

Rhode Island Gold Star Families Memorial Monument

After an enormous amount of time planning, the groundbreaking ceremony for the RI Gold Star Families Memorial Monument took place on October 20, 2019.

The land was donated for this project by RI Veterans Affairs office in partnership with the RI Gold Star Families, Veterans Memorial Cemetery and the Hershel Woody Williams Medal of Honor Foundation. The Monument will be placed on humble ground in a prominent location near the entrance of the Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Exeter, RI and will provide a place of permanence for Gold Star Families to gather and reflect as they need.

Gold Star mother of Sergeant Brian St. Germain (Lynn St. Germain-Lundh) said, "This monument gives us the opportunity to educate the public on what a Gold Star Family is along with being able to give our loved ones and those who came before and after them the proper recognition for all that they sacrificed."

The Monument belongs to the families and their fallen Loved Ones. It is intended to achieve the following goals:

- Demonstrate to Gold Star Families that their community cares for them and appreciates their sacrifice while also honoring the ultimate sacrifice paid by their Loved Ones
- Establish local Gold Star Family communities and strengthen the community within itself through Gold Star Family outreach events associated with each monument location
- Educate the general public about Gold Star Families' enduring sacrifices and the ultimate sacrifice made by their Loved Ones

Gold Star Families Memorial Monuments are a two-sided tribute made of black granite. One side bears the words: Gold Star Families Memorial Monument, a tribute to Gold Star Families and Relatives who sacrificed a Loved One for our Freedom. The other side tells a story through the four granite panels: Homeland, Family, Patriot, and Sacrifice. The scenes on each panel are a reflection of each community's Gold Star Families and their fallen Heroes. At the center of this tribute is a silhouette of the Loved One who paid ultimate sacrifice in the name of Freedom.

Fundraising and Dedication for the Monument

The fundraising for the building of the RI monument, as well as the October 2020 dedication ceremony, have been postponed until 2021 due to COVID-19. The Gold Star Family team had been working diligently with several RI businesses and the Secretary of State on a major fundraising campaign that was to be launched in April 2020. Understandably, the RI Gold Star Family team agreed to postpone the fundraising and the dedication until 2021.

The Rhode Island community is excited to partner with the Gold Star Families to raise the funds to build this Monument together. This virus delay will not prevent them from meeting their mission in 2021. PFC Kyle Coutu's Aunt, Jenn Durkin, said, "This monument will be a visible reminder and marker, not only for my loved one, but for all the young men and women beside him who were taken from us too soon. It will also serve as a visible reminder to the Rhode Island community about the sacrifices they all made and to remember the very proud families who continue to struggle every day with their absence."

Any questions, please email rigoldstarmemorial@gmail.com.