

The Commonwealth's Memorial Day Ceremony



Monday, May 25
10 am – noon
Heilman Amphitheater

TGA 5K They Gave All REGISTRATION OPEN



Saturday, May 23
7:30 am – 10:30 am
Heilman Amphitheater



New at the Virginia War Memorial

Virginia Medal of Honor Gallery *Beyond the Call of Duty*


This gallery is the only place in the Commonwealth where you can learn the history of the brave Virginians who have been awarded the nation's highest and most prestigious military honor for valor. Of the more than 25 million men and women who have served and sacrificed in our nation's wars, fewer than 3,600 have received the Medal of Honor. And of those, 50 have been officially attributed to the Commonwealth of Virginia by the Department of Defense.

Each of the Virginia recipients is remembered in this gallery with a plaque that bears the recipient's full name, hometown, military unit, a description of the recognized action, and the full text of the citation. Also in the gallery are video stations where honorees can be researched, and additional information about the individuals and the events related to their service can be reviewed. Below are a few of Virginia's Medal of Honor recipients you can learn about in the gallery.

JIMMIE W. MONTEITH JR.




First Lieutenant Jimmie W. Monteith Jr.'s headstone at Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, Basse-Normandie, France.

 The citation for this brave Virginian reads: *"1st Lt. Monteith landed with the initial assault waves on the coast of France under heavy enemy fire. Without regard to his own personal safety he continually moved up and down the beach reorganizing men for further assault. . . . Completely exposed to the intense fire, 1st Lt. Monteith led the tanks on foot through a minefield and into firing positions. . . . Supervising the defense of his newly won position against repeated vicious counterattacks, he continued to ignore his own personal safety, repeatedly crossing the 200 or 300 yards of open terrain under heavy fire to strengthen links in his defensive chain. When the enemy succeeded in completely surrounding 1st Lt. Monteith and his unit and while leading the fight out of the situation, 1st Lt. Monteith was killed by enemy fire. The courage, gallantry, and intrepid leadership displayed by 1st Lt. Monteith is worthy of emulation."*




A wartime photo of First Lieutenant Jimmie W. Monteith Jr.

ROBERT BLAKE

 Robert Blake was born into slavery in Virginia. In June 1862, his owner's plantation was burned during a Union naval expedition up the Santee River. About 400 slaves from the plantation, including Blake, were taken as contraband onto Union ships. By December 25, 1863, Blake had been transferred to USS *Marblehead*. While Blake was on the ship's gun deck, he was knocked down by an exploding Confederate shell. The explosion had killed a powder boy manning one of the guns. Blake had no assigned combat role and could have retreated to relative safety below deck, but he instead chose to take over the powder boy's duties. The Confederates eventually abandoned their position, leaving a gun behind. For his actions during the firefight, Blake was awarded the Medal of Honor four months later, on April 16, 1864.

JAMES GARDINER

 James Gardiner worked as an oysterman before enlisting in the Union Army from Yorktown, Virginia, on September 15, 1863. He joined Company I of the 36th Regiment United States Colored Troops as a private. At the Battle of Chaffin's Farm, Virginia, on September 29, 1864, Gardiner's regiment was among a division of black troops assigned to attack the Confederate defenses at New Market Heights. The attack was met with intense Confederate fire; over half of the black troops were killed, captured, or wounded. The day after the battle, Gardiner was promoted to sergeant. Several months later and three days before the end of the war, on April 6, 1865, he was issued the Medal of Honor for his actions at Chaffin's Farm.

BELOW: The Virginia Medal of Honor Gallery in the new C. Kenneth Wright Pavilion features the stories of all 50 of the state's Medal of Honor recipients.



Rock Solid Support from Southside Virginia



A few months ago, before I joined the Foundation, Joyce Ellen French and Ted Daniel announced the Southside Initiative. They approached other like-minded citizens, businesses, and local governments in Southside Virginia about working

together to show the Commonwealth, and the country, how important their area has been in shaping our nation’s history through military service and sacrifice. Their efforts have resulted in close to \$100,000 in gifts and grants to the Virginia War Memorial Foundation in memory and in honor of those brave souls whose names are etched on the walls of the Shrine of Memory.

And a rugged piece of granite from Mecklenburg County, hauled to the Memorial by a crew from J.A. Barker Construction, Inc. now anchors the Walkway of Honor.

