

Jefferson County Veterans Hall of Honor and Museum still expanding

By RORYE O'CONNOR

rorye.oconnor@register-news.com

MT. VERNON — What once started as a way to celebrate veterans who passed through the local airport has transformed into a museum honoring all local veterans of the United States armed forces.

The Jefferson County Veterans Hall of Honor and Museum is a still-expanding tribute to the men and women of Jefferson County who have served in the armed forces.

In a hallway in the Koziara Terminal at the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport, the faces of soldiers, airmen and Marines from all eras in history look out with information about their service. Most recently, members of the Hall of Honor Committee have worked to build a museum and library alongside the framed photos in an area formerly used by the Grandma's Landing restaurant.

"Where the old bar room used to be is a museum," said R.D. White, a member of the committee. "We're going to have maps of the wars up on the walls, and we'll locate the individuals who were involved in the combat area so they are distinguished."

HALL

continued from 1C

a visit to the Hall of Honor, where committee members will present a history lesson on the wars and what led up to them.

"Our first group is going to be from Greentree housing on Feb. 12," White said. "We're going to let them select pictures of relatives and friends they might want to see, and then we'll break and have a



The Hall of Honor Museum features military uniforms loaned by local veterans and replicas of military aircraft, and members are working to expand a library and maps of combat areas from all wars. RORYE O'CONNOR/REGISTER-NEWS

Under the maps of combat areas, committee members will list the names of veterans whose tributes are on the Hall of Honor, and cross-reference back to the tribute, said airport manager Chris Collins.

"My father served in the Air Force in Japan, so under a map of Japan, my father's name will be there and it will cross-reference to the tribute," Collins said.

The museum is open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesdays.

history of the wars and let them ask questions."

White, a 28-year Army pilot, and later a company and battalion commander, said preserving the memories of veterans and honoring their service is important to him.

"Twenty-eight years in the military made me a veteran for life," White said. "The welfare of veterans is very important to me."

The Jefferson County Veterans Hall of Honor com-

White said the goals of the Hall of Honor committee are to preserve the memories of veterans, especially those killed in action; to assist in education of Jefferson County youth and to provide a context for the wars; and to increase the visibility of the airport to the community.

The Hall of Honor first got started about two years ago, White said.

"I do veteran things for the airport during the (EAA Little Egypt)Fly-In," White

said. "I thought I'd put up a few pictures of the veterans. They were poorly done ... They got a great amount of attention, though, and the board and Chris (Collins) got interested in it and behind it."

Collins said the idea was all White's.

"The committee formed to make this something very special," Collins said. "There are many ideas together all in one creative display."

White said veterans or

family members bring the veteran's 214 discharge information and a photo, and the framed tributes are based on that information.

"They are beautiful pictures, and it's just the beginning," White said. "The light plane manufacturers were here in the fall, and they took the ideas back to their airports. Chris was at the Sebring Expo not too long ago, and other airports are still applauding the idea we had."

There are approximately 220 tributes to veterans in the Hall of Honor currently, Collins said.

In addition to the tributes

on the walls of the airport, committee members are working to complete a virtual representation of the tributes on the Mt. Vernon airport's Web site, Collins said.

"We're trying really hard to get all the guys and gals on there," Collins said.

White said committee members have been able to establish a library and a space where tours can come and discuss the wars of United States history.

He said the third grade students at Woodlawn Grade School are scheduled to make

see HALL/Page 2C



The Jefferson County Veterans Hall of Honor committee has worked to display more than 200 tributes to local veterans in the Koziara Terminal at the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport. RORYE O'CONNOR/REGISTER-NEWS

Endicott, Nancy German, Joyce Poorman, Ernie Collins, Clarence Duckworth, Cliff Christensen, Karen

Speith, "Blue" Trout, Wayne Jackson, Ken McKenzie, Jim Donoho and Don Davis, Collins said. 2-5-2011