

A Call to Arms in Support of Veterans Memorial at Potter Park

By Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian

A memorial to Perinton's soldiers has stood proudly in Fairport's Potter Park since 1945. The Memorial was erected by the Brooks-Shepard Post of the American Legion on the former estate of Frederick Potter, who donated his home and surrounding acres to the village of Fairport upon his death in 1943. Located at the corner of West Church Street and Potter Place, the Memorial has served the community well for almost 70 years.

The dedication for the Veterans Memorial took place on Flag Day, June 14, 1945 with a parade which began at the High School on West Avenue, led by the school band and members of the Brooks-Shepard Post. The route was lined with residents as the parade marched to the Potter Memorial grounds, adjacent to where victory gardens were established earlier in the war.

The structural integrity of the Veterans Memorial at Potter Park is now compromised, and a community-wide effort is underway to raise funds for a newly designed memorial. The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8495, with the Fairport Foundation, is helping to drive the initiative. A special event, Operation Potter Patriots, was held on April 5th by local Boy Scouts to raise awareness and funds for the new Memorial. Despite remarkably bad weather, the Scouts, along with volunteers from other organizations, raised almost \$8,000 toward the new Memorial.



Boy Scouts and other participants in Operation Potter Patriot at the Veterans Memorial in Potter Park.

The design of the new Veterans Memorial will include the installation of personalized bricks, which can be purchased for \$100, in memory of local veterans who have served in a branch of the United States military. I have heard from residents who are interested in supporting the Memorial by purchasing a brick, but have no personal connection to a soldier, past or present, from the community. For these citizens, I offer some suggestions: All Perinton residents live near one of our town or village cemeteries. Most graves of those who served in the military are identified as such. Adopting one of these soldiers would be a fine tribute in their honor. Another option is to recognize someone from your neighborhood or workplace, past or present, who has served in the armed forces.

The Perinton town archives include records related to the military service of many Fairport and Perinton citizens. Call me at the Perinton Town Hall at (585)223-0770 for help in researching a soldier, and consider dedicating a brick for the new Veterans Memorial in their honor. For information on purchasing a brick, visit www.fairportfoundation.org or call Scott Winner at (585)377-6010.

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