

GREAT FALLS DEFENSE OF FREEDOM MEMORIAL-- WHY, WHO, WHAT, WHERE, AND WHEN

This paper provides information about the planned Great Falls Defense of Freedom Memorial.

WHY and WHO: After the September 11, 2001 tragedy, some thought that the community of Great Falls needed a special place where people could gather to honor and remember those who have served or are serving our country. This is why a committee was formed in January, 2003 of Great Falls residents. The members include: Peter Hilgartner, Col., USMC (Ret), chairman, Mike Kearney, vice chairman and fundraising, Milburn Sanders, secretary and Great Falls historian, Eleanor Anderson, Great Falls Citizen's Association President, Rev. Paul Gysan, Sara Hilgartner, Marge Gersic, Brian Winterhalter, Supervisor Stuart Mendelsohn's representative, Roger Sudduth, Dranesville Representative, Fairfax County Library Board, Andrew Pendergrass, manager, Great Falls Library, Bill Ten Eyck, architectural design, and Glen Sjoblom, site selection and construction.

WHAT: The mission statement of the committee is, "Our mission is to build a permanent, visible, accessible, and educational memorial in Great Falls to honor those who have served our Country in defense of liberty and justice for all." The theme of the memorial was also selected as "Americans in Defense of Freedom." The memorial is to be constructed using the highest standards of materials, design and construction as would be appropriate for a State or National Memorial. The committee is inviting the Great Falls Garden Club to consider plantings around the memorial, and plans to install a permeable trail to the memorial. Historical information about those who have served our Nation would be placed in the Library. Attached is a photograph of a scale model depicting current conceptual design developed by the committee.

WHERE: The committee concluded that the memorial should be located near the center of the Great Falls community to be of greatest value during potential times of use, such as Memorial Day, Fourth of July, September 11, and Veteran's Day. The committee also felt the memorial should be located on public land with adequate parking to ensure long-term accessibility by the public. The committee evaluated potential sites on the Grange property and the Great Falls Public Library property. The committee met with the Fairfax County Park Authority staff and Fairfax County History Commission representatives, who liked the idea of such a memorial in Great Falls. However, they discouraged the use of the Grange Property, suggesting this added feature might possibly jeopardize the official designation of the Grange on the National Register of Historic Places, and the committee agreed.

The committee also evaluated a site on the plateau to the west of the Great Falls Library and thought it would be potentially very beneficial to the memorial, the Great Falls community, and the library. The committee therefore met informally with representatives of the Fairfax County Library Board and received encouragement for a memorial at the Great Falls Library. The committee has formally requested Fairfax County Library Board approval to construct the memorial at this site.

WHEN: The committee is earnestly requesting the input and show of support from Great Falls civic group leaders during a meeting on May 28, as well as all Great Falls citizens at a Great Falls Town Meeting at the Great Falls Library on June 4, at 7:30 PM. The committee expects extensive community interest, and the committee will consider community input prior to our meeting with the Fairfax County Library Board on June 11, to present the conceptual design and hopefully obtain approval of a site for the memorial. The committee hopes that fund raising, design and construction can be complete in 2003. Checks marked "Freedom Memorial" in the lower left can be made payable to: Brogue Charities, P. O. Box 295, Great Falls, Virginia 22066. This is an IRS approved 501::C::3 corporation, and your donations are tax deductible to the extent of the law.