



The Sentinel



The Newsletter of the Florida Medal of Honor Memorial, Inc.
Issue 12- January 2024

Chairman's Message

As I noted last month, construction began before Christmas with some basic work. As we moved into the new year (2024), the year it will happen, we saw more prep work with our good friend Buddy Hopson bringing in heavy construction equipment to start "moving dirt." A glance at photos on subsequent pages shows some of that going on. You will also see that we have poured our first load of concrete! This involved five cubic yards to fill the footers for the fence posts. This was a team effort by TOMO Construction to place and dig the footer holes and Jahna Concrete to bring in the concrete. Obviously, there is much more to do, but things are really picking up and it is gratifying to see the process of construction start. As I have noted to anyone who asks, it is more important to do this right than to do it fast.

On 25 January I made a pitch to the Tourist Development Council (TDC). The purpose of the presentation was to ask for money, plain and simple. Inflationary pressures have hit us hard, and we are short of funding to get across the finish line. At this point the TDC has to consider our inputs and then make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. Hopefully they will provide the funding we need. Nothing is going to stop us, and we will find the money no matter what happens

On 8 January I had the opportunity to speak to the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). These patriotic ladies listened with interest, and we enjoyed a great conversation. They provided us with a financial donation - we are very grateful for their support.

I want to say a word about our Board of Directors. They are GREAT!! Each and every one of them brings something to the table. And all do it for FREE! We are lucky to have such a diverse team. They all have a passion for what they are doing, and they are AMAZING! I am so lucky to be part of this group of patriotic Americans.

Sincerely,
Michael R. Borders
Chairman



Calendar of Events

January 2024:

Site Prep On-going

January 2024:

Visitors Center and Memorial Build 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

Private Donations: \$57,052

In-Kind Donations: \$298,400

These pictures show a variety of heavy construction equipment, good old-fashioned manual labor, cement getting poured into fence post footers, and more. It is definitely getting real, and it is exciting!!

