

The Sentinel



The Newsletter of the Florida Medal of Honor Memorial, Inc. Issue 13- February 2024

Chairman's Message

So much has happened since the last report that it is hard to keep it brief! Following the installation of the fencepost footers, 29 fenceposts were built. They were then filled with concrete (free from Jahna Concrete) and a day later stucco was applied. On the 12th and 13th, the North American Fence Contractors Association arrived on site to install the decorative aluminum fencing. We had them put in all but a small section along Eucalyptus Street and at the north end parking lot. As you can see from the pictures, it is beautiful! Meanwhile, the old chain link fence was removed, trenches were dug from one end of the site to the other, electrical and sewage pipe/conduit was laid, and trenches were backfilled. Initial grading and layout began along with site cleanup. Soon we will be putting in the footers and stem walls for the Visitors' Center. At that point we will start to see some vertical construction. That is a "visual" that will really be exciting! Also the old markers were picked up by Buxton & Bass Funeral Home to be completely redone in a uniform manner—all for free.

In other news, the Duke Energy Foundation approved a \$20K grant to help with the project. We should see the money in our account in about a month or so. That, along will a potential allocation from Highlands County of "Not to Exceed" \$93K, will enable us to do everything—and I mean everything—just like we had hoped!

Finally, other fund-raising efforts continue, and we are happy to have the support of the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1097—they are conducting a raffle of a Celebrity cruise. The drawing is in late March, and this effort could bring in a

significant amount of money. More to follow next month.

I'll end by noting that we are extremely proud and honored to be part of this noble effort. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel—and it is not an oncoming train!

Sincerely, Michael R. Borders Chairman



Calendar of Events

February 2024:

Site Prep On-going

Spring 2024:

Work Complete

Summer 2024:

Ribbon-Cutting and Grand Opening







Funding Status

Primary Source: \$250,000 State of Florida

Sebring CRA: \$20,000 **Duke Energy**: \$20,000

Private Donations: \$57,652 **In-Kind Donations**: \$323,400

These pictures show a variety of construction work, good oldfashioned manual labor, a Jahna Concrete truck and more, such as trenching, pipe and conduit laying by Fassler Plumbing and Sabre Electric, and a fence column without stucco.



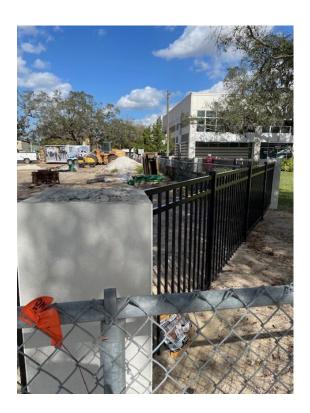












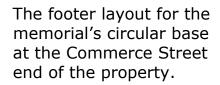


These photos show some of the aluminum fencing installed by the North American Fence Contractors Association, as well as some of the 29 columns after the stucco was applied. Later we will install caps on the tops of the columns. The gate is the "main" entrance on Commerce Street.



Markers being prepped for removal from the old venue by the Highlands County Veterans Services Office. Buxton-Bass Funeral Home is doing this pro-bono!







Our secretary, Sarah Carter, receiving the Highlands County Veterans Council Veteran of the Year award for her work with our organization.

Hero of the Month

Paul Ray Smith

Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army Tampa, FL



Citation

Sergeant First Class Paul R. Smith distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with an armed enemy near Baghdad International Airport, Baghdad, Iraq on 4 April 2003. On that day, Sergeant First Class Smith was engaged in the construction of a prisoner of war holding area when his Task Force was violently attacked by a company-sized enemy force. Realizing the vulnerability of over 100 fellow soldiers, Sergeant First Class Smith quickly organized a hasty defense consisting of two platoons of soldiers, one Bradley Fighting Vehicle and three armored personnel carriers. As the fight developed, Sergeant First Class Smith braved hostile enemy fire to personally engage the enemy with hand grenades and anti-tank weapons, and organized the evacuation of three wounded soldiers from an armored personnel carrier struck by a rocket propelled grenade and a 60mm mortar round. Fearing the enemy would overrun their defenses, Sergeant First Class Smith moved under withering enemy fire to man a .50 caliber machine gun mounted on a damaged armored personnel carrier. In total disregard for his own life, he maintained his exposed position in order to engage the attacking enemy force. During this action, he was mortally wounded. His courageous actions helped defeat the enemy attack, and resulted in as many as 50 enemy soldiers killed, while allowing the safe withdrawal of numerous wounded soldiers. Sergeant First Class Smith's extraordinary heroism and uncommon valor are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the Third Infantry Division "Rock of the Marne," and the United States Army.

