



Reflections

FROM THE MEMORIAL

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'THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE' ESTIMATED 4,000 ATTEND DEDICATION OF PSU VETERANS MEMORIAL AMPHITHEATER

by Olive L. Sullivan, *Morning Sun Staff Writer*

Former Sen. Robert Dole may have been the keynote speaker for the dedication of the Pittsburg State University Veterans Memorial Amphitheater dedication on Memorial Day, but he made it clear he was there more as a veteran of World War II than as a politician.

Dole's remarks highlighted a "grand celebration of freedom," said Dr. James AuBuchon, PSU vice president for university advancement and one of those who spearheaded the memorial's creation.

The celebration was grand indeed, featuring "Rolling Thunder" from several area motorcycle clubs, military aircraft flyovers, a 21-gun artillery salute, and all the pomp and glory of two military bands.

AuBuchon estimated that more than 4,000 people - twice his original expectation - showed up for the afternoon celebration.

Following a welcome and introductions by AuBuchon, John Devitt, a Vietnam combat veteran, placed the "seat for the missing," a symbolic empty chair draped with the black and white POW/MIA flag, showing that all veterans were being recognized in the ceremony.

In his remarks, Dole often returned to that theme. The senator said the PSU memorial, and the national World War II memorial he helped dedicate in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, are important not just for those who died in combat, but for all those who served in the armed forces - and for many who didn't.

"We couldn't all wear the uniform," he said. "Someone had to stay home and preach and teach and keep the shops open, farm the crops."

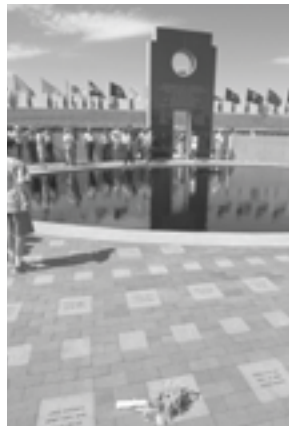
(see Dedication, pg. 4)



Sen. Robert Dole



Veterans enter the Amphitheater.



A view of the Ken & Debbie Brock Veterans Plaza.

NEW PAVER DISPLAY AREA BEING DEVELOPED AT MEMORIAL ENTRANCE

So many people have purchased engraved pavers in honor of veterans or veterans organizations at the PSU Veterans Memorial, that it has necessitated the development of a new display area for the granite stones.

The project director, Dr. Jim AuBuchon, reports that "we have sold more than 750 granite pavers since the dedication in May. What we are hearing time and time again, is that people who visit the Memorial are very impressed. They want their loved one to be a part of this very special tribute to veterans."

The plaza area surrounding the reflecting pool is now sold out in terms of space for new engraved pavers. A new area for memorial pavers is being created at the front entrance of the Memorial, just south of the entry rampart featuring the five seals of the military branches, AuBuchon said.

A special ceremony is being planned at the Memorial for Veterans Day, Nov. 11, at 9:30 a.m. Pittsburg-area veterans organizations are planning the event with university staff.

As part of that Veterans Day ceremony, engraved pavers purchased since the May 31 ceremony and prior to Sept. 17, 2004, will be dedicated. Pavers purchased after Sept. 17, will be dedicated at a future ceremony.

"The newest pavers will be displayed in the remaining spaces in the amphitheater plaza and then in the new display area at the main entrance of the Memorial, AuBuchon said.

An 8"x8" paver is \$125; a 12"x12" paver is \$250. All proceeds from the sale of engraved pavers go toward the care and maintenance of the Memorial.

The PSU Veterans Memorial Amphitheater is located at 1909 S. Rouse, across from the Kansas Technology Center in the southeast corner of Pittsburg.

To purchase a paver, call or stop by the PSU Office of Development, 106 Russ Hall, 620-235-4768.

PSU MEMORIAL ATTRACTS DIGNITARIES, THOUSANDS OF VISITORS

People come at all times of the day, seven days a week to see the PSU Veterans Memorial. Visitors have come from Crawford County and from nearby states and beyond to walk through the entry portals, see the reflecting pool and the many other impressive features of the Memorial.

Based on a systematic survey of cars at the Memorial site, Dr. James AuBuchon, Vice President for University Advancement, estimates that more than 30,000 have visited the Memorial since it opened in late May.

Those visiting the Memorial have included U.S. Congressmen Jim Ryun and Jerry Moran and former Kansas Gov. Bill Graves.

With the start of the new school year, area school groups are now beginning to visit the site. Dr. AuBuchon said he expects the flow of visitors to remain steady as more and more people hear about the Memorial.

Soon a computerized visitor counter will be installed in the entry portals in order to accurately count how many people are visiting the memorial. Maintaining records on the number of visitors to the site will be used in future grant applications.

The PSU Veterans Memorial is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The university has already obtained one grant from the Kansas Division of Tourism to support initial marketing of the Memorial. The university will continue to seek outside support in the form of gifts and grants to fund continued operation and maintenance of the site.

Former Kansas Governor Bill Graves toured the Memorial along with Joe de la Torre and President Bryant.



