

## **Star gazette (Elmira): Elmira prison employees honored at memorial service**

By: Ray Finger

Tribute paid to those who have died, as well as current employees at the maximum security facility

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Under a sunny sky amid occasionally strong gusts of wind, past and present Elmira Correctional Facility employees were honored Friday during an annual memorial service.

The newly added names of Jeanette Buchanan and Corrections Officers Clarence "Larry" Borum, Denny Middaugh, David L. Phillips and Michael J. Phillips were recognized during the ceremony at a memorial garden site on the grounds of the maximum security state prison.

"While we're here to honor those that have passed away, I would like to pay tribute to our current employees. It's a difficult job that we do, sometimes with little recognition," said Paul Chappius Jr., the prison's superintendent.

"The atmosphere inside our facilities is difficult to explain to those on the outside," he said. "I believe we have a good working environment here in Elmira, but the thought is always there of incidents that have happened in the past and the potential for future incidents."

State Sen. Tom O'Mara, R-Big Flats, also thanked current employees for their service.

"You are protecting us from the worst of our society, those that are confined behind these walls, and those like you across the state, protecting our communities to keep the worst of the worst off of our streets," he said. "And you do it day in and day out with great risk to yourselves."

Following the service, Chappius explained the importance of such ceremonies.

"Those that have passed on have really paved the way for the rest of us. We enjoy a safe working environment. We strive for that, and it's important," he said. "It's these people whose names are on the pavers that have paved the way for us to be able to do that. We've made a lot of strides in the safety of the facility, and that's why it's important."

Also participating in Friday's service was an honor guard including members of the Chemung County Sheriff's Office, the Elmira Correctional Facility, the Elmira Police Department, New York State Police Troop E, the Southport Correctional Facility and the

Elmira Heights Police Department. Vietnam War Veterans Chapter No. 803 provided a three-round-volley salute.