

103d INF DIV WW II



TEXAS WW II HISTORICAL MONUMENT FUND

HISTORY

1998 - 2008



ETO 1944-1945

DEDICATION

This Monument Historical Legacy is dedicated to all combat veterans of the 103d Infantry Division of WW II, especially those that made the supreme sacrifice.

Three devoted veterans, B. Melton “Mel” Wright, Lejeune “Rabbit” Wilson and Robert N. “Bob” Powers made the initial contributions and established the TEXAS WW II HISTORICAL MONUMENT FUND. This Corporation accumulated the funds, made the design, selected and obtained a prime location, constructed and dedicated this beautiful monument to preserve our vital history for future generations.

This is also dedicated to my dear wife Thelma and the Fund final list of Board of Directors. Without all of them it would not have been possible.

*B. Melton Wright
Lejeune Wilson
Robert N. Powers (Deceased)
Marsha L. Powers
Edwin McGhee*

*Arthur M. Flynn
John T. Poole
James E. White
Kenneth Kaden
George Grounds*

B. Melton Wright



A CALL TO DUTY



From the President of the TEXAS WW II HISTORICAL MONUMENT FUND

Building this Monument came from an Idea that was conceived to preserve this vital part of our history for future generations.

It honors the service of combat veterans of the 103d INF DIV of WW II, especially the 847 of them that made the supreme sacrifice.

The project was 8 years in the making. It was developed by the efforts of a dedicated group of individuals. The bulk of them were combat veterans of the 103d, who late in their lives still responded to the call to duty.

At it's dedication 11 Nov 2006 it was donated to the City of Gainesville TX and now it belongs to the public.

Being located at this TxDOT Travel Information Center on US-I-35 places it just across the street from the former Camp Howze location where we were trained in the arts of war. It will be visible to thousands of travelers 365 days a year

The Board of Directors of the Fund extends a special thanks to all the individuals whose contributions and ideas made this commemorative venture a reality.

From the Peace Makers of WW II may it in the future remind travelers of the price and sacrifices required to protect their freedom. It will be there when we are gone. We are proud to have been a part of this Greatest Generation.

B. Melton Wright



DESIGN: Arthur M. "Art" Flynn, Architect, former member of 409 Hq Co 1Bn and board member of the monument fund did a superb job of not only the design but of the complete Project plans. The original design was a 3 man statue on a triangular base representing a soldier from each division that trained at Camp Howze but the other infantry division associations that trained there chose not to participate in the project. Constant improvements and design changes were made to improve its value and also to agree with the funds that were collected or projected to be available. The final design was made in early 2006 when it was projected that the necessary funds were within sight. A 26 page detailed architectural project manual was then prepared by Art.

It specified a 5 ft tall Sunset Red Granite Pentagon shape base for the one and one half times life-size action bronze statue of a WW II Infantryman, and 5 slabs of the same height to hold bronze plaques for the names of all those 847 men who made the supreme sacrifice and it is noted thereon the 16 names of those bodies that were never recovered. The Granite is the same as used for building the State Capitol in Austin. The base weighs 17,379 lbs. The granite block from which it was cut weighed some 10 tons. Under this base is a hole 18 inches in diameter and 18 ft deep down to bedrock. It is filled with reinforced concrete for everlasting support. Each of the 5 slabs for the KIA'S weighs 1,695 lbs. The pentagon base is surrounded by a concrete walk that is in the shape of a star that is a symbol of our flag and the lone star state of Texas.

BRONZE: At the suggestion of board member James E. White it should be considered using bronze plaques instead of the original plan to inscribe the data directly on the granite. This turned out to be a great idea. The Cold Spring Memorial Group, a division of Cold Spring Granite Company was selected to furnish the bronze. It consisted of 10 plaques 30X42 inches in size with 3/8 inch lettering in all caps to make it easier for the public to read. The background texture is Leatherette and the final design was made in early 2006 when it was projected that the necessary funds were within sight. A 26 page detailed architectural project manual was prepared by Art.

Five bronze plaques are mounted on each side of the pentagon base. They cover the 103d ORGANIZATION, ITS HISTORY, ITS BATTLE RECORDS, THE HISTORY OF CAMP HOWZE and MONUMENT DEDICATION CREDITS.

During the process of the pouring the multiple castings a trip was arranged by Mel for the 103d members of the Fund Board to visit the Foundry and also tour the Cold Spring Granite Company Quarry and Plant in Marble Falls TX where the Granite Pentagon base and the 5 slabs were being prepared.