Congressman Jim Ryun and Dr. James AuBuchon



Congressman Jerry Moran and President Bryant

PSU STUDENTS PROVIDE GIFT IN SUPPORT OF MEMORIAL

The PSU Student Government Association has provided a \$10,000 gift to support the PSU Veterans Memorial Amphitheater. The gift was made following the dedication in May but will be used to help cover construction costs, said Dr. Jim AuBuchon, Vice President for University Advancement.

Angela Meyer, treasurer of the PSU Student Government Association, said the allocation was made from a fund created to support campus improvements.

Each year, the Student Government receives funds collected as part of fees that all students pay in conjunction with tuition. Leaders in SGA then allocate those fees to various student organizations and campus initiatives.

The student leaders decided, Meyer said, that it was only right that students participate

in this project.

“So many private donors stepped up to make this Memorial possible. We thought the students should also be involved. The moving wall and the entire Memorial are assets for the campus. We also thought it was important for students to acknowledge those who came before us and made it possible for us to enjoy the education and freedoms that we have today,” she said.

Dr. AuBuchon said it is most appropriate that current students have a role in building the Memorial.

“We appreciate the students support and we look forward to placing permanent recognition in the Memorial of this gift from students,” he said.

A PROMISE KEPT

by James M. AuBuchon
Vice President,
University Advancement
US Army 1963-1996

It has been about four months since the Veterans Memorial Amphitheater was officially opened and dedicated on Memorial Day. Over the four-day Memorial Day Weekend, Friday to Monday, an estimated 9,000 people visited the site, including approximately 4,000 attending the ceremony itself.

THE RESPONSE HAS BEEN OVERWHELMING...

During the nearly one year the memorial was under construction, hundreds of people would drive by the construction site on South Rouse Street never fully comprehending what was taking place. They knew it was the Veterans Memorial Amphitheater because the project sign said so. But, the full power, emotion, and significance of the place was not to be fully understood until the grand dedication ceremony.

The response to the memorial has been a bit overwhelming. With over 30,000 visitors to the site since it was opened, this writer regularly receives phone calls, emails, notes and personal comments from those who share the “special place” idea. In fact, since the dedication, the original space for the engraved memorial paving stones is now sold out. This happened much sooner than expected.

PHASE I EXPANSION...

In response to the interest expressed for the memorial paving stones, a new area will be opened soon that will allow for additional stones. Elsewhere in this newsletter are the details of the expansion plan.

VETERANS DAY CEREMONIES...

Also in the newsletter is an outline of plans for the next grand ceremony at the memorial. Starting Sunday, November 7, and culminating on Thursday,

(see Reflections, pg. 4)

PITTSBURG COUPLE DONATE STATE FLAGS FOR MEMORIAL

As part of the dedication of the PSU Veterans Memorial in May, the flags of the 50 U.S. states were on display. The Friends of Crawford State Park loaned the state flags to the university for the dedication. Cliff and Judy Hix of Pittsburg were so not so happy to see the flags taken down following the ceremony, so according to Judy, she and her husband volunteered to fund the permanent display of state flags on the north berm of the Memorial.



Cliff and Judy Hix have provided two sets of state flags and a set of permanent flag poles for displaying the flags on the north berm. Judy indicated that they plan to provide for the flag display indefinitely which means they will purchase replacement state flags or poles as needed.

Hix said she considers the Memorial to be an impressive addition to the community. "We love being a part of the Memorial, even if it is in some small way," Hix said.

Dr. James AuBuchon, Vice President for University Advancement, said the university was very pleased to learn of the Hix support for the Memorial.

"People enjoy many aspects of the Memorial, including the state flag display. All the elements of the Memorial combine to make a strong first impression. We appreciate the support from Cliff and Judy Hix that have made the state flag display a permanent part of the Memorial," he said.

AREA VETERANS, UNIVERSITY PLAN TWO SPECIAL CEREMONIES IN CONJUNCTION WITH VETERANS DAY

Area veterans groups are working with PSU staff to plan two ceremonies at the PSU Veterans Memorial just prior to or on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2004.

Leading up to Veterans Day, veterans, university and community volunteers plan to read the names of the 58,228 individuals who lost their lives or were missing in action in Vietnam, according to Dr. James AuBuchon, PSU Vice President for University Advancement.

The reading of the names, A Ceremony of Remembrance, will begin at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 7 in the Brock Family Memorial Plaza of the Amphitheater. Volunteers from the university, community and region will read names on Sunday until midnight, and then on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 6 a.m. to midnight. The reading of the names will conclude Thursday morning by approximately 9 a.m.

"When they read the names at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C., it took 65 hours. It will be quite an undertaking to do this in Pittsburg but we think it will be memorable. We will be seeking the help of many volunteers," AuBuchon said.

The university will be seeking the assistance of approximately 300 volunteers to read the names. Each volunteer will be asked to read 250 names during 15-minute time slot.

Pittsburg-area veterans organizations are involved in planning a 9:30 a.m. ceremony on Nov. 11, to honor all veterans. The ceremony will feature patriotic music, presentation of the colors and remarks by various officials. In addition, all engraved granite pavers installed at the Memorial since the dedication on Memorial Day 2004, will be dedicated.

