

REMEMBER THEM

COMMITTEE TIMELINE

NOVEMBER 13, 2018

Dennis D. Berg, a 1963 St. Francis high school graduate and Vietnam veteran was the guest speaker at a St. Francis school Veterans Day assembly. Berg mentioned two classmates who were killed in Vietnam: Peter Hedlund, class of 1962 and Leslie Cowden, Class of 1965. He expressed a hope that their stories would be researched and documented. After the presentation, a committee was formed between Dennis and Mike.

2005

Anoka County Historical Society did a scrub down of the County list of service men killed in action in Vietnam resulting in ten names being added, for a total of 32.

2007

Two more names were discovered for a total of 34 men. Since then, two more names have been added after cross checking with the updated state list for a total of 36 men. Because the protest against the war in Vietnam didn't separate the war from the warrior, families were shielded by not publicizing when a loved one was killed in action. It also resulted in Anoka County not knowing how many soldiers had been killed in action.

FEBRUARY 23, 2023

Mike Starr made a call to Dennis to explore the idea of two county bridges being named after Peter and Leslie.

FEBRUARY 2023

Discussions of naming the bridges were had with Anoka County Commissioners and found out Anoka County has a policy of not using individual's names dedicating county funded properties but suggested alternative possibilities.

APRIL 10, 2023

Jeff Perry, Anoka County Parks Director, gave a tour of Anoka County parks and memorials to assist us in planning a memorial and location. Dennis, Mike and Brad ultimately decided upon the memorial to be placed at Cedar Creek Conservation Area.

JUNE 12, 2023

Dennis, Brad and Mike met with Travis Gienger about the big stone.

JULY 2023

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, Anoka County Historical Society Executive Director, authored and designed the fundraising pamphlet. Rebecca also came up with the name "Remember Them".

JULY 2023

Richard Oxley, Anoka County Historical Society President, produced and donated the fundraising video. Richard is an interactive design/video production instructor at Hennepin Technical College and produced the video as a class project.

JULY 2023

Grand Rademacher of Bills Gas Station offered us the use of their conference board room for meetings.

JULY 24, 2023

Met at the Cedar Creek Conservation Area along with Anoka County Parks staff to discuss the project and select a site for the memorial.

JULY 2023

Fundraising goal was \$15,000

AUGUST 2023

Fundraising goal increased to \$30,000

OCTOBER 6, 2023

Pass the Boot at a high school St. Francis home football game raised \$785. Design ideas also continued into the fall.

JANUARY 5, 2024

Front page story about the memorial in the Anoka Union Herald.

JANUARY 2024

Donations are being sent to the Anoka County Parks Departments and have set up a special account for the memorial.

JANUARY 2024

As part of the fundraiser for the memorial, two more names of St. Francis High School graduates killed in Vietnam were discovered. Raymond Baker, class of 1961 and Phillip Donald Waters, class of 1958. At the request of the community and school their names will be added to the memorial.

APRIL 9, 2024

The Anoka County Board meeting passed the resolution. After viewing the video at the meeting, a round of applause was made from the County Board.

APRIL 24, 2024

The big stone will be delivered on site. A video recording of cutting the monument boulder and approved bench design was made. Both benches are cut from the same boulder. Meeting on design with the Parks staff have continued every couple of weeks.

MAY 1, 2024

Reviewed bid documents during the meeting. Anoka County Parks Planning Department and TKDA have done a great job. Plaques and invitations are on order. Members present: Dennis Berg, Mike Starr, Brad LeTourneau, Karen Blaska, Danielle Sanborn and Julia Gustafson.

MAY 10, 2024

Concrete work is scheduled for May 20 with a backup date for May 28. The setting of the monument is tentatively scheduled for June 14 with a backup date of June 17. Currently the committee has raised \$37,847.22. The committee is hopeful to have enough money for the original design with possibly some additional amenities.

MAY 13, 2024

Members present: Dennis Berg, Mike Starr, Brad LeTourneau, and Jeff Perry. Reporting on all the construction components, everything is on track as scheduled. Parking on site on the dedication date will be a challenge. Anoka County Sheriff's office will have two squads on County Road 9 and Anoka County Park Rangers will be on site to assist bus parking. A meeting is scheduled on June 17 at 8:00 am at the Cedar Creek Conservation area parking lot to go over parking and handicap accommodations.

The QR interpretive sign will be manufactured and installed by Anoka County Parks. We will reimburse them for the cost. As per Anoka County resolution number 2024-41, the QR code will include:

- background information on the named individuals
- information about the conservation area
- history of the memorial and creation of the monument
- recognition of donors

Nikki Greenwell, Communications supervisor for Anoka County Parks will be the lead coordinator for the QR code. Anoka County Historical Society has on file all the information we have, to date, for the four named individuals.

Information about the conservation area will need to be drafted by the parks department.

Richard Oxley has been gathering video of the project to produce an updated video that will be included in the QR code.

Rebecca has been collecting history of the project for a book the Anoka County Historical Society is producing. It is the desire of the committee that Nikki, Richard, and Rebecca coordinate and share information. By working together, we will have a better product and avoid duplication and copyright concerns.

MAY 10, 2024

May 31, 2024 – We are still on schedule for June 27. The concrete work is a little behind schedule because of the rain. The six-foot-deep concrete pad for the main monument is poured and hopefully the weather will cooperate for completion of cement work next week.

The committee is working on the dedication program and sending out invitations. Indications are that we can expect a large crowd.

The committee will work with the parks department during the next legislative session to obtain state funding for blacktopping the parking area. As a conservation area it doesn't qualify for park funding but we have other options.

If a small school like St. Francis had four graduates kidded in Vietnam with a known record of only two, how many more than the 38 now listed from Anoka County are lost to history.

The committee is working with the Anoka County Historical Society to publish an updated book on Vietnam listing all known, killed in action and include the history of the "Remember Them" memorial.