LOCATION: Final approval of the prime location at the TxDOT (Texas Department Of Transportation) Travel Information Center was due to the action of the Honorable Jerry Patterson, Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office and the late Honorable Ric Williamson Commissioner of TxDOT. Fund board member Lejeune "Rabbit" Wilson, his friends Till Phillips and Rob Jones assisted in making arrangements for their meetings. The Fund was notified of this approval by letter dated 20 September 2005 (seven years after the first meeting of 30 September 1998) from the TxDOT Executive Director Michael W. Behrens. The Monument Fund sent Behrens a thank you letter 4 October 2005.

Thousands of visitors stop at this major highway location and the monument, A *CALL TO DUTY*, is clearly visible to travelers going north or south on US-I-35. Thanks to Commissioner Rick Williamson highway markers 11 ft wide and 5 ft tall mark the north and south bound exits to this WW II MONUMENT. Not only is it a one of a kind but to date the only military or war monument located on any TxDOT Travel Information Center location.

SCULPTURE: Various sculptors had been contacted over the first few years of planning. It was late 2005 and the board set a projected dedication date of 11 November 2006. It was time to select a Sculptor and make sure that his creation would match the fund board members requirements and available funds. Their desire was to have an action oriented large statue of a WW II 103d Infantryman in authentic combat uniform with an M-1 rifle.

Bids were then received from several sculptors. Fund board members also visited some of their studios. From that group Edd Hayes of Spring Texas was selected for the job. He is the official sculptor of the State of Texas. The quality of his work examined was world class. It was not only apparent that he had a desire to tackle this project but would work with the Fund in meeting the financial and time schedule goals. Edd also came up with the final statue name *A CALL TO DUTY* that was approved by the Fund Board.

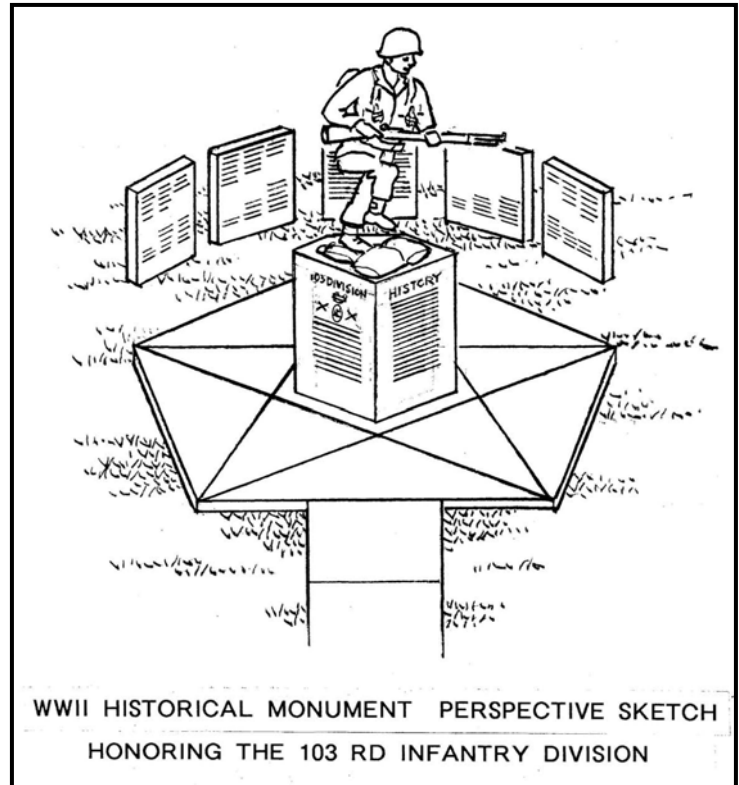
An agreement with Edd Hayes was signed on 2 November 2005 and it included not only the sculpture but also the bronze casting and final placement of that finished product on the granite base at the TxDOT location.

His work involved first sculpting of a clay model approximately 18 inches height. It was visited and critiqued by board members on multiple occasions and Edd was most cooperative in making modifications to make the work realistic.

From this model a mold was made to produce a limited edition of maquettes of the statue. At the dedication 11 Nov 2006, the Fund Board awarded serial no 1 of that limited edition to Mel Wright. He then presented his award to Mayor Glenn Loch for the City of Gainesville TX

Edd Hayes then sculpted the full 1 and 1/2 life size clay model of the final product in his Spring Texas studio. It was also visited in stages by a quorum of the Fund Board Members for a friendly critique.

