

INDEPENDENT

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'A place of reverence'

Community dedicates Veterans' Memorial Park



Photo by Deb Gau Many of the people gathered at Thursday's dedication of the new Veterans' Memorial Park stopped to look for — and photograph — memorial stones displayed in honor of military service members.

MARSHALL — It was a dream that was years in the making. On Thursday, community members were finally able to see it completed.

A crowd gathered downtown to celebrate the new Veterans' Memorial Park. The memorial recognizes service members and veterans from all branches of the military, and is the final piece of the bigger plan for Memorial Park, which also includes the 9/11 memorial in Marshall.

"This is a place of reverence and respect," said Marshall Mayor Bob Byrnes.

"We are very fortunate to stand here today because of veterans, and what they have done," said Marc Klaith, one of the community organizers of the memorial project. Klaith said the memorial honored all service members, not just those from Marshall or Lyon County. "This is a regional memorial."

The memorial was dedicated Thursday morning with speakers and music, a flag-raising ceremony, and a flyover by a B-25 bomber from the Fagen Fighters WWII Museum.

The memorial and dedication were both a long time in the making. It took around six years to fundraise and plan for the park, Klaith said. But, he said, "The support of the community is unbelievable."

A coalition of area veterans were among the organizers for the memorial project, Klaith said. Financial support for the project included contributions from Lyon County, the city of Marshall, and groups including the VFW, American Legion and Marshall Rotary clubs.

Some of the major design elements of the memorial, like the central metal sculpture engraved with military scenes and the 60 foot-long wall reading "All gave some, some gave all," were built by area businesses, said Marshall parks superintendent Preston Stensrud. Bend Rite Fabrication made the wall, while Action Manufacturing built the sculpture.

Marshall parks staff also did a lot of work in preparing and landscaping the park For the parks staff, "A lot of pride really went into it," Stensrud said.

Representatives from local veterans' organizations said they appreciated all the support community members have shown the memorial.

"I want to say thank you to everyone," said Ken Versaevel, speaking with the Marshall American Legion post. "It's a very good-looking park."

The finished memorial is a place that honors the sacrifices of military service members, including those who gave their lives for their country, said Quentin Brunsvold, who was speaking with the Marshall VFW.

Like many local residents, Brunsvold had watched the progress of the memorial from the ground being cleared last fall, to the addition of concrete pathways, and then the statues and large metal sculptures in recent weeks.

Brunsvold reflected on the line "All gave some, some gave all," that was a prominent part of the memorial.

"When I read that, it's very emotional," he said.

In addition to statues and flags representing the five branches of the U.S. military, the memorial includes space for memorial stones on specially designed display racks. Some of the crowd Thursday filed past the racks — which were engraved with the words "Courage," "Honor," and "Sacrifice" — looking for names they knew.

Rita Smidt and Deb Butman-Perkins said they were looking for a stone placed in honor of their parents, Kenneth and Beverly Butman. Kenneth Butman was a World War II veteran, and Beverly was active in the VFW Auxiliary.

"It's on my favorite word, courage!" Butman-Perkins said, pointing out the Butmans' memorial stone.

Butman-Perkins said her mother would have loved seeing the veterans' memorial.

"It's beautiful," Smidt said.

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