

Honoring Roosevelt, 'Long Island's own'

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full of promise" for the future of America. He served as troop committeeman for Oyster Bay Troop 39, was the first commissioner of the Nassau County Boy Scout Council (now the Theodore Roosevelt Council) and in 1911 became the only person ever awarded the title of Chief Scout Citizen. Scouts often visited him at Sagamore Hill, where they were allowed to roam the grounds and enjoy nature.

Scouts who attended Sunday's event, spoke with great respect of Roosevelt's legacy.

"We're learning what he did and we're learning about the spirit of scouting," said Kyle Soscie, 16, of Troop 43 in Sea Cliff. "It makes me feel proud to know a U.S. president lived near where I live."

Peter Vitale, 11, held the

flag for Troop 252 of Oyster Bay. "I've been to his house and it's pretty cool," he said. "That's where I learned to raise, lower and fold the American flag."

Speaking from the podium, Saladino reminded people of the former president's enormous achievements, not just as the nation's chief executive, but also as a statesman, a writer, a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize and, of course, a military man.

During the Spanish-American War, Roosevelt was lieutenant colonel of the Rough Rider Regiment, and his heroism during the ferocious Battle of San Juan Hill became legendary. Roosevelt's distinguished military service was what drew Oyster Bay resident Richard DeJesu, 78, to the hilltop cemetery on this crisp winter day.

"Roosevelt was a leader



Boy Scouts and their leaders showed their respect for the former president, who was a troop committeeman for Oyster Bay Troop 39, on the 100th anniversary of his death.

in favor of the military, which is a big thing for us veterans. It's important we recognize that," said DeJesu, a Navy veteran (1958-1961) and the commander of Amvets North Shore Veterans Memorial Post 2 in Oyster Bay.

When it was time to place the wreath, Saladino was joined by members of the Roosevelt family as well as the scouts.

Inside the black iron gates where Roosevelt rests with his second wife, Edith, the red, white and blue wreath

offered a striking contrast to the gray gravestone, which was flanked by several small American flags. The cemetery overlooks the bay, which on this particular afternoon sparkled in the distance. During his life, Roosevelt loved taking his

children rowing, swimming and fishing there.

"You can imagine him being up here, overlooking Oyster Bay Harbor," said Saladino. "It reminds us of the beauty he always enjoyed and worked to protect."