A well-known bronze foundry, DEEP IN THE HEART ART FOUNDRY, located in Bastrop, TX was used by Edd. A team of theirs was sent to Edd's studio after the final full size clay model was finished. They generated a sectional model of multiple individual molds that would be necessary for pouring of the bronze for the final product.



Drilling 18 inch Hole 18 ft deep for Base and A CALL TO DUTY Support



Pouring concrete for Monument



During the process of making bronze castings a trip was arranged by Mel for the 103d members of the Fund Board to visit the Foundry in Bastrop TX and also tour the Cold Spring Granite Company Quarry and Plant in Marble Falls TX.

They witnessed the pouring of the statue's Combat Boot at the Bastrop Foundry, and in Marble Falls at the Quarry, they witnessed the actual cutting of one side of the pentagon base. Clint Nobles, a nephew of Mel's, had assisted in the arrangements made with the Granite Co and hosted the entire group with a wonderful dinner overlooking the City at Russo's during their stay in Marble Falls. This was 21-22 September 2006.

BRONZE: At the suggestion of board member James E. White it should be considered using bronze plaques instead of inscribing the data directly on the granite. This turned out to be a great idea. The Cold Spring Memorial Group was selected to furnish the bronze. It consisted of 10 plaques 30X42 inches in size with 3/8 inch lettering in all caps to make it easier for the public to read.. The background texture is Leatherette. It is a beautiful combination with the Sunset Red Granite. The bronze plaques were shipped from Cold Spring Minnesota to the Granite Company in Marble Falls TX so that they could all be delivered to the site together and installed at the same time. This turned out to be an ideal plan. The target date for completion was accomplished.

CONSTRUCTION: In early 2006 the Monument Fund had in their sights the necessary funds to build the Statue, the Granite, the Bronze Plaques and had received TxDOT approval for the location on 20 September 2005. The only thing lacking was the Foundation and putting it all together. Mel arranged a short meeting with Mike Land, the Gainesville City Manager explaining to him the situation. Mike indicated in that meeting that he felt sure that the City would take care of that part of the project and he was successful with that plan. This put the icing on the cake.

Meantime the Fund was dealing with TxDOT concerning a detailed contract that was required by them for material placement on their property. It was suggested by the management of TxDOT that it may be better arranged if the City of Gainesville would be the builder using the bronze statue, plaques and granite base and 5 slabs along with the architectural project manual furnished by the Monument Fund. This was a valuable idea and involved the establishment of an Interlocal Agreement between TxDOT and the City of Gainesville.

Rabbit Wilson, Mel Wright, Edd Hayes and Harold Branton attended the City Council Meeting that involved their approval of this method of handling. The clay model of the statue was shown to them at this meeting. The Council approved the Interlocal agreement thanks to the efforts of their City Manager Mike Land and their honorable Mayor Glenn Loch. The City of Gainesville built the forms, drilled the hole for support of the monument, poured the concrete and furnished the cranes required for placing the Granite base, 5 slabs and the Sculpture. Ron Sellman, the Gainesville Public Services Director was most cooperative and did a superb job of putting it all together. His work involved extensive coordination with Cheryl Cash, Supervisor of the Travel Information Center. Cheryl and her staff maintained photographic records of the complete construction phase and kept the Monument Fund advised of its progress. The fund is thankful for the services and friendship of Ron, Cheryl and their Staff.

CONCLUSION

The TEXAS WW II HISTORICAL MONUMENT FUND accomplished their objective in building a beautiful monument to preserve a vital part of WW II History. It is one of a kind and the first WW II monument to be located at a TxDOT Travel Information Center. To our knowledge no other infantry division has a monument with the detailed information that is underneath the sculpture of *A CALL TO DUTY*. It will be visible to thousands weekly and will be there when all of us are no longer here. May it remind its visitors of what it took to preserve their Freedom. For our actions we are proud to be called a part of the Greatest Generation.

It was dedicated on schedule 11 November 2006 with some 750 in attendance for the ceremony. Many of those in attendance were 103d men, their families and friends. Six busloads came from the 103d ASSN Reunion at the Marriott Quorum Hotel in Addison (near Dallas).

Inside the heart of the statue is a small plaque with the names of the Sculptor, The Bronze Foundry Crew and the Board of Directors of the Monument Fund.

