



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 with 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 old-fashioned 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!



The footer layout for the memorial's circular base at the Commerce Street end of the property.



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***





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 Sevigny
Kevn Roberts

• **Founding Members**

Haywood 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.

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