

Veterans Memorial Plaza

By Phyllis Moses

Behind the Social Center in Sun City Texas is a serene and sacred place – the Veterans Memorial Plaza. Butterflies and birds flutter around the beautifully landscaped gardens. Garden benches provide a tranquil opportunity for remembering those honored here.

A wall dominates this setting – not just an ordinary wall. It's a special 82 foot long Texas limestone wall with a gracious curve accentuating the natural flow of surrounding gardens and pools. A message is engraved on the wall for the world to see: "IN HONOR OF THOSE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED IN OUR MILITARY FORCES." The Plaza and walkways are set with more than 11,000 red bricks; approximately 2700 of those are engraved with the names of those who made sacrifices in defense of this country.

Included is a second wall, one which honors the brave men of Williamson County who gave their lives during WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam Conflict, and the War on Terrorism.

Bricks depicting various battle campaigns of all wars line the sides of the Plaza. In addition, bricks engraved with the names of all 50 states and US Territorial possessions skirt the perimeter. Bricks honoring George Washington, Robert E. Lee, and four Medal of Honor recipients lie here, as well. Bricks honoring Civil War soldiers, Revolutionary War combatants, and those who served in the two World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam grace the Memorial.

SFC Nathan Chapman, son of Sun City residents Lynn and Will Chapman, was the first U.S. casualty of the war in Afghanistan. A Drake Elm tree stands proudly in his honor. A sturdy Texas live oak tree grows on the opposite side in honor of Oliver Wolcott, great-great-grandfather of Sun City resident Bill Boyce. Wolcott, an officer in the Continental Army, signed the Declaration of Independence and became the first Governor of Connecticut.

Behind the wall are fifteen Cypress trees; five of these trees are dedicated to specific veterans. Future recognition of others who have served is anticipated.



Jim Biero

The idea for the Memorial sprang from a dream of Sun City resident, retired Navy Commander Robert Keley. He spoke of his dream to others, including Army General Chuck Graham, who determined to make this dream a reality. They formed a committee to raise the necessary funds to build the Memorial.

In addition to the sales of engraved bricks, donations were made from Chartered Clubs, organizations, and community sponsors to help raise the necessary funds to complete the project.

At last, the financial goal was achieved. On Memorial Day 2003, the wall was dedicated as the centerpiece of the "Georgetown-Williamson County Veterans Memorial Plaza." Twenty-five hundred people packed the grounds. An Air Force Band played, Color Guards presented the flags, and there was even a fly-over by Air Force fighter planes. A bugler played "Taps" on a trumpet having a history back to WWI.

Here in this sanctuary of hearts, engraved on red bricks, memories flicker as we recall the sacrifices these veterans made so that we Americans can continue to taste the fruits of freedom.

A peace descends.



Wes Ode