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For Immediate Release: Middleton Military Memorial Park Appreciation Event

ONEONTA, NY - Almost 54 years ago, one of the deadliest battles of the Vietnam War was fought in the Ia Drang Valley. This was the first major battle involving the Northern troops and American forces, that lasted from November 14 to November 18, 1965. Retired First Sergeant Billy Middleton of DeRuyter, NY was there during this time when the North Vietnamese forces ambushed the American army, killing or wounding more than half of his unit.

His military experience inspired him to undertake a special project - a memorial to the fallen soldiers of the Ia Drang battle, that has grown into a military park that recognizes every military branch and features a 9/11 memorial for the heroes of September 11th.

Just outside of DeRuyter, on Mariposa Road, is a clearing filled with statues, flags, and a Hughes "Huey" UH1 helicopter - the kind used in Vietnam, which was the first "helicopter war" the United States was involved in. In his days in the military, the Huey was how soldiers like Middleton were brought to the battlefield, including the Ia Drang Valley.

While Middleton has since passed, his wife and son continue to maintain his military memorial park. This past Sunday, September 8th the American Legion Riders of Oneonta Post 259, Norwich Post 189, Sidney Post 183, Helmuth Ingalls Post 232 and other supports road to the Memorial Park for a ceremony to express appreciation to the Middleton's and their commitment. Certificates were handed out as well as a check for monies raised by the participating Legion Riders and their members and supports. The ceremony ended with the raising of an American Legion Rider flag and everyone joining in to sing God Bless America.

"The experience was really moving," says Chris Chase, American Legion Riders Asst. Director for New York State, District Six. "Gloria and her son Martin, maintain this park out of love and ask for nothing in return. It is our honor to be able to help them in any way we can to honor both them, Billy Middleton and the Veterans and Heros we have lost. I encourage everyone to take a drive out to the site, it is impressive."

If you are interested in supporting the Middleton Military Memorial Park or visiting the site yourself you can find directions and more information here: <https://www.alrpost259.org/middleton>

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