Also the Cactus Arm Patch on the statue is in real color, complements of the Foundry.

A complete computer database of the entire Monument Project was prepared and presented to the NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COLLEGE Library at Gainesville to preserve these historical records. They were also presented with copies of all the Casualty Reports and the Battle Death publication.

FUND BOARD MEMBERS

(THEY PUT OUR LEGACY TOGETHER)

B. Melton "Mel" Wright, President and Founding Member, 411 Co G, ASTP, BSME University of Texas 1949.

Lejeune "Rabbit" Wilson, VP, Founding Member, 328 Eng Co C, ASTP, BSPE University of Oklahoma 1948, MPE 1953

Robert N. "Bob" Powers, VP, Founding Member, Deceased 11 Nov 2005, 411 AT Co, ASTP, BSPE Oklahoma A & M University 1947

Marsha L. Powers, Daughter of "Bob" Powers.

Arthur M. "Art" Flynn, Architect, 409 Hq Co 3Bn, ASTP, Master of Architecture, University of Houston.1948.

Edwin "Ed" Mcghee, VP, Treas, 409 Co B, ASTP, BSME Texas A & M University 1949

John T. Poole, 409 Co C, ASTP, BSIE Texas A & M University 1948.

James E. "Jim" White, 409 Co B, ASTP, BSIE Texas A & M University 1949.

Kenneth Kaden, Former Mayor Gainesville TX.

George Grounds, Commander VFW Post 1922, Gainesville TX.



Finished Monument Slab



Cutting 10 ton Square Sunset Red Granite block into Pentagon Base At COLD SPRING GRANITE Quarry Marble Falls, TX, 22 Sept 2006



Polishing one of the five slabs for the BATTLE DEATHS At COLD SPRING GRANITE Quarry Marble Falls, TX, 22 Sept 2006



Head Casting at DEEP IN THE HEART ART FOUNDRY Bastrop, TX 21 Sept 2006



FORMER SERVERS ON THE BOARD:

Ramond J. Menuey, 409 Hq Co 3Bn., Julie Anne Krug, Daughter of Mel Wright, William L. Reed, VFW Post 1922, Gainesville TX., Marvin L. "Pete" Ralston, 409 Co C. (Deceased).

DISSOLUTION OF THE FUND

In accordance with the TEXAS WW II HISTORICAL MONUMENT FUND board meeting of 10 Nov 2008 it was agreed to dissolve the fund effective 31 Dec 2008. It was also decided to distribute the remaining funds to the following organizations: Gainesville VFW POST 1922. North Central Texas College. Gen Scholarship Fund & Library. City of Gainesville TX. Medal of Honor Host City Program. 103d INF DIV ASSN of WW II.

CITY OF GAINESVILLE RESPONSE



November 13, 2006

Mel Wright
9737 Warwana Rd
Houston, TX 77080

RE: 103d Infantry Division Maquette

Dear Mel,

The mayor humbly handed me the maquette Saturday evening after our Veteran's Day celebration. The craftsmanship of the piece is outstanding and you and your fellow infantrymen should be very proud of your accomplishments, not only on the battlefield but in immortalizing your efforts.

We will be displaying the maquette in the Gainesville City Hall's main entry. Our plans are to place it on a wooden pedestal and have it encased in a glass display. We will also have a nameplate to honor your contribution of the maquette.

We have been honored to work with you on this important project and look forward to your future visits to Gainesville.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Glenn Loch, Mayor

Handwritten signature of Mike Land, City Manager



L-R: Robert George and Mike Struchen of Cold Spring Granite Co. 26 Oct 2006



Installation of Sculpture A CALL TO DUTY 4 Nov 2006



They witnessed his placement on granite pentagon base on 4 Nov 2006
L-R, Rabbit Wilson, Edd Hayes, Cheryl Cash and Kenneth Kaden



Edd Hayes and his MASTERPIECE 4 Nov 2006

TEXAS WW II HISTORICAL MONUMENT FUND HISTORY page 6 of 9
MONUMENT DEDICATION

(103d VETERAN) DICK MUSSETT'S DEDICATION DESCRIPTION

What a glorious day near the Oklahoma border was November 11, 2006. Cool breeze, brilliant sunshine, enormous boisterous crowd, great speeches and comfortable chairs. All of these combined to make the afternoon an utter delight to the participants and local people alike.

