

American Legion Post 66 and Tilton School Host Baseball Game in Honor of Veterans

TILTON, NH - Tilton School hosted a truly special baseball game on Wednesday, July 15 as residents of the New Hampshire Veterans Home came out to watch the Durand-Haley Rangers (American Legion Post 66, Plymouth) meet Concord Post 21 in the first Rangers "Veterans Classic," played in the veterans' honor. The Rangers held the day, winning 7-2 in nine, action-packed innings. The Rangers will play a home game in Tilton each summer to honor the veterans who come out to watch.

Rangers' General Manager Col. Ward Scott coordinated the event with the Veterans Home, Concord Head Coach Averill Cate, and Tilton School Athletic Director Ken Hollingsworth. Said Scott, "It was a pleasure to host Coach Cate and Post 21—one of the most venerable programs in New Hampshire American Legion Baseball—as we honor those who have served in our nation's armed forces." Scott added, "Ken Hollingsworth really pulled out all stops to make this a very special day for the veterans and the ballplayers of both teams. When Ken and his gifted grounds crew learned the game would be played at Tilton School, they worked tirelessly to prepare the baseball diamond—not an easy task since the field had not been used since the conclusion of the spring season. They also moved bleachers to a wonderfully shaded vantage point for the veterans to watch the game, and had a large cooler of chilled water on hand for them. Without question, Tilton School transformed the dormant diamond into a veritable 'Field of Dreams' and rolled out the red carpet for the New Hampshire Veterans Home."

The Rangers struck first in the second inning, when centerfielder and tri-captain Seth Shackford (Conway, NH) scored all the way from first on a big double by third baseman Bubba Scott (Plymouth). Concord battled-back in the fourth, taking a 2-1 lead after singles by Thomas Heath and Douglas Turnbull, followed by a wild pitch, a sacrifice fly by

the designated hitter Zachary Cogswell, and finally a double by the pitcher Daniel Solomon. The Rangers tied it up with one run in the fifth, however, before busting the game wide open in the sixth with a five run rally, which included RBI doubles by Kyle Fifield (Lisbon) and Sam Macomber (Holderness).

Michael Larson sealed the victory for the Rangers with a solid performance, scattering seven hits over seven innings and giving up Concord's only two runs, before ace Andrew Kelley (Lincoln) came in to seal the win. Solomon, Carter Malpass, and George Seigel all saw time on the hill for Concord.

Shackford said of the game: "We were playing for something more than just a win. It was for the men who risked their lives for our country." Shortstop and tri-captain Eric Jensen (Gorham) added, "I think we took it upon ourselves to come out and play a bit sharper than usual."

Following the game, each player filed by the veterans and shook their hands before assisting them to their waiting van. Said Rangers catcher and tri-captain Alexander Scott (Plymouth), "They are exceptional, highly-spirited, and knowledgeable fans who really love the game. The veterans gave us a lot of spark on the field. It was a great honor playing for them and all those who have served our country."

The Durand-Haley Rangers' catcher, Sam Macomber of Holderness, NH, assists NH Veterans Home resident and former US Navy Quartermaster First Class Ellis Howard following Mr. Howard's delivery of the ceremonial first pitch, kicking off the First Annual Rangers Veterans Classic held at Tilton School. The Rangers won the nine-inning American Legion game 7-2 against Concord Post 21. Mr. Howard, a member of Tilton School's Class of 1942, enlisted in the Navy following graduation and served throughout the Pacific Theater as a submariner.



The Rangers are currently 13-8 on the season, which concludes on July 31. The Rangers were founded in 2002 as New Hampshire's tri-county North Country team. The 2009 team draws from 13 secondary schools, from Pittsburgh High School to Phillips Exeter Academy. The Rangers take their name after the Navy's Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron Two (VQ-2) Rangers, of which Plymouth native Lieutenant Steve Batchelder was a member when he and his crewmates made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of our nation in a crash aboard the USS Nimitz during an operational mission in 1987. The team proudly wears the VQ-2 patch on its uniforms in honor of Lt. Batchelder and all veterans who have served America.

The New Hampshire Veterans Home, established in Tilton in 1890 as the Soldier's Home for Civil War Veterans is one of just four New Hampshire nursing homes to win the first Quality of Life Award from the NH Department of Health & Human Services. The NHVH campus is home to 200 men and women who have served their country and fellow New Hampshire citizens. The mission of NHVH is to provide high quality, professional long-term care services to the Granite State's elderly and disabled veterans. NHVH is the only long-term care facility in the Granite State that is dedicated exclusively to veterans.

#####



*Photos:
Above - NH Veterans Home residents and staff
enjoy watching the game from a shady spot at the
Tilton School Athletic Fields.*

*Opposite - Members of the Durand-Haley
Rangers (American Legion Post 66, Plymouth)
baseball team warm up before the game.*