It is support like this, from areas all over the state and country, which helps us in our mission to honor veterans, preserve history, educate our youth, and inspire patriotism in all.

Pam

Pamela R. Seay
PRESIDENT
VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL FOUNDATION



Walkway of Honor Southside Initiative Donors

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Saxon Martinez
USMC, Assault Amphibious Crewman 2008–2012
Aircraft Rescue Firefighter 2012–2016

The Veterans’ Art Gallery

Creative expression shaped by military service

This space is a natural extension of our efforts to provide veterans a safe place, free from judgment and convention, to tell their stories in their own words and images.

Currently on view: stunning artwork in a variety of mediums from Mike Fay, Diana de Avila, Pamela Corwin, Bernie Donato, Dennis Hicks, and Saxon Martinez.

Our next art show opens June 1, 2020:

Sacred Scenes: American Parks and Battlefields
The Photography of Frank Lee Ruggles and Amanda Ransom

Their individual work captures the beauty and majesty of some of America’s most hallowed spaces: national parks and national battlefields. Together, their photography paints a picture of places that are purely American with a history that connects us all, and must be protected. ■



Playwright Rachel Landsee,
MAJ, USA, (ret.) JAG Corps,
and her daughter, Tess

The Mighty Pen Project

Now in its seventh year, our Mighty Pen Project continues to offer intensive writing classes to help and encourage veterans and their loved ones to commit to paper their memories and reflections, together forming a living documentary of American military service.

The Virginia War Memorial, in partnership with the Mighty Pen Project and Firehouse Theatre of Richmond, is taking part in another

groundbreaking initiative for military veterans. Opening this September, four one-act plays written by Virginia veterans will be professionally produced by Firehouse. The four playwrights worked with Mighty Pen founder, author, and professor David L. Robbins to create *War in Pieces*, an evening of staged performances of their experiences of combat and the home front. ■

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The Opening Was Grand



It was with a combined sense of excitement and relief that we dedicated the new Shrine of Memory expansion and opened the C. Kenneth Wright Pavilion here at the Virginia War Memorial on 29 February.

This project was over four years in the making, but the families of those honored in the Shrine of Memory — Global War on Terrorism and Beyond have waited much longer to see their loved ones honored. Now, we will be able to use this world-class facility to honor their memory and make a real impact in the Commonwealth in terms of educational programming, events, and other exciting initiatives. As director of the War Memorial, I have never been prouder of what we have accomplished or more enthusiastic about what the future holds. This expansion is the springboard that will launch us into a new era of discovery, identifying the many ways that we can be the greatest living memorial possible and continue to set the standard for the nation. With the continued support from our state and proud, committed patriots, we will prove over and over just how much Virginia values those sacrifices made by its sons and daughters, and how dedicated we are to ensuring that future generations understand and appreciate those sacrifices. These are exciting times at the Virginia War Memorial, and I look forward to seeing you here soon and having you join our mission.

John C Mountcastle

Dr. Clay Mountcastle
Director
Virginia War Memorial



OUR MISSION

To honor veterans, preserve history, educate youth, and inspire patriotism in all.

OUR VISION

Advancing knowledge of history and cultural awareness throughout the Commonwealth and beyond by sharing and preserving veterans' personal stories and America's military past.

ALSO NEW — In the C. Kenneth Wright Pavilion

Expanded and Improved Space for Education

(We also need a larger whiteboard)

A new distance-learning classroom will allow us to stream our classroom programs and teacher education programs in real time. On-site and off-site teacher institutes continue to be of significant importance to our educators who want professional development opportunities as well as curriculum content. Our efforts continue to reach not only traditional school groups but also adult learners in the Lifelong Learning Institute, retirement communities, and veterans organizations. ■



Military Photography: An Added Dimension

Military-themed photography from the American Civil War to the Global War on Terrorism, stereoscopic images, and 2D images converted to 3D images (anaglyphs) give visitors a different perspective on history.

OTHER EXHIBITIONS



Arms for the Nation

This long-term exhibition tells the story of the resolve, spirit, and skills of Virginians who have fought to gain and preserve our nation's freedoms from the American Revolution to the present. The exhibition highlights the Jean H. and Howard P. Hart Collection of U.S. Martial Arms and artifacts.



