



The Sentinel



The Newsletter of the Florida Medal of Honor Memorial, Inc.
Issue 28 – January 2026

Chairman's Message

What a first year we had!! Some highlights in no particular order: 1,425 visitors; a highly successful golf tournament; a wonderful gala dinner; a awesome "National Medal of Honor Day" ceremony, a magnificent "Wreaths Across America" Day ceremony; we won the Highlander 501.c.3 organization of the year; we received additional donations and grants; we had a visit by Congressman Scott Franklin; we had lots of group visits; we participated in the local "Soda Fest"; we continued to enhance the facilities; and we have an incredible board and fantastic docents. And, of course we had a marvelous dedication ceremony to kick it all off!!

There is more, but really too much to mention. If I had thought the first year would go half as well as it did, I wouldn't have lost so much sleep! The fantastic community support continues to amaze us as we continue to hear words of gratitude and admiration from individuals, groups, the local governments of the City of Sebring and the County of Highlands, and the Chambers of Commerce. We could not be happier!

We remain dedicated to honoring our twenty-four heroes, to inspiring our community, and to educating our fellow citizens on the high price of freedom. All our heroes displayed incredible bravery;

17 made the ultimate sacrifice. We owe them more than we can ever repay. We enjoy the freedoms we hold dear because of men like these. Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,
Michael R. Borders
Chairman

**This newsletter is published quarterly:
Jan/Apr/Jul/Oct**



Calendar of Events

On-going:

Open Tuesday—Saturday
10:00 AM — 4:00 PM

25 March 2026

11:00 AM

National Medal of Honor Day Ceremony

TBD

8:00 AM

Second Annual Golf Tournament

22 October 2026

5:30 PM

Second Annual Gala Dinner

19 December 2026

10:00 AM

Wreaths Across America Ceremony



Funding Status

Please support us with your donation. See the "How You Can Help" section on pages 7-8 for more info.

The first two pictures below show a visit by members of the national and state headquarters of the Military Officers Association of America along with members of our staff.



It's so beautiful at night.



Our beautiful Christmas tree



Our docent Sylvia Beeks was Miss Sebring Grand Prix of 1961

The below pictures show several takes of our Wreaths Across America ceremony held on 13 December. We had a good crowd of some 130 and great weather.





Sebring Police Chief Karl Hoglund and Highlands County Supervisor of Elections Karen Healy lay wreaths on two of the markers surrounding the memorial.



We not only placed wreaths on each of the 24 markers, but also placed wreaths around the fence and along the stage, making the whole site simply beautiful.



One side of the memorial with the "Wreaths Across America."



Chairman Mike Borders with Shyrell Copas and Betsy Copas Clintonz, daughter and mother of Florida MoH recipient Ardie Ray Copas, and Richard Karkowski, organizer of the Wreaths Across America ceremony.



Architectural Design Philosophy

The Memorial is constructed on the site of the previous Highlands County *Stepping Stones* Girl Scout House. In the 1930s, Girl Scout leader Sophy Mae Mitchell, Sr. led an effort to build a Girl Scout log cabin at the corner of South Eucalyptus Street and Commerce Avenue. The FLMOHM Visitors Center is designed to pay homage to the *Stepping Stones* Girl Scout House by retaining the “look and feel” of the log cabin design with horizontal bands of light and dark which complements the architectural design of the surrounding government buildings. Inside the Visitors Center you will find select components reused from the Girl Scout House. These include the wood ceiling that had once been the floor in the older building. The façade is also nearly identical, as is the address, though the Visitors Center is technically on Fernleaf Street.



The “Stepping Stones” House just prior to demolition. It stood from 1939-2022.

In the late 1930s, the community raised \$5,344, some from shows performed by New York actor Fred Stone and his young daughters. Fred Stone placed the cornerstone on Jan. 15, 1939. The community named the building *Stepping Stones* House, in honor of his daughters, nicknamed “Stepping Stones” for their height and age differences. Employees of the Works Progress Administration cut local trees and built the house. The Girl Scouts moved in December 13, 1939 and used the building for decades. In 2022, the site was repurposed and transferred by means of a “Quit Claim Deed” to the Florida Medal of Honor Memorial, Inc. by the City of Sebring for a fee of \$10.



Our Mission

To honor and preserve the legacy of Florida Medal of Honor recipients through education, leadership, and inspiring displays, ensuring their courage and sacrifice are never forgotten.

Our Vision

To inspire all generations to embody the six character traits of Medal of Honor recipients, fostering a deeper appreciation and commitment to the values of courage, sacrifice, and patriotism.