The memorial statue stands on a knoll of high ground easily seen from US- I-35 and the Texas Travel Information Center. From the base of the statue looking west into the sun you can see the old silo water tower from our time and the rolling brown hills we romped over that summer of 1944. You could almost hear the crunch of demo mortar fire or was it only the wind buffeting your hearing aids.

Barbara and I arrived at the site several minutes prior to the 1500 hr. start time. When you arrive from the south you have to go all the way to the Red River for a cross over (under) to double back to the west side of the highway. The river was running wild and almost blood red. Kinda scary. I can vaguely remember one night bivouac the company made to the bank of the river. It was so dark you could have almost walked right into the stream without knowing it.

Even a half hour before start time there was huge crowd of people, cars and trucks already there. We walked up the hill from the parking lot to the memorial site. Even from a hundred yards away the looming hulk of the covered statue stood out on the horizon. It was covered with an olive drab parachute that came down all the way below the pedestal. It looked like a miniature version of the Matterhorn in Switzerland.

A 16 ft cement walkway extends from the edge of the parking lot up to the memorial.

There was a brass quintet of soldiers from Fort Sill playing military tunes just to the right of the statue. If you looked back to the west and down the hill toward the parking lot you could see a sea of people crowding together for the festivities.

At that moment the festivities began so I returned to my seat on the second row of chairs not 20 feet from the podium. By the way, when we first arrived we sat down and the wife of the mayor of Gainesville was seated beside us. She is a charming young woman and extolled the virtues of living in Gainesville.



Commerative Air Force Flyover, Corsair Pilot Ray Kinney
 Two AT-6's, Pilots Tom Martin and Carl Best



Tom Carson and Rabbit Wilson MC'S



Keynote Speaker The Honorable Jerry Patterson



US Representative The Honorable Michael Burgess



The Matterhorn



Silo on horizon is Camp Howze Water Tower



Rabbit awards Mel Serial No 1 Maquette



Band from Fort Sill Oklahoma Army Base



Mel donates his Maquette No 1 to Mayor Glenn Loch for City of Gainesville



Amazing Grace



Taps



Posting of Colors by Texas A & M Cadets



Rifle Salute by Gainesville VFW Post 1922



Edd Hayes and Marsha Powers unveiled *A CALL TO DUTY*



Fund board mbrs visit Granite Quarry Marble Falls TX. L to R: (our host), Clint Nobles, Mel Wright, Rabbit Wilson, Thelma Wright, John Poole, Aleah Poole, Jim White, Joyce Kleespies, Betty Flynn, Art Flynn, 22 Sept 2006



Mel and his idea



Pouring statue bronze Combat Boot at Foundry, Bastrop, TX, 21 Sept 2006



North bound US-I-35 exit, Complements Ric Williamson, TxDOT



Benediction by Judge Tom Stagg of 411 Co E and 411 Co G



South bound US-I-35 exit, Complements Ric Williamson, TxDOT

“Good Afternoon, Lord: We are back again. Some of your older adherents and their families are here this afternoon on this slender slice of Texas turf where, some sixty odd years ago, we were gathered together to learn more of the art of war.

This beautiful monument to those friends we lost in that war serves to remind us that life’s termination can come in many ways—some violent, some peaceful, some painful, some sublime.

Lord, teach us not to hold on to life too tightly. Teach us to take it as a gift. To enjoy it Cherish it while we have it, but to let go gracefully and thankfully when the time comes. The gift is great, but the Giver is greater still. You are the Giver and in You is the life that never ends.

And Lord, if you have time, please see to it that we all return home safely so that we may continue in our service to Thee.”



Lowering granite Battle Death Slab 21 October 2006



Talk about detail, Look at that Colored Arm Patch



Lowering granite base for statue 21 October 2006



5 Medal of Honor Recipients visit Monument with Rabbit and Mel 31 Mar 2007
 L to R: Rabbit Wilson, David McNerney, James Stone, Drew Dix,
 Don "Doc" Ballard, Mel Wright, Robert O'Malley



Bronze Plaques in place 26 October 2006



First Wreath laying , L to R: George Grounds, Ed McGhee, Kenneth Kaden,
 Mel Wright, Rabbit Wilson, Chan Rogers, Art Flynn. 11 Nov 2007

PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTRIBUTORS

Cheryl Cash & Staff, TxDOT
 Jim Evans
 Art Flynn
 Douglas Handel
 Edd Hayes
 Kathy Nobles

Jim Osborne
 Jerry Passmore
 Zack Sigler
 Jim White
 Mel Wright

103d INF DIV WW II