Only those granite pavers purchased prior to Sept. 17, 2004 will be ready for the Veterans Day ceremony. Pavers purchased after that date will be dedicated at a future ceremony.

The public is invited to stop by anytime during the reading of the names and they are encouraged to attend the Veterans Day ceremony on Nov. 11 at 9:30 a.m.

To learn more about volunteering for the reading of the names for those lost in Vietnam, call the PSU Office of University Advancement, 620-235-4762.



PSU VETERANS MEMORIAL SITE OF SEK TRIBUTE TO PRESIDENT REAGAN

As people gathered nationally for a national of mourning to pay their last respects to President Ronald Reagan, so too did residents of the Pittsburg area. A short, moving ceremony was held at the PSU Veterans Memorial Amphitheater in tribute to President Reagan on June 11, 2004. University Archivist Randy Roberts presented a short eulogy to this country's 40th president. Those attending the ceremony were invited to sign a book of condolences, which was then forwarded to Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, Calif.

Dedication *(from pg. 1)*

Dole praised the families of military veterans as well, especially those who lost their loved ones in the service of our nation.

He pointed out that young people today often don't have the sense of a nation pulling together that characterized World War II, when everybody faced rationing and grew victory gardens. Compared to the current war in Iraq, he said, the average American doesn't do much sacrificing in support of the military.

He urged the audience to remember veterans not just on Memorial Day, pointing out that there are hundreds of veterans languishing in nursing homes and veterans hospitals who would love a visit, and would love to hear the five simple words, "Thank you for your service."

"That's what today is all about," he said.

In a rare moment, Dole talked about his own war experiences. A second lieutenant, he was trying to rescue his radio officer when shrapnel ripped into his arm and back, nearly killing him. He was rescued by a fellow soldier, but spent four years struggling to recover from his wounds.

That moment changed his life and led him to politics, where he has achieved much in a different kind of service.

He said his doctor had lost a brother in WW II, and treated him - and his mother's varicose veins - at no charge because he felt he owed it to the nation. He also pointed out that the largest single donation to the WW II memorial in Washington was from an Armenian-American with no military experience who felt he should pay back the country for his freedoms.

"He said, 'I'm not a veteran, I wasn't totally poor when I came to this country, but if it hadn't been for events in WW II, I wouldn't have been able to send anything.' He felt he owed it to America," Dole said.

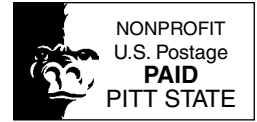
The senator said the goal of success is to be able to look back and say, "I made a difference," and then to reach down the ladder and help someone else to the top.

He also honored the Vietnam veterans, present in a large group to celebrate the presence at PSU of the half scale replica of the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C.

Dole said the veterans weren't always honored when they returned home to a country opposed to the war, and he talked about veterans of Korea, "the forgotten war."

Dr. C.J. Chris Johnson, retired PSU biology professor and WW II veteran, gave the veteran's response to Dole's speech, repeating Dole's assertion that Memorial Day honors not just those veterans who survive, but those who fell on foreign shores or sleep beneath the waves, those who

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Reflections *(from pg. 2)*

November 11, will be two ceremonies, separate yet related. A Ceremony of Remembrance will begin November 7, and a more traditional Veterans Day program on November 11 will honor the duty, service, and sacrifice of those who served.

LOOKING AHEAD...

As we look ahead, we will re-install the 50 state flags with new, more-sturdy poles courtesy of Cliff and Judy Hix; we will construct the expanded area for the additional pavers; and we will launch a new "Friends of the Memorial" support group.

The "Friends of the Memorial" will be intended to provide on-going support for programming, up-keep and maintenance, and future improvements.

OUR SINCERE THANKS...

The many donors and friends who have supported this project from its inception deserve special thanks and appreciation. In many cases, it required a "leap of faith" because what was being promised was difficult to completely understand. I trust that what was delivered is worthy of your generosity. I believe it has been. All veterans and Pittsburg State University offer you our thanks.

worked in factories at home, and the military personnel behind the lines who supported the troops on the front.

"Today's dedication is about veterans and about our freedom," he said. "Without that additional support, we could not celebrate by conducting Memorial Day dedications today or any other day," he said.

The ceremony also included brief remarks from PSU President Tom Bryant, and a special message from Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, presented by David Taylor, the chairman of the Governor's Military Advisory Board.

She wrote, "Our world is a dangerous place today," and Sebelius pointed out that more than 4,000 Kansans are serving today in Iraq and Afghanistan, fighting for freedom.

Bryant pointed out the thing that makes the PSU memorial unique is that it is not a memorial to just one war, battle or branch of service.

"It is so much more than that," he said. "Today we honor the spirit of duty and sacrifice that these veterans represent."

Following a ribbon cutting that officially opened the memorial, veterans were invited to enter the memorial first. Vietnam vets entered from the west rampart, where they were guided by Girl Scouts to the replica Wall. All other veterans entered at the east rampart and were assisted by area Boy Scouts, who led them through the various features of the amphitheater.

The ceremony ended with a performance of "Taps" and a musical postlude by the 312th Army Band.