

## The Guardians

Throughout mankind's history, when the need arose, individuals have stepped forward to safeguard objectives that warriors have obtained. Their organizations have been called various names and have assumed vastly different structures, but they served a common purpose – they are Guardians!

In 2011, a group of Sky Soldiers stepped forward and formed the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation Spartan Club. Their purpose was to establish an endowment fund to maintain the 173d Airborne Memorial in a manner befitting the heritage and traditions of the 173d Airborne Brigade. Ultimately 226 individuals or organizations stepped forward to meet the challenge.

The Club objective was to raise \$300,000. The goal was achieved in eight years with donations exceeding \$350,000 and unfinished pledges still being completed.

The Memorial was dedicated in 2010. A decade of experience has taught the Foundation Board of Directors that the average cost to maintain the Memorial and sustain its operations is approximately \$22,000.00 per year.

A major cost over the years has been adding new information to the granite panels depicting Brigade deployments, the names of fallen warriors, as well as names of those receiving the Nation's highest honors. Funds are expended for ceremonies at the Memorial and annual commemorations on site (including wreathes and physical support) that are considered necessary in terms of our commitment to never forget the fallen.

The Memorial Foundation has made many upgrades to the physical structure and the large footprint on which it sits. This includes:

- Replacing trees, foliage, and flowers.
- Replacing all the lights in the base of the memorial as well as those surrounding the structure necessitated by moisture seepage.
- Repairing cracks in the floor of the Memorial and the sidewalks leading up to the Memorial.
- Periodic repainting the floor of the Memorial.
- Annual Cleaning of the Memorial.

While none of the members of the Memorial Foundation receive any salary, the Foundation has annual administrative costs that include but are not limited to:

- Maintaining and updating the Foundation's website.
- Insurance on the physical structure of the Memorial.
- State registration, federal and state reporting requirements, office supplies and postage
- Occasional limited travel, and representations to the Brigade's active duty units require administrative funds.
- Financial investment management fees.

The Memorial Foundation has established an interest-bearing investment program that serves to offset some annual expenditures while providing a cash reserve capable of maintaining the structure. This reserve needs to be maintained and grown to keep pace with inflation.

The Spartans have secured and maintained the Memorial, but many have gone to their final rewards. It is now time for Guardians to step up and carry on.

The Memorial Foundation is asking for volunteers to step forward and become Memorial Foundation Guardians, making annual financial pledges of \$50.00 or more. The application can be printed from the donate button or our Facebook page.

We need your support to maintain our world class Memorial and honor our fallen brothers. They trained as paratroopers; they fought as paratroopers; they died as paratroopers. We owe them this.