

News and stories

Local Gold Star family speaks about new memorial monument

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SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (WRSP) — A new memorial to honor fallen service members and their families will soon have a place at Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield. On Monday, a groundbreaking was held for the future Gold Star Families Memorial Monument.

The future memorial monument will stand inside Oak Ridge and is the first one to be built in the state of Illinois.

Gold Star families said they want their fallen soldiers to be remembered by the community.

Margaret Palmatier is a local Gold Star mother. "I'm trying to smile because it's very hard to talk about him sometimes," she said.

Margaret and David Palmatier's only child, U.S. Army Corporal Jacob Palmatier, was killed in Iraq at just 29 years of age.

"I had to go tell his mother. That was the hardest thing I ever had to do," said David Palmatier, a local Gold Star father.

Corporal Jacob Palmatier, a Springfield native, is just one fallen soldier being honored by the Gold Star Families Memorial

Monument in Springfield. David recalled, "There was not a lot of recognition of what was going on with Gold Star mothers here in town. People need to know about it."

"Of course our life drastically changed and there's not a day - a minute - that goes by that we don't wish he was here, but nobody can take our memories," Margaret said.

The future monument is being spearheaded and supported by the Hershel Woody Williams Medal of Honor Foundation. Christine Hansley, the Illinois Project Chair of the Gold Star Monument said, "Someplace where they could say this was in honor of the sacrifice that the families gave."

It's to recognize all of the local Gold Star families like the Palmatiers. "I just think no parent should have to bury their child," Margaret said through her tears. "But he's in our hearts to stay and we'll see him again someday in heaven."

It's no coincidence the monument will be built in former President Abraham Lincoln's hometown. Denise Williams, a Gold Star mother and President of the Department of Illinois American Gold Star Mothers said, "Abraham Lincoln is the one who had said that it is - we are to remember the veteran and we are to remember his widow and child."

The memorial will be about 15 feet wide and six feet tall at its highest point.

A date for construction to start has not been decided as the organization needs to raise about \$100,000 to build the monument.