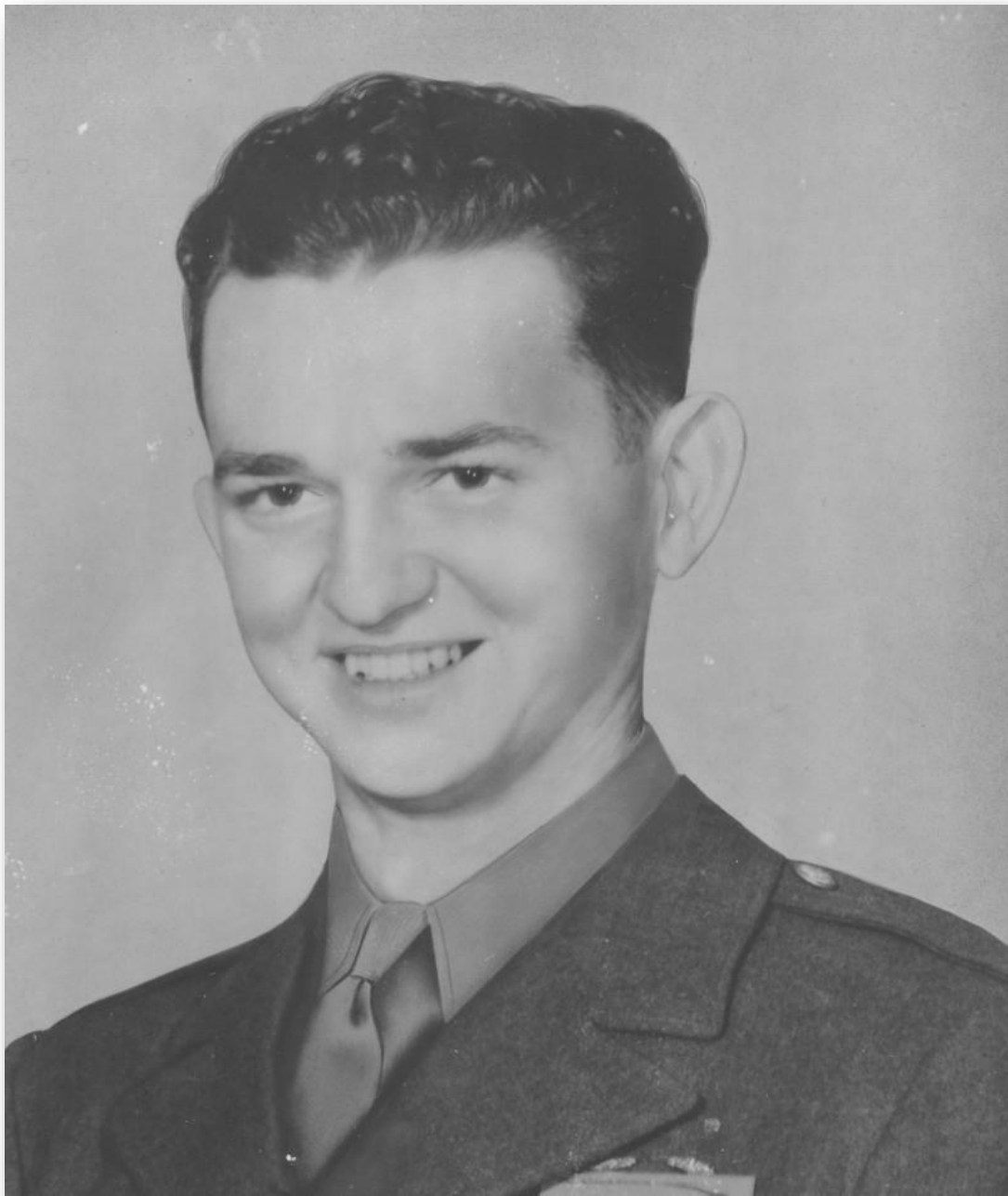


Hero of the Month

James Henry Mills

Private, U.S. Army

Fort Meade, FL



Citation

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. Pvt. Mills, undergoing his baptism of fire, preceded his platoon down a draw to reach a position from which an attack could be launched against a heavily fortified strongpoint. After advancing about 300 yards, Pvt. Mills was fired on by a machine gun only five yards distant. He killed the gunner with one shot and forced the surrender of the assistant gunner. Continuing his advance, he saw a German soldier in a camouflaged position behind a large bush pulling the pin of a potato-masher grenade. Covering the German with his rifle, Pvt. Mills forced him to drop the grenade and captured him. When another enemy soldier attempted to throw a hand grenade into the draw, Pvt. Mills killed him with one shot. Brought under fire by a machine gun, two machine pistols, and three rifles at a range of only 50 feet, he charged headlong into the furious chain of automatic fire, shooting his M1 from the hip. The enemy was completely demoralized by Pvt. Mills' daring charge, and when he reached a point within 10 feet of their position, all six surrendered. As he neared the end of the draw, Pvt. Mills was brought under fire by a machine gunner 20 yards distant. Despite the fact that he had absolutely no cover, Pvt. Mills killed the gunner with one shot. Two enemy soldiers near the machine gunner fired wildly at Pvt. Mills and then fled. Pvt. Mills fired twice, killing one of the enemy. Continuing on to the position, he captured a fourth soldier. When it became apparent that an assault on the strongpoint would in all probability cause heavy casualties on the platoon, Pvt. Mills volunteered to cover the advance down a shallow ditch to a point within 50 yards of the objective. Standing on the bank in full view of the enemy less than 100 yards away, he shouted and fired his rifle directly into the position. His ruse worked exactly as planned. The enemy centered his fire on Pvt. Mills. Tracers passed within inches of his body, rifle and machine-pistol bullets ricocheted off the rocks at his feet. Yet he stood there firing until his rifle was empty. Intent on covering the movement of his platoon, Pvt. Mills jumped into the draw, reloaded his weapon, climbed out again, and continued to lay down a base of fire. Repeating this action four times, he enabled his platoon to reach the designated spot undiscovered, from which position it assaulted and overwhelmed the enemy, capturing 22 Germans and taking the objective without casualties.

*Conflict: **World War II***

*Location of Action: **Near Cisterna di Littoria, Italy***

*Date of Action: **May 24, 1944***

*MOH Awarded: **November 14, 1944***





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

• **Silver Level**

City of Sebring CRA

• **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

• **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
Kevin Roberts
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 MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION 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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