

News and stories

Soldier Spring Park honors Parker County's veterans

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Christin Coyne | [Weatherford Democrat](#)

Work on the Veterans Memorial at Soldier Spring Park is nearing completion and two special ceremonies are planned in coming weeks.

What had been at one time a city dump now boasts a spacious memorial to the thousands of Parker County veterans.

The memorial includes a prayer garden and soldier's battlefield cross fountain memorializing Parker County's fallen, a veteran's walk of honor carrying veteran names, flags representing the military branches and those killed in action, a pavilion, sidewalks and, soon, an obelisk with etchings honoring each branch of the military and a monument to Parker County's gold star families.

The American Legion, VFW, the city and Parker County Gold Star Families have worked together to make the dream come true.

"We're getting toward the end," Ron Chandler, who's been on the committee for the project for nearly seven years, said.

The original site for a proposed veterans memorial was originally selected on Eureka Street where the old American Legion building previously stood.

But when they determined it wasn't the right site and Weatherford offered the land if the American Legion and VFW would raise the funds.

The park is said to have been the site where Confederate soldiers camped in the 1860s because of the natural spring and was used for a reunion in 1890.

The location has also been used for Chataqua programs, circuses, town gatherings, reunions, a public hanging in 1908, a city dump between 1934 and 1953 before becoming a park in 1973.

Visitors strolled through the park Wednesday afternoon, stopping to read recently placed plaques about several U.S. wars.

Weatherford residents Brittney Hohenbrink, whose grandfather served during World War II, and Judy Stults said they'd been at Shep's Place during a recent fundraiser for the memorial and decided to check it out.

Russell Parsley said he lives nearby and sometimes takes a walk through the area.

He praised the work that's been done to the area.

"I think they've done great with it," Parsley said. "I remember what it looked like before and now they've actually started to do something with it. I like the memorial down there. I'll be glad when they finish it up."

Parsley said he served 23 years in the Marine Corps, from Vietnam in 1969 to Desert Storm in 1992, and likes to come sit sometimes.

"It's just a nice peaceful place," Parsley said.

A dedication of the Veterans Memorial is scheduled for 9 a.m. June 2.

American Legion State Commander John Hince is expected to be the keynote speaker.

Local leaders, including Parker County Judge Mark Riley, Weatherford Mayor Craig Swancy, and Aledo Mayor Kit Marshall, are expected to be in attendance, as well, Chandler said.

Parker County Gold Star Families is also planning a ceremony, as well, which will be held at 4 p.m. May 25.

A monument to Parker County's fallen designed by medal of honor recipient Hershel Woody Williams, who fought in the Battle of Iwo Jima, will be dedicated.

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