

**\*\*\*\*Honoring Somerville's Active Military Personnel\*\*\*\***

Before we pledge allegiance to our flag and our country, I thought it important for us all to reflect for a moment on what the pledge really means. I ask that if there are any armed forces veterans here today to please stand up and be recognized.

History teaches us that this country is filled with those who put others before self; safety and security before possessions; and country above all.

That is what makes our country stand above others...The ability to unite for a common goal, to fight for a better vision, and in the most pressing times have those willing to give of the individual for the betterment of all. Somerville is proud to be called home for many of our brave soldiers currently and formerly serving in our military. It is our moral obligation and duty as a neighbor, as a community and as a nation to recognize the good these soldiers are doing for themselves, our community and our country.

Few here have seen the ugliness of war, of what young men and women have endured to ensure our safety... veterans that have proudly served our nation in the past, and those currently serving in our armed forces. These truly are extraordinary men and women.

These men and women have a quiet understanding that we will never know of the pain endured to ensure our safety. We need to ensure we remember, and that our children are taught, of the sacrifices people make to better all of our lives. And as a community we need to say a special prayer for those that did not and will not come home to their families. For it is these sacrifices that enable us all to live in here in Somerville.

It is very easy to demonstrate against issues, but it is far more important for all to demonstrate our support for those that carry out a conviction of purpose, that is our moral obligation. For it is these fine men and women that allow us to live in a society that enables that freedom of dissension....too often that is forgotten.

God holds a special place in his heart for all veterans, both living and passed, active and fallen, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. Today, we honor those brave men and women, sons and daughters from our Somerville community, who are actively serving in our military, and thank them and their families for their strength and conviction of purpose, if there families are present here today, please stand as I read their name:

Andrew L. House  
US Marine  
Stationed in Iraq

Rebecca Coccozza  
Quartermaster 2nd Class  
US Navy  
Stationed in the Persian Gulf

Lieutenant Colonel Neil Rivers  
Pilot, US Air Force  
Stationed in Iraq

Sais Singh  
US Army  
Stationed in Iraq

Michael Syler  
US Marine  
Served in Iraq

Corporal Robert Olejnek  
US Marine

Noah Fusco  
Specialist 4th Class  
New Jersey National Guard  
Served in Iraq

Lance Corporal Jonathan Chang  
US Marine  
Stationed in Iraq

This is a partial list of those from Somerville actively serving in our Military. If anyone knows of others, please get their names to our Borough Administrator.

Knowing that God is present here, may He bless all of our veterans, all who are assembled here today, and Bless the United States of America.

Again, as we pledge allegiance, please understand the importance of the words we all speak today. I ask that Noah Fusco, Specialist 4th Class of the New Jersey national Guard, veteran of the Iraqi war and now back home to Somerville as of late October after serving a one year tour of duty, I ask him to come forward and lead us in our Pledge of Allegiance