

News and stories

Effort underway to recognize Miss. Gold Star families

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Hugh Keeton | [WLOX.com](http://wlox.com)

BILOXI, MS (WLOX) - With more than 1,100 family members of fallen service men and women living in Mississippi, an effort is underway to recognize and honor Gold Star families.

Before losing his life in 2014 during a training mission in Fort Gordon, Ga., 2nd Lt. Anthony Scardino served two tours in Afghanistan. Leonard and Sandra Scardino are proud to tell their son's story.

"I'm standing for him, I'm standing for my wife, and I'm standing for any other family that has had a person that has died in service of our country," Leonard said.

Knowing the pain of what it means to be a Gold Star family, Scardino is raising money for Gold Star Monuments to be built in Mississippi.

"This is a reminder of what the cost is," Scardino said. "It's not just soldier, it's the family of the soldiers that have to pay the ultimate price."

Groundbreaking for the first monument to be built at Camp Shelby

was held earlier in 2017. Wednesday at the V.F.W in Biloxi, Scardino explained why such monuments are needed.

"We want to have a place where they can go to and just take a moment and remember their loved ones," Scardino said.

Julia Encalade is friends with a family that lost a loved one in Vietnam. She helped organize a \$1,000 donation to the monument effort from the Mississippi Association of County Veteran Service Officers.

"To know and have that family in my mind, to know that they have a place to go to put their hand on the wall as he spoke of is very important and it means a lot," Encalade said.

Along with the monument at Camp Shelby, Scardino is working to build four other monuments around the state. The planned locations for the Gold Star Monuments are Camp Shelby, Biloxi/Gulfport, Kilmichael Veterans Cemetery, Tupelo and Southaven.

To find out more about the nationwide effort to build Gold Star Monument, email Leonard Scardino at .