

Heroes Memorial dedicated during Fly-In

Refurbished memorial honors 269 Jefferson County servicemen killed throughout nation's history

BY TIM JOHNSON
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MT. VERNON — With county and city leaders and members of the public in attendance, the Jefferson County Heroes Memorial was officially dedicated on Saturday at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport to honor county servicemen killed

in the line of duty.

The memorial, once located at the AMVETS Hall on Main Street, was renovated in recent weeks at the direction of Troop 102 Boy Scout Andrew Dreas, who took on the project to earn the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank in the organization.

Bearing the names of 269 local heroes, the memorial stands about 12 feet tall, with a banner large enough to read the names from several yards distance.

Designed by Mt. Vernon architect Brian Edmison, redesigned memorial features a steel frame,

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Sentinel Photo/TIM JOHNSON

TO THE FALLEN — Mike Bullard of Bluford, AT PODIUM, delivers the keynote address at a dedication ceremony held Saturday for the new Jefferson County Heroes Memorial at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport. The memorial was the project of Eagle Scout candidate Andrew Dreas, FAR LEFT, of Boy Scouts of America Troop 102.

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2011 sign panels and graphics, advanced lighting, patio pavers and landscaping. It cost close to \$10,000, aided in construction by the help of local sponsors.

Keynote speaker Mike Bullard, a Bluford resident and member of the Sons of the American Legion, delivered a moving address to mark the dedication, which was held during the 15th annual Experimental Aircraft Association Fly-In and Veterans Reunion.

"It is here today we remember the men who charged up Hamburger Hill, never to return," Bullard said. "It is here today we honor those who never made dry land as they swam through the bloody waters of Omaha, Utah and Juno Beach. ... It is here today we honor the men who were buried at sea, in a foreign country or simply listed as missing in action."

Bullard made special mention of Goldstar mother Cheryl Hunsell, whose son Kyle Price has the last name on the wall. Price, a U.S. Marine from Woodlawn, was killed in action in Iraq in 2006. He is the only Jefferson County serviceman killed during conflicts in the Middle East.

Joined by Airport Manager Chris Collins, Hunsell stood at her son's place on the wall as the American Legion Post 141 delivered a rifle salute, followed by the playing of taps.

"Generation after generation has risen up in arms, stared into the eyes of our aggressors and, at the cost of their lives, defeated those who threaten [our] sacred ideals," Bullard said. "We are here to dedicate this memorial to these great veterans. And as we stand here and view the names of 269 American heroes who paid the ultimate price in battle, we realize these are the heroes who never came home."

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