

PROCLAMATION OF CONSECRATION AND DEDICATION

VETERANS MEMORIAL OF STARKE COUNTY, INDIANA

Today we gather in solemn assembly to commence an ambitious new memorial to generations of service, dedication and sacrifice stretching back seventeen decades -- generations of soldiers, sailors and aviators who served with valor, honor, and fortitude through every imaginable hardship and peril.

From Shiloh to Chickamauga they fought to preserve and make more perfect the union of American states. From Cambrai France to the Battle of the Bulge, from Midway to the jungles Quang Tri Province Viet Nam, from the sands of the Middle East and on to the mountains of Afghanistan they fought for the ideal of government by the people and *for* the people -- democracy, America's beacon of hope for the world. In the one hundred and seventy years since Starke County was organized, not once have the U.S. Armed Forces failed to protect the peace where we stand today. It is a rare and remarkable achievement and one we would be wise to reflect upon more often.

From our quiet corner of this great and grateful Nation, we honor all our veterans, with a special place for the one hundred patriots, their names to be memorialized in black granite, who sacrificed everything. Thirty from the Civil War, eight from the Great War, and from World War II, thirty-nine. Seven more from the Korean War, twelve from Viet Nam, three from Iraq and one from Afghanistan. When we've completed this monument we will see those names, not alone, but joined and overlain by reflections of the faces of today -- grandchildren for whom the war was previously merely a history lesson, parents and loved ones touching engraved letters with aging hands, surviving comrades whose pain may never entirely fade away. No monument, no medal, no words will ever be adequate. But we can find reverence, and in our hearts perhaps a place of peace and of solace.

Let us pause to reflect for a moment that each fallen hero to be listed here represents a human life -- a unique individual with families, friends, loves, dreams, achievements and disappointments. Each person's story deserves to be remembered, repeated and cherished. We hope you will take some time to learn more about the people whose names we commemorate with this monument. While one hundred lost their lives in

action, many more did make it home again. But few of them returned unchanged – some bore wounds to the body, others were wounded in ways that are harder to see. Though their names will not appear on the granite wall, be mindful that this is their monument too.

We honor all our veterans in dedicating, in *consecrating*, this site as a permanent monument to their service, valor and sacrifice. This monument will be a powerful and enduring testament to our recognition and respect, and we ask that you visit it with quiet reverence. But that is not enough. We must also dedicate a place in our hearts to veterans who are with us today. All deserve our respect, but some need our assistance too. And, we must teach our children about the sacrifices that have built America. Perhaps more than anything else we must re-invigorate in ourselves our belief, trust and active participation in government by the people, *for* the people. That is the wellspring of our nation, and the reason it became a beacon to the world.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Charles Chesak, President of the Board of Commissioners of the County of Starke, State of Indiana, do hereby make this **PROCLAMATION OF CONSECRATION AND DEDICATION** of this portion of the Starke Courthouse Square, Section 21, Township 33 North, Range 2 West, Center Township, Starke County Indiana, as the permanent site of the **Veterans Memorial of Starke County, Indiana**, in solemn commemoration of the veterans of all conflicts involving the Armed Forces of the United States of America commencing with the formation of Starke County as a unit of the State of Indiana, United States of America. I call upon all citizens of our community to honor and support our veterans, our fallen, our wounded and missing in action, and their families and loved ones.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this ____ day of May, in the year 2020, being the 170th year of Starke County, State of Indiana.

Charles Chesak, President
Board of Commissioners
Starke County, State of Indiana, USA