The Vietnam Wall and the Three Soldiers

The statuette featured in the McMurtrie Grand Lobby, a replica of the statue on the National Mall, was recently donated by Tommy Johnson, a Vietnam-era veteran who served as a U.S. Air Force medic.

Admiral Hekman Retires

After more than 20 years of service to the Virginia War Memorial and the Foundation, RDML John G. Hekman, USN (Ret.), retired as of January 1, 2020. His service spanned terms as trustee on the Virginia War Memorial Board, Foundation Director, and Executive Director of the Foundation. His tireless leadership and relentless fundraising resulted in the successful completion of two capital campaigns, the launch of a planned giving program, and numerous other initiatives. His intellect and creative spark will be greatly missed. To honor his service, the Memorial has created the John G. Hekman Volunteer of the Year Award, to be



given annually to a volunteer who exemplifies the attributes that made the Admiral a critical part of the Memorial and Foundation. We say "job well done," but not "goodbye," because we expect Admiral Hekman to return each year to present the award. In addition, he will assume the position of director emeritus of the Foundation. ■



Walkway of Honor

Purchasing a brick to be placed on the Walkway of Honor is a meaningful and permanent way to commemorate an event, honor a friend or family member, or remember a loved one.

Order bricks before April 15, 2020, to be installed in time for the Commonwealth's Memorial Day Ceremony on May 25. Contact Brenna Magette at bmagette@vawarmemorial.org or (804) 786-2069. ■

Now available for your special event



There's a reason Venture Richmond has named the Virginia War Memorial one of the top ten best places in Downtown Richmond to photograph and be photographed. Consider the views, the interiors, and the remarkable mission of this stunning facility. Open spaces or quiet places — guests will long remember this location. Meeting amenities and plentiful parking are among the other features that make the War Memorial a perfect place to rent for a special event or celebration. For more information, contact Kerrie Arcand at karcand@vawarmemorial.org or call (804) 786-2176.



The Virginia War Memorial Foundation rents its beautifully appointed indoor and outdoor spaces for events ranging from small business meetings and large educational conferences to dinner banquets and formal receptions.

Virginia War Memorial
621 South Belvidere Street
Richmond, Virginia 23220
OPEN — Monday – Saturday: 9 am – 4 pm
Sunday: noon – 4 pm
Shrine of Memory: open 5 am to midnight daily
CLOSED — New Year's Day, Easter,
Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day
VaWarMemorial.org

PHOTOGRAPHY: Mark Mitchell Photography,
David L. Robbins, Richmond Times-Dispatch,
Virginia War Memorial
NEWSLETTER DESIGN: Communication Design Inc.



Calendar of Events

Virginia Forum 2020, Crafting History
March 26–28, 2020
An opportunity for scholars, teachers, writers, museum and historic site professionals, librarians, archivists, and all Virginia history and culture enthusiasts to exchange ideas, research, and experiences. Register in advance at VaWarMemorial.org/vaforum2020.
TGA 5K — They Gave All Presented by Loyalty Automotive
May 23, 2020 (Saturday)
7:30 am – 10:30 am
Registration and Details at VaWarMemorial.org/5k