Our Goals

- Maintain the Memorial and Visitors Center
- Provide educational outreach to K-12 school systems

What We Do

Honor Florida's Heroes

Preserve the memories of the 24 Floridians who have been awarded the MOH and inspire others to build on their legacies.



Inspire Our Community

Encourage our community, young and old, to embody the ideals of the MOH (sacrifice, commitment, courage, integrity, citizenship, and patriotism).

Educate and Inform

Work with K-12 schools to promote the virtues, behaviors, and choices of everyday heroes as exemplified by the MOH awardees through thought-provoking curriculum and active learning activities.



How You Can Help

Additional funds and help are needed for, operating costs and maintenance of this unique and special facility.

Volunteer

- Be a museum docent
- Assist with the K-12 educational outreach program.

Donations

Tax-deductible donations accepted:

- Online – <https://tinyurl.com/233kmcfe>
- Phone – text "FLMOHM" to 44321
- Mail – See page 8

Sponsorship Levels

- **Platinum** \$50,000 and up
- **Gold** \$25,000 – \$49,999.99
- **Silver** \$10,000 – \$24,999.99
- **Bronze** \$5,000 – \$9,999.99
- **Brass** \$1,000 – \$4,999.99
- **Founding Member** \$100 – \$999.99

Our Newest Members:

- David G. Leidel, Jr.
- Joshua C. Cleveland
- Walter Fricke
- Glenn B. Nulty
- James T. Lange (from annual to 5-yr)
- Michele B. Roberts
- Bill Muckler
- Gary Nolan

Sponsor Upgrade

- **Duke Energy is now a Gold Sponsor with total contributions of \$30,000.**



Thank You!

How To Become a Member

Please consider becoming a member of the Florida Medal of Honor Memorial. Members are invited to special previews, member-only activities, and are kept informed of special events via a newsletter, social media, and the website. There are three different membership levels: Annual, Five-Year, and Life. An application form is provided on Page 9.

How to Become a Sponsor

As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit/ non-profit, we rely on donations and fund raising. Our staff is all volunteer. We have a full range of expenses. Donations may be tax-deductible. Go to the "How You Can Help" section on the previous page to see how to donate or sponsor our organization and use the contact information on the last page.



Board of Directors & Other Volunteers

Chairman: Michael R. Borders
Vice Chairman: C. Raymond McIntyre
Junior Vice Chairman: Byron Oakley
Treasurer: Richard Karkowski
Education: Erik Christensen
Construction Project Mgr.: Donald Laycock
Secretary/Asst. Const. Project Mgr.: Judy Laycock
Marketing: Moddie Desselle & Heather Oakley

IT: Shawn Nickel
Chaplain: Denise Williams
Master Gardeners: Mark and Marie Milia
Legal Advisor: John McClure
CPA: Mark Cox



The Florida Medal of Honor Memorial, Inc. is an incorporated Florida non-profit organization. We are non-partisan, apolitical, and are a 501(c)(3), charitable, non-profit, tax-exempt organization. The FLMOHM is a 501(c)(3) / IRS EIN# 45-3798922 / State of Florida Corporation N16000001848 / My Florida Market Place 85-8017597686C-0 / vendor # F45398922001/ D-U-N-S Number 05-868-9165 / FL Tax Exempt #Registration #: CH56194 "A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling 1.800.435.7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the State.



Florida Medal of Honor Memorial, Inc.

Website: www.flmohm.org
Mail: 442 S. Eucalyptus St., Sebring, Florida 33870
Telephone: 863.451.5862
Email: FLMOHM@gmail.org
Facebook: FLMOHMemorial
X: FLMOHM

Florida Medal of Honor Memorial (FLMOHM) Membership Application

Members are invited to special previews, member-only activities, and are kept informed of special events via a newsletter, social media, and the website.

Name: _____ Date: _____
(Last, First, MI) (dd-mm-yyyy)

Address: _____
Street

City State Zip Code

Telephone No.: _____

E-Mail: _____

Military Branch (If applicable) _____

Spouse's Name: _____

Present/Former Occupation: _____

Types of membership:

- Annual (\$25)
- Five-Year (\$100)
- Life (\$250)

Return this completed form with enclosed dues to any docent at the FLMOHM Visitors Center or mail it to: Florida Medal of Honor Memorial, 442 S. Eucalyptus St., Sebring, FL 33870. Questions: call 863.451.5862 or email FLMOHM@gmail.org.



(FLMOHM Use Only): Member No.: _____ Expiration Date: _____