

News and stories

Gold Star Families Monument Project Breaks Ground

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Hank Hayes | [Times News](#)

KINGSPORT — Brenda Shelton got to talk about her lost baby on Monday.

Shelton, a Gold Star mom, shared the story of her late son Ben White during a ceremonial groundbreaking for the planned Gold Star Families Monument to be erected next to the Kingsport Veterans Memorial.

The monument is for family members of military members who have sacrifice their lives for U.S. freedom.

White, a U.S. Air Force senior airman, was killed in action in Afghanistan on June 9, 2010, during a rescue mission.

“They completed the mission, but the helicopter my son and the rest of the men were on was shot down,” Shelton shared with a small gathering. “Five of the seven crew members lost their lives. Ben was my baby. He was full of life. He loved God and his country.

“One of the greatest fears to me or any mother ... is they will be forgotten by the rest of the world. To hear their name continue to be mentioned is the greatest gift you could give to a family member who has lost a loved one.”

The idea for the Kingsport monument, scheduled to be the second one in Tennessee, was hatched during a Kingsport Chamber of Commerce and Leadership Kingsport Medal of Honor Luncheon held last September.