



# The Sentinel



The Newsletter of the Florida Medal of Honor Memorial, Inc.  
Issue 6 – July 2023

## Chairman’s Message

Thanks to Kati Pippin of The Champion for Children Foundation we have wonderful artist’s impressions of our Visitors Center which you can see on the next page. The offset of dark and light block pays homage to the Girl Scout cabin that once stood on the site. The memorial will be a beautiful addition to downtown Sebring, right in the heart of Highlands County.

Detailed planning with the design aspects continues apace. Graybar Electric will help with the lighting requirements. Our good fortune is that Don’s cousin, Bob Mygrant, was the former CFO of Graybar and is pulling together some very significant In-Kind support. We are also working with Eagle Mountain Flag & Flagpole to ensure proper lighting of the poles. And as it turns out, the father of the owner of Eagle Mountain was mentored by Bob Mygrant back in the day.

Trusses and windows have been ordered to ensure on-time delivery. We are all aware that the interruptions in the supply chain are still an issue. Our truss provider, Mid Florida, is providing the trusses at cost, resulting in a substantial savings. Anderson Windows is our window supplier, and we also received a cost offset, saving some \$2,500.

Finally, we are excited and pleased to announce that we have selected a general contractor to help us see the project to completion. Don, Judy, and I met with the owner of Marmer Construction of Sebring. Marty Wohl and his team are “all-in” to move the project forward. We will realize a substantial savings as a result of this partnership. Marmer has a solid reputation with numerous projects under their belt, and this will help keep the project execution as local as possible. Whitney Seignious of Marmer will shepherd us throughout the

process, and we look forward to working with her and the whole Marmer team.

We continue to seek financial support, both cash contributions and offers of in-kind support, which will help us get across the finish line. Please do what you can to get the word out as any contribution will be helpful, and we will be eternally grateful.

**Thank you.**

Sincerely,  
Michael R. Borders  
Chairman



## Calendar of Events

### **July 2023:**

Site Prep/Design On-going

### **August 2023:**

Memorial Build Begins

### **September 2023:**

Visitors Center Build Begins

### **1 March 2024:**

Work Complete

### **25 March 2024:**

Ribbon-Cutting and Grand Opening



## Funding Status

**Primary Source:** \$250,000 State of Florida

**Private Donations:** \$46,300

**In-Kind Donations:** \$85,000

# Florida Medal of Honor Visitors Center



Hero of the Month

# **Ardie R. Copas**

Specialist Fourth Class, U.S. Army  
Fort Pierce, FL



## **Citation**

Specialist Four Ardie R. Copas distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a Machinegunner in Company C, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division during combat operations against an armed enemy near Ph Romeas Hek, Cambodia on May 12, 1970. That morning, Specialist Four Copas' company was suddenly attacked by a large hostile force firing recoilless rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, and automatic weapons. As

Specialist Four Copas began returning fire, his armored car was struck by an enemy recoilless round, knocking him to the ground and injuring four American Soldiers beside the vehicle. Ignoring his own wounds, Specialist Four Copas quickly remounted the burning vehicle and commenced firing his machinegun at the belligerents. Braving the hostile fire directed at him and the possible detonation of the mortar rounds inside the track, Specialist Four Copas maintained a heavy volume of suppressive fire on the foe while the wounded Americans were safely evacuated. Undaunted, Specialist Four Copas continued to place devastating volleys of fire upon the adversary until he was mortally wounded when another enemy round hit his vehicle. Specialist Four Copas' daring action resulted in the safe evacuation of his comrades. Specialist Four Copas' extraordinary heroism and selflessness at the cost of his own life, above and beyond the call of duty, are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

*Conflict: Vietnam War*

*Location of Action: Ph Romeas Hek, Cambodia*

*Date of Action: May 12, 1970*

*MOH Awarded Posthumously: March 18, 2014*



**AWARDED POSTHUMOUSLY:** Yes

**PRESENTATION DATE & DETAILS:** March 18, 2014 at the White House, presented to his daughter, Shyrell Copas, by President Barack Obama

**BORN:** August 29, 1950, Fort Pierce, FL

**DIED:** May 12, 1970, Ph Romeas Hek, Cambodia

**BURIED:** Hillcrest Memorial Gardens, Fort Pierce, FL

**CONNECTION TO FLORIDA:** Entered the service in Fort Pierce, Florida





### **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 special facility.

### **Donations**

Tax-deductible donations accepted:

- Online – [shorturl.at/pz001](http://shorturl.at/pz001)
- 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
- **Bronze Level**  
The Borders  
The Christensens  
In Memory of Bolivar Rivera  
VFW Post 4300 Sebring
- **Brass Level**  
Highlands County Veterans Council  
Woman's Club of Sebring  
Publix Supermarkets Incorporated  
John McClure, Esquire  
APEC - Automated Petroleum & Energy Company, Inc.  
Glades Elect. Charitable 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  
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

## **In-Kind Sponsors**

### • **Platinum Level**

Highlands County (\$50K)

### • **Gold Level**

Buddy Hopson (\$25K)

### • **Bronze Level**

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

### • **Brass Level**

Junctions--Selvin Walker (\$500)  
Liberty Flagpoles (\$750)  
Blue Steel Fabrication, LLC (\$750)  
Sunset Drafting (\$1,000)

## **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, even after the memorial and visitors center is constructed and the ribbon has been cut. We also will have to pay for property and liability insurance, power, water, sewage, IT/telecom, maintenance costs, office supplies, etc. With your generous support, we will stay the course as outlined elsewhere in this newsletter. 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](http://www.flmohm.org)
- Congressional Medal of Honor Society  
<https://www.cmohs.org>
- National Medal of Honor Museum  
<https://mohmuseum.org>

## **The Three Versions of the Medal of Honor**



Army      Air Force      Navy



## **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  
**Budget:** Shelly Pettit  
**IT:** Shawn Nickel  
**Chaplain:** Denise Williams  
**Landscaping:** Mark and Marie Milia  
**Boy Scout Eagle Candidate:** Bobby Border  
**Engineering Consultant:** Clinton Howerton  
**Legal Advisor:** John McClure  
**CPA:** Bruce Lybarger



## **Editorial Policy**

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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