



Veterans and First Responders Memorial at Fairfield Glade 2025 Annual Report

Overview

Born from a dream in 2018, the Veterans and First Responders Memorial at Fairfield Glade was officially unveiled with the dedication of its Flag Plaza at Robin Hood Park on November 15, 2025, four years after the groundbreaking took place on November 11, 2021. The dedication ceremony was a profound event, with nearly 300 people in attendance to witness the inaugural flag raising. These flags are powerful symbols, representing our nation, state, and local government, as well as the military services and first responders who serve our community and country so tirelessly.

The design of the Flag Plaza was intentionally crafted to honor not just the institutions, but the *individuals* who have served. This tribute is visualized by over 1,200 engraved pavers, each naming a person who served in the military, as a first responder, or both. To emphasize the diverse origins of our residents and visitors, the Memorial features the flags and seals of all 50 U.S. states. Special features enhance the site's solemn purpose: a recognition of the 34 Tennessee recipients of the Medal of Honor—our nation's highest recognition for valor—a tribute to the victims of the September 11th attacks, and a display of the official seals for our military services and first responder groups.

While designing the Memorial presented a challenge, it was paramount to create a structure that permanently displays our pride in those who have served and in the institutions that define our nation. Through a rigorous focus on superior workmanship and materials, we aimed to build a Memorial that fulfills our core mission: to **remember** those who have served, to **honor** their service and memory, and to **inspire** future generations to serve our nation. We are confident that these goals have been achieved.

2025 Highlights

Construction: The year began with most of the foundation work completed enabling our contractors to focus on the finishing touches including:

- Installation of flag poles and lighting.
- Placement of engraved pavers.
- Completion of the Crab Orchard stonework for the seat and display walls complete with custom stone sign work and text narratives.
- Attachment of custom bronze plaques to the display walls and the Military and First Responder seals to the center display wall.
- Placement of temporary stone and mulch landscaping pending final construction.



Financial: The Board of Directors is committed to the prudent management of all contributions. As a total volunteer effort and we pay no salaries or consulting fees. We have also made every effort to be cautious in how we award construction funds, learning through this process how to improve our performance and our results.

A summary of our 2025 finances follows:

- **Cash Balance:** Started the year with \$540,428, and ended with \$261,731.
- **Expenses:** Total expenses were \$379,045 of which \$368,884 was dedicated to construction.
- **Funding:** The largest share of these construction costs was covered by a \$250,000 grant from the State of Tennessee Department of Veterans Services as appropriated by the 2024 Tennessee General Assembly.
- **Total Cost:** Total Flag Plaza construction costs through 2025 were \$655,142. While additional costs will occur in 2026, the total project cost is projected to remain under \$700,000.

Looking Ahead: 2026

Flag Plaza: While the Flag Plaza is nearly complete, we will make several adjustments and additions, including:

- **Fountain:** Adding a Fountain in Lake Catherine aligned with the military flag circle.
- **Lighting:** Adjusting display wall lighting to reduce glare. The American Flag will remain lit in accordance with national protocol. All the other lights will turn off at 7:30 PM except in the summer months when natural light renders them unnecessary.
- **Pavers:** Installations will occur at least twice in 2026 (late spring and early fall). However, if we have 50 or more pavers ready at any time, we will install them immediately
- **Sealing:** Pavers will be permanently sealed and placed. This process was deferred in 2025 to observe the effects of winter weather.
- **Landscaping:** Limited landscaping will occur around the Flag Plaza, as long as it will not be damaged by ongoing construction.

Memorial Garden (Phase II): Construction on Phase II will begin in early Spring. The tentative plan calls for a pavilion, Crab Orchard stone display walls with bronze artwork, fencing, and various landscape features. The Board is currently working with our architect to finalize the design. We will host a Town Hall meeting in March to show the plans and solicit community feedback.



Budget: Once the Phase II plan is adopted, we will finalize the budget based upon design features, materials and complexity. We will continue to act as our own general contractor to maintain high standards at a reasonable cost

Fundraising and Sponsorships: Following the budget approval, we will launch a fundraising campaign. As with the Flag Plaza, we will seek contributions from individuals, businesses, and civic organizations. Donors will continue to be recognized on our website. We will also feature a display in the Memorial Garden highlighting our Founders 200 Club. In addition, we will offer opportunities for individuals or organizations to sponsor specific bronze display. More information will be provided at the March Town Hall.

Schedule: We anticipate that site preparation and initial construction for Phase II will be well underway this year, with completion scheduled for 2027

Appreciation: Finally, I want to express my appreciation to the Board of Directors for their tireless work in creating this Memorial. Their significant contributions have been invaluable. I'd like to acknowledge:

- Everett Bolin
- Oliver Dossmann
- Alan Joseph
- Dana Kendall
- Rick Leonard
- Colleen Mall
- Kirk McLaughlin
- Eric Ritzman
- Kate Self
- Sean Stephens
- Bryan Vaughn

I want to especially recognize the outstanding efforts of two of these Directors, **Dana Kendall** and **Alan Joseph**. As our Treasurer, Dana has maintained meticulous records, ensuring we remain in compliance with all state and federal regulations, and upholding the high administrative standards our community expects. Alan, our paver program sales and marketing coordinator, has likewise devoted immense energy to successfully implementing the program and ensuring our veterans and first responders are properly recognized. Their combined commitment has been instrumental to our successful operation, and we have all benefited greatly from their service.

And on behalf of this Board of Directors, we want to express our appreciation to our community for your encouragement, patience and support. We are confident that upon completion, this Memorial will be a source of pride for Fairfield Glade, Cumberland County, and Tennessee. It is our sincere hope that it will serve as a lasting tribute, honoring the men and women who have served our nation in a meaningful and significant manner. We will always remain grateful to our veterans and first responders.

Thank you.

**Phil Smith, President
Veterans and First Responders
Memorial at Fairfield Glade.**

For More Information on how to order a paver, make a donation or to sign up for email updates, please visit our website at: **vfrmemorial.com**