

# Local Memorials Honor Veterans

## Five VFW Posts honor veterans from their communities with memorial services or permanent structures

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Since its inception more than 123 years ago, the VFW has prioritized the remembrance of veterans who died fighting for their nation.

In the years since, VFW's efforts to commemorate their sacrifices have led to war memorials sprouting across the country, from small towns to large metropolitan cities.

Commemorated through an array of permanent markers that include monoliths, cemeteries, streets and memorial parks bearing their names, honoring veterans has always been a tenet of the VFW's existence.

Here are a few examples of memorials created in 2022 through the help of local VFW Posts, whose memorials honor those who fought to protect and preserve the existence of our nation's values.

### **'RESOLVE TO REMEMBER'**

After a year spent raising \$20,000, VFW Post 8794 members in Whitehall, Ohio, presented its town with the first 9/11 and Global War on Terrorism Monument and Memorial on Sept. 11.

The monument and memorial, a promise by then-Post Commander Christine Curry a year earlier, was unveiled during a remembrance ceremony in front of more than 200 people that included Whitehall's mayor, as well as police department and fire department representatives.

"In an unforgivable and horrific attack, terrorists robbed America of more than 3,000 lives," VFW Post 8794 Commander Gary Pfaff said at the September 2022 ceremony. "We vowed we would not forget, and we will not as we continue to prove. Let this be hallowed ground and a true testament to our resolve to remember always those we will never forget, those

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who died, those who served and those who carried on.”

### **HONORING A LOCAL HERO**

In honoring the memory of a local veteran who was killed in action in Iraq, VFW Post 2486 members in Wauconda, Illinois, voted on renaming the Post after the fallen soldier.

During a ceremony at Memorial Park in Wauconda on July 9, 2022, Post 2486 members, who recently combined with Post 11020, unveiled the Major Paul R. Syverson III Memorial Post banner.

Syverson, who served with the Army’s 5th Special Forces Group in the opening days of the Afghanistan War, was later killed in Iraq by mortar fire on June 16, 2004.

The Army veteran grew up in nearby Lake Zurich, Illinois, and was a member of his high school’s 1987 state football championship team at Hershey High School in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Syverson would go on to be commissioned at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington City, Virginia, before deploying to Afghanistan.

### **‘MORE THAN ANY OTHER CITY OR TOWN IN CONNECTICUT’**

Known as one of the most patriotic cities in the country, Waterbury, Connecticut, carries the names of all area veterans who paid the ultimate price on its municipal building’s walls.

From local casualties during World War II, as well as the Korean and Vietnam wars, the names of its sons and daughters in uniform are spotlighted on bronze plaques inside the Chase Municipal Building.

When the Waterbury Veterans Memorial Committee received permission to erect a new plaque for veterans of the Global War on Terrorism in 2017, the support was overwhelming. The new plaque memorializes the names of seven Waterbury veterans who were killed in Afghanistan or Iraq.

On May 10 of last year, the plaque honoring the memory of its local sons who died during the Global War on Terrorism was moved to the town’s main park in downtown Waterbury and unveiled during a Memorial Day ceremony.

“Waterbury has lost seven service members in Iraq and Afghanistan, more than any other city or town in Connecticut,” said Joseph Nolan, a Gold Star parent and member of the Waterbury Veterans Memorial Committee whose son, Sgt. Joseph Nolan, is among the seven names honored.

“The monument was moved so more people could see it, and a special ceremony was held [afterward].”

### **‘IT’S A GOOD THING FOR THE TOWN’**

On May 15, 2022, more than 50 people converged at VFW Post 8311 in Elk City, Idaho, for an unveiling ceremony that formally dedicated the Post building as a veterans’ memorial.

Led by Post 8311 Senior Vice Commander Bruce Gabari, the unveiling included vinyl banners with the names of approximately 3,000 Idahoans who have died since World War I.

“The membership went out of their way to follow up on my crazy idea,” Gabari told attendees during the presentation. “But I think it worked out. It’s a good thing for the town, and a good thing for the state of Idaho.”

The vinyl banners with all 3,000 names also include recipients of the Medal of Honor dating back to 1863, as well as the history and specifications of the USS Idaho, which served in several campaigns during World War II.

### **‘THIS EVER-IMPORTANT DAY’**

During Memorial Day weekend last May, VFW Post 9903 Commander Lee Daigle and fellow members in Church Point, Louisiana, reminded their hometown of the importance of such a holiday.

For three consecutive days between sunrise and sunset, Post 9903 members displayed the names of the 21 local service members who paid the ultimate sacrifice in crosses on a manicured lawn overlooked and patrolled by veterans at Church Point Depot.

“Memorial Day, while a sacred day for veterans, is sadly overlooked by many Americans who have lost touch with the true meaning of this ever-important day,” Daigle said. “We veterans are doing this to give family, friends and our community a time to remember and heal.”

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