

In July of 2011 Joshua Tyler Baillargeon, a Life Scout with Troop 21 in Holden, began to ponder what he was going to accomplish for his Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project. After several months of pondering over a multitude of ideas, he told me that he had been doing some research and would like to accomplish a veterans memorial for our town that didn't currently have one. In addition to the veterans memorial, Joshua said that he would also like to incorporate a freedom garden off to one side of the memorial, to remember those veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms.

Therefore, in October 2011, Joshua attended an Eddington Town Council meeting and presented the idea to Russell Smith, the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen. After hearing Joshua's proposal, the town manager, to include all members of the board were overwhelmingly in favor of Joshua pursuing this worthy project. From this point, Joshua spent countless hours calling, contacting and visiting business to solicit donations of materials, working out the details on various fundraising activities, and doing research on the specific design he would use for the memorial. Eventually, Joshua decided on a design that was totally unique to this one project. He gathered ideas from numerous memorials that he had viewed both on-line and had visited, and ultimately, the design, to include the sayings he chose is as follows:

The design consists of a 40' circular cement pad with a 30' five pointed raised concrete star in its center. The star is raised 6" higher than that of the circular pad, so it has an eye-catching appearance from a distance. At each of the three upper points of the star are three flag poles, containing the American flag in the center (35' tall), the State of Maine flag (30' tall) to its left and the POW/MIA flag (30' tall) to its right. Each flag pole has its own lighting affixed to the pole. In the center of the cement star sits a 13' long by 1' high granite base, with three separate granite pieces for the memorial. The center piece is 6' high in the center and slopes off to each side like the peak of a house. It also contains the inscription "Eddington Veterans Memorial: To honor all those who served to protect our freedom, may they never be forgotten. The two outer pieces are 4.5' at the inner peak and slope to the outside, reaching a height of 3'. The piece on the left has three of the US military insignia's inscribed, to include a quote from Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain of the 20th Maine that states "We are an army out to set other men free. America should be free ground, all of it, from here to the Pacific ocean...What we're fighting for in the end...were fighting for each other." The piece to the right of center contains the insignias from the other 3 branches of the service and the inscription "In peace you served as our defender, in battle you served as our protection, and in death as a reminder that liberty is still our greatest strength. The granite itself came from Barry Granite in Vermont. There are also two lights that continuously illuminate the memorial during the hours of darkness. Off to the left of the monument is the freedom garden, which consists of a 25' five pointed star constructed

of landscaping bricks. The inside of the freedom garden contains several types of flowers, and in its center stands a 46" life-size bronze battle cross. In its interior are 5 lights that during the hours of darkness, light up the battle cross. Off to the side sits a 5' long bench constructed of brick and a wooden seat. Lastly, on separate pieces of granite, which is described below, contain two separate brass plaques. On one plaque is a donors plaque, which contains the names of the 24 primary sponsors that made the memorial come to fruition. On the other plaque, which is located on a piece of granite and is placed inside the freedom garden, Joshua placed a quote that he wished to say, honoring our veterans. The inscription reads "In honor of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, may these seeds of life keep those memories alive forever" - Joshua Tyler Baillargeon.

Early into Joshua's research he also learned of an old schoolhouse from the 1800's that once was used to be in our town on Route 46 across from the cemetery and still had pieces of the granite foundation located at the site. Joshua made contact with the property owner, Bob Catton and asked if he may be willing to donate a couple pieces of granite so it could be incorporated into the memorial. Without reservation, Mr Catton said that we could have 5 pieces of the granite.

Shortly after picking those pieces up, Josh made strong headway into determining a tentative design for the memorial, which was presented to the town manager and selectmen. Additionally, the first fundraiser, which consisted of a spaghetti supper, was well on the way. Many of the items that were needed to make the supper a success were donated, thus making the fundraiser nearly a 100% profit. At its conclusion, Joshua, through the support of the citizens, had raised \$5,200 from the event. Joshua continued his fundraising efforts over the course of the following four months by holding a baked bean supper and a community yard sale. In addition to these fundraisers, the town, at the suggestion of a citizen, sought to place on our town ballot for the town to raise \$5,000 toward the memorial, which passed with ease. At the conclusion of his fundraising efforts in late May, Joshua, along with the town and its citizens, managed to raise nearly \$22,000 dollars. This is nothing short of remarkable for a town of only 3,500 residents.

Soon after the funds were gathered and all of the contractors were in place, the ground breaking began in early June, 2012. Lowes Home Improvements of Brewer, Maine, under the direction of Store Manager Robert Ahern, turned Joshua's Eagle Scout Service Leadership Project into what the store deemed as a "Salute To Hero's" project, allowing them to open up their allowable donations. Not only did Lowes donate nearly \$5,000 worth of products, but they solicited a team of 17 volunteers that came to the memorial site with Joshua, and built the entire freedom garden, along with a bench in which citizens could sit and reflect on their lost loved ones.

Over the course of the the next several months, each contractor came in one at a time and did their respective work at the memorial site, each time under the direction of Joshua. For example, during the project, Josh either directly supervised, or assisted in the construction of the freedom garden, the ground work (to include the bringing in of fill gravel), the framing of the memorial, the pouring of the cement, to include the bases for

the flag poles. Joshua also assisted in obtaining the donated flag poles from the City of Bangor and painted them in preparation. He also assisted in setting the poles in place as well as prepping the site for the monument itself. Over the summer Joshua spent countless hours at the site, despite having a very hot summer, both during and after the contractors had long left for the day.

Upon completion of the site work, the dedication ceremony was scheduled for September 29th, 2012. There was significant preparation for the dedication itself, as Joshua sent out letters to all veterans in the Town of Eddington, put up bulletin announcements and made the last minute plans to have everything in place. On the day of the ceremony, there were several veterans, both active and retired, who assisted in the raising of the American, State and POW flags. In addition, there were members from the Maine Congressional district in attendance, as well as dignitaries from the Maine Veterans Affairs office and the American Legion, to include a color guard unit from the local Marine Corp Legion Detachment. A gold star mother spoke during the ceremony and assisted in placing the wreath on the monument and the town manager assisted Joshua in the revealing of the monument. It was an emotionally touching event for all in attendance, whether you were a veteran or a member of the community.

Since the time of the dedication, Joshua has received his Eagle Scout Award, where he was recognized with a legislative sentiment from Representative David Johnson, received a Good Citizenship Award from the Marine Corps Legion and has been awarded a certificate of accomplishment from the United States Army. In addition, the memorial was featured in the Town of Eddington Bicentennial 2013 Calendar, which features those people and achievements that have made an indelible mark on our community. Despite all of this, Joshua continues to reinforce how his project wouldn't have become a reality if it wasn't for the outpouring of support he received from our and neighboring communities.

Collectively, there were 1500 hours put into this project, and if this project were to be constructed without the financial support from any businesses, it would have cost approximately \$55,000 to build. This project has truly been a life-changing and inspiring endeavor for Joshua, despite the fact he was 14 throughout the life of this project. Currently, as of January 2013, Joshua is a Freshman at Brewer High School in Brewer, Maine and is in the AFROTC program where he is aspiring to become a pilot through the schools pilot program. At this programs completion during his Senior year of high school, he will have obtained his pilot's license. Joshua is also continuing with scouts, where since attaining the rank of Eagle, has assumed duties as Troop Guide for Troop 21 and is a Den Chief for Webelo I scouts in Pack 21. In addition, this month he will be completing all requirements for his first Eagle Palm.