

MT. VERNON AIRPORT

# Memorial dedicated

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MT. VERNON — Jefferson County veterans killed in action have a monument once again.

Local leaders came out Saturday morning to dedicate the Jefferson County Heroes Memorial at Mt. Vernon Airport.

The structure, bearing the message “These loved ones gave their tomorrows so that we could have our today,” includes the names of the 269 people from Jefferson County killed in military service in World War 1, World War 2, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Middle East.

Master of Ceremonies David Keen said he was floored by the effort put into the project by Airport Manager Chris Collins and Woodlawn Boy Scout Troop 102’s Andrew Dreas, who served as project manager and will be-

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come an Eagle Scout with its completion.

“We’ve got a great young generation,” Keen said. “Andrew stepped forward and created a lasting memorial to Jefferson County veterans.”

For Dreas, it was the end of a long journey.

“I’m really relieved to have it done,” he said. “We’re not quite finished — the electrical still has to be put in — but the panels look marvelous. It was nice for Boy Scouts to help me, and

I want to thank the people at the airport who did the landscaping and everyone who donated.”

Keynote speaker Mike Bullard of Bluford evoked the famous “we cannot dedicate, consecrate, hallow this ground” portion Gettysburg address in expressing his thanks to the men and women named on the memorial.

“Reflecting on history, I am compelled to refer to Abraham Lincoln’s address at the dedication of a memorial in the small town of Gettysburg. His words are just as appropriate today,” he said. “As mere mortals, we are here to dedicate this

memorial.”

Bullard was joined for the dedication ceremony by American Legion Post 141, which performed a rifle salute to “Taps,” and Troop 102, which raised the American flag over the memorial for the first time.

The front of the memorial is composed of several metal plates previously housed at the Mt. Vernon AMVETS that were put in storage when the organization moved to a new location. AMVETS members approached the airport, which houses the Jefferson County Hall of Honor, in late 2010 about the possibil-

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ity of using the plates for a new structure on their property.

The airport’s Board of Commissioners approved the project unanimously. Collins said it was a no-brainer, and those he asked for help agreed.

“I’m very proud of the team we had. They recognized how important it was to honor our friends and loved ones who paid the ultimate price. I really feel like we had the best of Jefferson County helping us, and it was an honor to work with them,” he said.

“It’s wonderful to see how beautiful it turned out.”