

News and stories

Gold Star family aiming to install monument to honor all

Jan 30 2018

Whitney Vickers | [Fairborn Daily Herald](#)

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE — Jim and Leslie Groves wear orange shirts decorated with an American flag. The white stars are against a grey background and names of certain men and women make up the stripes.

Jim explained that while he and Leslie were exploring Carillon Park one day, someone approached them and asked how they could get one.

“I said ‘they’re very expensive,’” he said. “She said ‘how expensive?’”

So he explained that every name on the shirt is a Wounded Warrior or gave the ultimate sacrifice — Gold Stars.

“Our son is there,” Jim said, pointing to his chest, where it says James Edison Groves III.

Next to his name, a gold star.

James Edison Groves III, a helicopter pilot, was on a check ride alongside a relatively new pilot when the fuel pickup unit failed. He

was killed March 16, 2013 in Afghanistan.

“They were doing a live fire,” Jim said. “They made their first run and were coming back around for a second run. No fuel.”

James was six months short of coming home and a year and a half away from retirement. He was 37.

“Our lives changed,” Jim said. “I think our world ended, or at least that’s what we felt at the time. That first year was a blur, we were kind of lost.”

James left behind a wife and two sons. And since then, Jim and Leslie have been labeled Gold Star parents.

They are aiming to have a Gold Star monument erected in the Memorial Garden at the National Museum of the United States Air Force that will not only honor their son, but all Gold Star families. Typically, Gold Star monuments honor just one individual. However, Jim and Leslie emphasized that the monument is aimed at honoring all — all wars and branches.

“Those that fought and died, regardless of what war, they were Gold Stars,” Jim said. “They were somebody’s brother, father, grandfather, uncle and someone’s mom, aunt, grandmother. That’s why the monument has no branch of service.”

On the front of the monument is a cut-out of a soldier as well as panels expressing appreciation of Gold Star families. The back of the monument honors homeland, family, patriot, sacrifice and family. The Groves’s need to raise \$40,000 in order to complete the mission. The groundbreaking ceremony for the monument took place in the September 2017 and welcomed 21 Gold Star families to the event.

The couple is aiming to host a ceremony in April that will reveal the monument to the community. However, all funds must be raised before the project can be complete. The money would go toward the cement work, preparation of the site, transportation of the

monument and finally, the installation.

“For one thing, it gives the Gold Star families a place that they can go,” Leslie said, adding that James is buried in Arlington. “You don’t get there for Memorial Day or Veterans Day and all the holidays, whereas having it here just makes it so we can feel there is part of him here.”

They’ve been fundraising since mid-2017 and have been getting by with the help of their friend, Hershel “Woody” Williams, a World War II veteran who created the Gold Star monument and is aiming to see one erected in all 50 states.

To donate funds, individuals can visit www.hwwmohfoundation.org.dayton-oh.html. They can also mail checks to 12123 Shelbyville Road Ste. 100 Louisville, Ky 40243.

“A great person once said ‘a great nation is not great because of the men and women it produces but its greatness comes from the men and women that it remembers and honors.’” Jim said, quoting John F. Kennedy. “As Gold Star parents, we know this country was founded on one folded flag at a time and that’s what it’s all about. This honors the vets who gave their lives.”

SHARE THIS PAGE!



FOLLOW US



Email*