

The Fort Sill Brick Project

This story was originally published in the April 2024 NDQSA Newsletter and has been reproduced for the Our History section.



Jackie Carver trailered in his small excavator to break open the ground.

During the last week of March 2024 the Fort Sill, Oklahoma brick project took a significant leap forward. To fully appreciate the effort, we must go back to Norfolk, Virginia and the NDQSA annual business meeting on November 13, 2021. It was there that Dave McCray presented information about the Air Defense Artillery Association's (ADAA) memorial brick program to raise funds in support of the newly constructed ADA Learning Center. He proposed that we, as an organization, somehow take on the heritage preservation project of obtaining a brick for each of the 212 men who lost their lives while assigned or attached to our ADA units in Vietnam. There was no



Jackie Carver laying down the crushed rock sub-layer.

debate about whether this should be done, only about how to raise the \$21,000. Vince Tedesco said he would go to the ADAA board of directors and ask that we get the bricks at cost and that they be displayed together because of their purpose as a memorial to the fallen. Within six months the \$14,000 was raised through member donations. Our brick design and layout requirements were submitted and approved. It then became a struggle as the ADAA had to change brick vendors and eventually could not find a landscaping company willing to take on the installation.



Volunteers from the ADA Warrant Officer Course help smooth the crushed rock and lay the bricks.



The bricks surround the Stinger Soldier statue in front of the ADA Learning Center, Fort Sill, OK.

Once again NDQSA stepped in to help make this project happen. Jackie Carver has the construction skills and equipment so volunteered to trailer in his small excavator and other necessary material from home in Alabama. Dave McCray worked with the ADAA for site access, a soil compactor, sub-layer crushed rock,

and local help. The ADA school coordinated volunteers from the current ADA Warrant Officer course and even a couple of ADAA board members participated in the project. No doubt the standout force of nature was Melita Simily, the ADAA executive director.



Melita Simily takes control of the soil compactor on the stone bed.

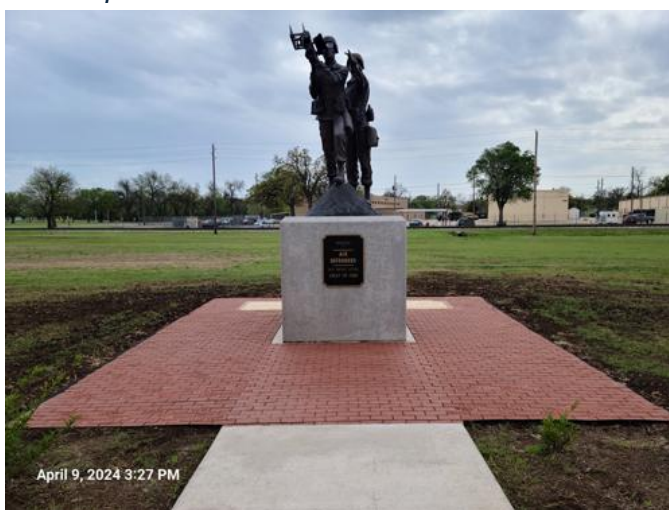
These pictures capture the project execution. Dave and Jackie began work on March 25 and the brick installation was done by the evening of March 27. Melita and her husband finished up installing the plastic grass barrier on March 28. This project is not over, but it is timely to share its progress with the membership in this newsletter. There is still a large dedication capstone with information about NDQSA and the ADA units in Vietnam to be engraved. It will be installed beside our memorial bricks to each of the fallen. And finally, because of all the brick vendor changes, the yellow fallen bricks themselves need to be replaced. The ones they sent do not adhere to the paint in the engraved lettering. They are being replaced at no cost with a grey brick that matches the color of the ADA soldier monument's base. After they arrive, volunteers will swap out the yellow bricks you see with the new grey ones engraved with rank, name, date they fell, their unit, and their hometown. When completed the 212 bricks will be arrayed in order by date of death, from SSG Frank Nadany, October 31, 1965 to PFC Bennie Holbrook, July 22, 1972. NDQSA continues its work to preserve our Vietnam service heritage. These memorial bricks are a fitting tribute and in a great location, right outside the ADA Learning Center, where young soldiers and visitors will pass by every day and reflect on their sacrifice.



Laying the memorial brick to the Vietnam fallen soldiers. Personally purchased red NDQSA member bricks surround the fallen bricks in



The Warrant Officer Class received a memorial brick and certificate in appreciation for their help.



The brick project after everyone completed their hard work and went home.