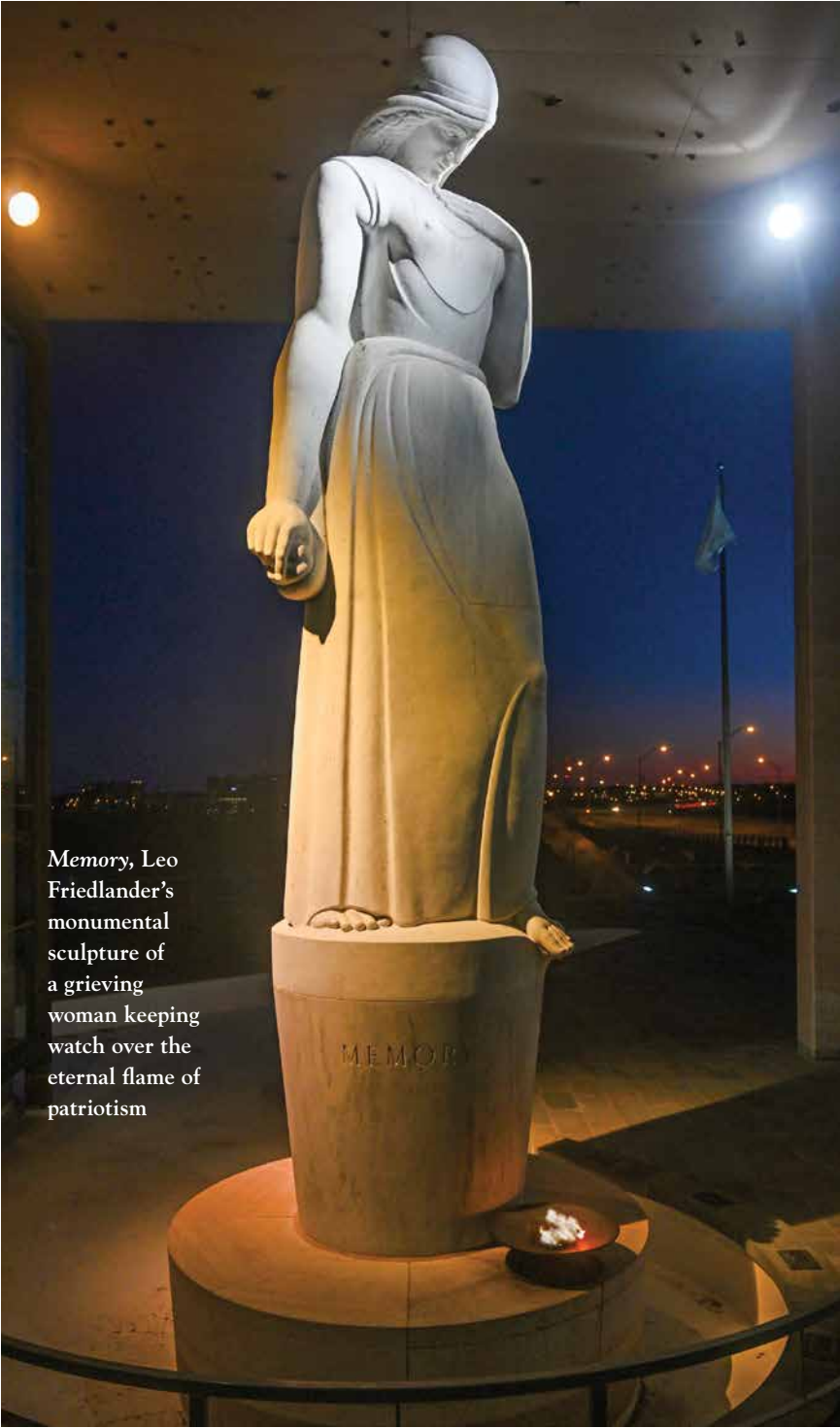


Enjoy a glass of wine and spectacular views at Sips on the Skyline. For ticket and sponsor information, visit VaWarMemorial.org.

Commonwealth's Memorial Day Ceremony
May 25, 2020
10 am – noon
Heilman Amphitheater
Art Exhibition Opening
June 1, 2020
Sacred Scenes: American Parks and Battlefields, The Photography of Frank Lee Ruggles and Amanda Ransom
Reception/Meet the Artists
June 5, 2020
6 pm – 8 pm
Free and open to the public
Patriot Day
September 11, 2020
6 pm – 8 pm
Heilman Amphitheater, Shrine of Memory — Global War on Terrorism and Beyond

Sips on the Skyline
September 25, 2020
7 pm – 10 pm
Silent auction (ticketed event)
For sponsor, volunteer, and ticket information, call (804) 786-2074 or email mmwachur@vawarmemorial.org
Commonwealth's Veterans Day Ceremony
November 11, 2020
10:45 am – 1 pm
Heilman Amphitheater, Veterans Hall West & East
Military Records Research and Preservation Class
November 12, 2020
6 pm – 8 pm
Schumann Conference Room
Commonwealth's Pearl Harbor Day Ceremony
December 7, 2020
11 am – 3 pm
Shrine of Memory — 20th Century, Russell Scott Hall

For the latest event details, visit VaWarMemorial.org or call (804) 786-2060.



Memory, Leo Friedlander's monumental sculpture of a grieving woman keeping watch over the eternal flame of patriotism