Conflict: War on Terrorism (Iraq)

Location of Action: Baghdad Airport, Baghdad, Iraq

Date of Action: April 4, 2003

MOH Awarded Posthumously: April 4, 2005



Forte Meda of Honor Memorial

Our Mission

To construct and maintain a perpetual memorial that honors the Florida Medal of Honor recipients and ensures that they are never forgotten.

Our Vision

To inspire current and future generations about the ideals of courage, integrity, patriotism, leadership, and sacrifice; to help them understand the meaning and price of freedom; and to encourage them to embrace their responsibility as citizens in a democracy.

Our Goals

- Construct the Memorial
- Construct and outfit the Visitor's 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

Although partially funded through a subgrant from the Florida Department of Education, additional funds are needed to complete the construction, outfitting, and maintenance of this unique and special facility.

Donations

Tax-deductible donations accepted:

- Online shorturl.at/pzO01
- Phone text "FLMOHM" to 44321
- Mail See Contact Us section

Sponsorship Levels

- Platinum \$50,000.00 and up
- **Gold** \$25,000.00 \$49,999.99
- **Silver** \$10,000.00 \$24,999.99
- **Bronze** \$5,000.00 \$9,999.99
- **Brass** \$1,000.00 \$4,999.99
- Founding Member \$100.00 \$999.99

Volunteer

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

Our Sponsors (Thus Far)

Platinum Level

The State of Florida City of Sebring North American Fence Contractor's Assn.

Silver Level

City of Sebring CRA
Duke Energy Foundation

Bronze Level

The Borders
The Christensens
In Memory of Bolivar Rivera
VFW Post 4300 Sebring
Rick Perry

Brass Level

Highlands County Veterans Council Woman's Club of Sebring Publix Supermarkets Incorporated John McClure, Esquire APEC Inc.

Glades Elect. Charit. Trust c/o Lee Hildreth Quarters for a Cause c/o Staci Christmas The Battle of the Bands Incorporated Re/Max - Chip Boring

Therese Mendel

The Rotary Club of Highlands County

Avon Park Noon Rotary

Master Chief Petty Officer Eugene Kissner BPOE Elks 1529, Sebring

South Central Florida Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America

Robert Brooks

Ronald Sevianv

Keyn Roberts

Founding Members

Havwood Taylor Alvin W. Pals Moddie Desselle Mr. & Mrs. Scardino William Bond Patricia Wilhelm Brinker International LuLaRoe Chantel Gilmore - Newly Inspired You! Heritage Festival Steven Albert Avon Park Service Club American Legion Post 25 Auxiliary Fort Meade Baptist Church Tanglewood Veterans Association Lake Placid Noon Rotary Club Dynamic Sales Associates, Inc.

In-Kind Sponsors

Platinum Level

Highlands County (\$50K)

Gold Level

Buddy Hopson (\$25K)

Silver Level

Anderson Windows
Marmer Construction (est.)
Griffin's Carpet Mart (est.)
Quality Roofing
NAFCA (est.)

Bronze Level

Crosson & Payne Tree & Land Service (\$2K) Stidham's Rentals (\$5K)

Brass Level

Sunset Drafting (\$1,000) SGIS Surveying-Will Pyle (\$1,200) Chem-Crete-Larry Mroz (\$2,458) SGIS Surveying (\$1,200)

Founders' Level

Junctions-Selvin Walker (\$500) Liberty Flagpoles (\$750) Blue Steel Fabrication, LLC (\$750) Central Florida Insulation (\$500)

How to Become a Sponsor

Our organization is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit/ non-profit. We rely totally on donations and fund raising. Our entire staff is volunteer, with no funds expended on payroll. But we do have administrative and operational expenses that must be paid, such as property and liability insurance, power, water, sewage, IT/telecom, maintenance costs, office supplies, etc. We need your generous support. Depending on your personal tax situation, donations are tax-deductible. So go to the "How You Can Help Us" or "Contact Us" section on the previous page to see how to donate or sponsor our organization.



Links

- The Florida Medal of Honor Memorial www.flmohm.org
- Congressional Medal of Honor Society https://www.cmohs.org
- National Medal of Honor Museum https://mohmuseum.org



Board of Directors & Other Volunteers

Chairman: Michael R. Borders

Vice Chairman: C. Raymond McIntyre **Junior Vice Chairman**: Byron Oakley

Treasurer: Harry Marsh **Secretary**: Sarah Carter

Comptroller: Erik Christensen

Construction Project Mgr.: Donald Laycock
Asst. Const. Project Mgr.: Judy Laycock

Marketing: Moddie Desselle **Marketing**: Heather Oakley

IT: Shawn Nickel

Chaplain: Denise Williams

Landscaping: Mark and Marie Milia

Engineering Consultant: Clinton Howerton

Legal Advisor: John McClure

CPA: Bruce Lybarger



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 MY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISON OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE."



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