki, left, Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs; Louis Parisi, center, and Margaret Jennings-Manzi salute at the wreath presentation during the World War II 70th Anniversary Global Tribute at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery, North Hanover Township, N.J., August 16, 2015. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Devlin D. Drew/Released)

crossings, Jennings-Manzi saw it all, from caring for German and Italian prisoners to the voyage when more than 300 of the patients were paralyzed and nurses wrote letters for the wounded.

Parisi entered the Marine Corps in 1943 and saw combat across in the South Pacific. At one point, he was able to help rescue a baby who had been caught in the crossfire.

Now, 70 years later, Parisi said he has one simple wish.

"Hopefully someday there will not be any wars and the 406,000 who died in World War II will have everlasting peace," he said.

Raymond L. Zawacki, the DMAVA Deputy Commissioner for Veterans' Affairs, said younger generations need to hear the voices of World War II Veterans.

"The Greatest Generation won the war on two fronts," he said. "Thank you for teaching us today a valuable lesson of freedom and liberty."