

# Traveling memorial coming to Mt. Vernon

*Organizers are asking for funds and volunteers for the project*

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**MT. VERNON** — Several members of the community are working together to bring a traveling memorial that honors more than 10,000 heroes and victims killed in combat or in acts of terrorism.

Tom Gaither, coordinator for HOOAH, along with coordinators and volunteers is leading the effort to bring the Global War on Terror Wall of Remembrance to Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

"I saw it up in Springfield a few weeks ago, and it is 120 foot long by six foot tall, and it is double sided," Gaither said. "The one side of the wall contains the lists and dates of the terror attacks and of the different conflicts that we lost soldiers in. It lists out basically date and order starting with the Marine Corps Barracks bombing in 1983 and runs through all conflicts and any acts of terrorism that killed our first responders."

The traveling memorial is cared for and owned by the Rear Area Support Foundation (RASf) and features the names of 10,570 people whose lives were lost from the Beirut attack to current day. The traveling memorial is scheduled to come to Mt. Vernon Outland Airport on Sept. 9 with people able to visit and view the wall on Sept. 10 and 11.

The idea to have the traveling memorial wall come to the area came about through the combined efforts of Gaither and volunteers Jason Presswood and Steve England. Last year HOOAH volunteered and fed first responders during Sept. 11 while England and first responders held flags at the overpasses on that day in remembrance.

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## Memorial:

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"HOOAH volunteers is basically how we know each other, and we thought it would be great to bring it to Mt. Vernon with the hopes of reaching some of our disabled veterans," Gaither said, "and to bring them out and maybe have an opportunity to meet them and hopefully get them on an event to continue their healing and thank them for their service."

Gaither explained that a ceremony will be held featuring the memorial on Sept. 10 at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport to "honor those on the wall that made the ultimate sacrifice and honor the Gold Star families that have names on the wall during a ceremony there."

**REACHING OUT**

Currently volunteers with HOOAH are reaching out to

several other organizations and individuals for funds and volunteers to help pay for and set up the memorial wall. Gaither did explain that memorial is a separate fund-raising campaign from other HOOAH funds.

"Anybody who wants to help, we are looking for financial support to cover the costs," Gaither said.

The financial support required for the entire project is \$6,000. Volunteers are also needed.

"We will need to have volunteers to help with the setup of the wall when it arrives on Saturday [Sept. 9]," Gaither said. "Then we will need eight volunteers to help dismantle the wall on Tuesday, Sept. 12, so it can depart Mt. Vernon."

Volunteers will also be needed to help people find names while the wall is on display.

Gaither mentioned that contact has already been made with several organiza-

tions and individuals.

"We have basically been in contact with everybody and anybody," Gaither said. "We have reached out to city leaders, we have reached out to organizations. There are so many of them. It is absolutely a community event to bring the community closer together and honor those on the wall. There is room for anybody and everybody to help."

For more information on donating or volunteering people can visit HOOAH Deer Hunt For Heroes Facebook page. Checks can be made out to RASf for donations the deadline for donations is by the start of the event.

"I just encourage people to come out and see it. We all know of someone who has served or someone who has made the ultimate sacrifice," Gaither said. "But when you see it on the wall it really puts it into a whole new perspective with the many names."

**The current schedule of**

**events is as follows:**

**SATURDAY, SEPT. 9**

- Wall arrives at Mt. Vernon Airport and volunteers will help set up.

**SUNDAY SEPT. 10**

- 2 p.m. Program to honor Gold Star Family members at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

- Global War on Terror Wall of Remembrance available to view at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

**MONDAY SEPT. 11**

- Noon to 2:30 p.m. Feeding of first responders at the Mt. Vernon Police Department parking lot. First responders eat for free.

- 8 a.m. to noon Waving of the Flag campaign at every overpass in Jefferson County.

- Global War on Terror Wall of Remembrance available to view at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

**TUESDAY SEPT. 12**

- The wall departs Mt. Vernon volunteers needed to help dismantle.

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