

The History of Hanover's "Veterans Memorial Grounds" at Codorus State Park

The "Veterans Memorial Grounds" at Codorus State Park is a place where families can plant trees in honor and remembrance of deceased veterans. This memorial grew out of a request by the family of Laverne Smith, a Warrant Officer and veteran of the Viet Nam War, who was killed in an automobile accident in June of 2000. After Laverne's death, his family wanted to honor his service to our country by planting a tree in his name. Like many of the local veterans, Laverne was a member of the American Legion, AMVETS and the VFW. The family went to the VFW, where Laverne had just been elected Commander for the upcoming year, and spoke to Laverne's close friend Ken Riley, another Viet Nam veteran. Ken told them that, unfortunately, there was no place in the Hanover area to honor veterans in that manner. However, Ken said he would talk to the AVC (Allied Veterans Council), to see what, if anything could be done. The AVC created a committee to investigate any options. This committee included the commanders from each of the local veterans' organizations, Laverne's family, and Ken Riley, who served as chairman.

Through Ken's efforts, the committee sent an e-mail to the office of then Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, who was also a Viet Nam veteran and sympathetic to issues concerning veterans. Governor Ridge was enthusiastic about this idea and set aside a portion of Codorus State Park to be designated as grounds for a Memorial for veterans. Governor Ridge suggested that the committee contact Ed Kautz, the Superintendent at Codorus State Park, to pursue this idea and ensure compliance with all Park Service guidelines.

By that time, the initial committee had grown to include a number of volunteers with interest in this project. With Ken Riley coordinating its efforts, and Randy Nehr's assistance, this group held several meetings with Ed Kautz to discuss the guidelines that had to be fol-

lowed. By early fall of 2000 the committee adopted a very simple design for the Memorial and the Park Service approved it. Ed Kautz also provided a list of native trees that the Park Service approved. Each family can pick a tree from this list to be planted at the memorial in honor of a deceased veteran.

Throughout the fall and winter months of 2000, the committee held fund-raisers and volunteers canvassed the Hanover area, soliciting donations of money and building materials. Construction of the Memorial started in the late spring of 2001 and ended late that summer. The construction was completed entirely by volunteers and Park employees. A core group of professional excavators, masons and carpenters, who also donated their time, helped and directed the other volunteers. From the time the planning for the Memorial started, until the construction was completed, over 20 families submitted requests for trees to be planted in honor of deceased Veterans.

The Dedication Ceremonies for the Memorial and the inaugural tree planting took place on Saturday, September 15, 2001, with Senator Mike Waugh as the keynote speaker. Governor Ridge had committed to be present for the dedication, but he was called to Washington earlier that week, to take charge of the newly created Department of Homeland Security. Each year since the dedication of the Memorial, the committee has held a service and tree planting for families who submitted requests for trees during that year. Since the dedication of the Memorial in 2001, and including all ceremonies that have been conducted through the fall of 2010, over 130 veterans have been honored with the planting of a tree in each veteran's name. This year marks the celebration of the 11 Year Anniversary of the "Veterans Memorial Grounds" at Codorus State Park.

Since the completion of the Memorial, the employees at Codorus State Park, The Friends of Codorus and a small group of volunteers continue with the maintenance of the trees and the grounds around the Memorial.

Veteran's to be honored November 10, 2012

Charles Henry Muller	Red Bud
Mark Allen Redmon	White Pine
John Carroll Smith	Sugar Maple
Cameron Stambaugh	Red Oak
Sterling Cyrell Yost	Sugar Maple

If anyone is interested in planting a tree in honor of a deceased veteran a form is available at the main office of Codorus Park. Also, families and friends can call Randy Nehr at 717-632-1152.

If anyone wishes to help in the support and maintenance of the Memorial, donations can be sent to Beverley Nehr, 417 Main St., McSherrystown PA, 17344. Volunteers are also always welcome. You can become involved by contacting Randy Nehr at the phone number listed above or inquiring at the office in Codorus State Park.

Any monument/flowers must be placed in the mulch at the base of the trees and will be the exclusive responsibility of the family.



**November 10, 2012, 11:00 a.m.
Veterans Memorial Grounds
at Codorus State Park**

Raising of the Colors
Pleasant Hill Boy Scout Troop 118

Opening Prayer
Beverly Nehr

Welcome
Brian Smith

Speaker
Sgt. Anthony Patelunas.

Flag Retirement Ceremony
Planting of the Trees
Retirement of the Colors