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BLUE STAR MEMORIAL MARKER PROGRAM

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HISTORY OF THE BLUE STAR MEMORIALS

At the close of World War II National Garden Clubs (called National Council of Garden Clubs at the time), like other public spirited groups, was seeking a suitable means of honoring our service men and women. Garden Club members visualized a living memorial, preferring to help beautify and preserve the country these men and women had fought for, rather than build stone monuments in their honor.

In 1944 Mrs. Lewis M. Hull, Garden Club of New Jersey President and future NCSGC President, and Mrs. Vance Hood, Roadside Chairman, had an inspired idea. One thousand flowering Dogwood trees would be planted along five miles of highway, which had been designated the Blue Star Drive by the Legislature. No billboards were to be allowed on the memorial stretch. The project was named for the blue star in the service flag, which hung in windows of homes and businesses to honor service men and women.

The guest speaker at the 1945 National Council of State Garden Clubs Annual Meeting in New York City was Spencer Miller, New Jersey's State Highway Commissioner, who had helped to implement the New Jersey project. He proposed that the program be adopted by NCSGC. At the 1945 Fall Semi-Annual Meeting, the project was approved. A "ribbon of living memorial plantings traversing every state" called The Blue Star Memorial Highway Program was adopted at the 1946 Annual Meeting in New Orleans.

In 1947 Mrs. Frederick R. Kellogg (NCSGC President 1930-1933) designed a marked, which would identify the highways.

Clubs responded enthusiastically, with Rhode Island receiving the first endorsement. After official approval of the site, garden clubs would purchase markers and planting materials. Highway Departments would plant and maintain the area. This was the first program undertaken by garden clubs on a national scale.

While it originally began to honor World War II veterans, it enlarged its mission in 1951 to include all men and women, who had served, were serving or would serve in the armed forces of the United States.

The need for an extension of the program to accommodate other than dedicated highways became apparent. As a result, a smaller By-Way Marker, to be placed in areas such as parks, civic and historical grounds, was approved at the 1981 convention in Atlanta. This marker was changed at the 1994 convention in Connecticut to be more descriptive by including the words "A tribute to the Armed Forces of America".

A third marker had been added at the 1996 convention in Michigan. This marker was identical to the original Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker, except for the removal of the word "Highway". This change allowed the marker to be placed on the grounds of a National Cemetery or Veterans Administration Center. At the 2004 convention in St. Louis the scope of this marker was enlarged to include other appropriate civic locations.

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Brevard, Transylvania County

Location: Intersection of Broad Street and Caldwell Street

Dedicated:

Presented by: The Brevard Garden Club



Chimney Rock, Rutherford County

Location: US 74A across the street from the entrance to Chimney Rock State Park

Dedicated:

Presented by: The High Point Council of Garden Clubs and the Garden Club of North Carolina



Dunn, Harnett County

Location: Dunn Veterans Park

Dedicated: November 6, 2016

Presented by: Youth Garden Club

This is the first Youth Garden Club sponsored Blue Star ByWays Marker in North Carolina.



Durham, Durham County

Location: Veterans Administration Hospital (Fulton Street)

Dedicated: April 27, 2014

Presented by: Durham Council of Garden Clubs



Emerald Isle, Carteret County

Location: Hwy 58 at Crystal Coast Visitors Center

Dedicated: November 11, 2015

Presented by: Emerald Isle Garden Club, The Town of Emerald Isle, The Garden Club of NC



Fayetteville, Cumberland County

Location: Hay Street at Freedom Memorial Park *

Dedicated: March 3, 1956

Presented by: Cross Creek Garden Club



Gastonia, Gaston County

Location: E. Franklin Blvd. near S. Marietta St. (Gastonia Conference Center)

Dedicated: May 20, 2015

Presented by: Gastonia Council of Garden Clubs, The City of Gastonia, Keep Gastonia Beautiful



Goldsboro, Wayne County

Location: Intersection of Spence Avenue and US 70

Dedicated: November 20, 2013

Presented by: Evergreen Garden Club & Citizens and Veterans of Wayne County



Greensboro, Guilford County

Location: East Wendover and Huffine Mill Road in a clover leaf

Dedicated: 1976

Presented by: Greensboro Council of Garden Clubs Inc.



Hamlet, Richmond County

Location: Highway 74, on the site of the New Hamlet Senior Center

Dedicated: October 18, 1984

Presented by: The Hamlet Garden Club



Hickory, Catawba County

Location: 1855 U.S. Highway 70 East bound lane

Dedicated:

Presented by: Hickory Garden Council



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Jacksonville, Onslow County

Location: N.C. Highway 24 near city hall going toward Camp Lejeune

Dedicated: May 27, 1984

Presented by: The Jacksonville Beautification and Appearance Commission and Onslow County Garden Club Council



Jacksonville, Onslow County

Location: U.S. Highway 17 South

Dedicated: between 1985 - 1993

Presented by: Onslow County Garden Club Council



Knightsdale, Wake County

Location: First Avenue and Main Street

Dedicated:

Presented by:



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Lewisville, Forsyth County

Location: U.S. 421

Dedicated: May 5, 2012

Presented by: Lewisville Garden Club



Lillington, Harnett County

Location: Veterans Memorial Park

Dedicated: May 30, 2016

Presented by: Four Seasons Garden Club



Manteo, Dare County

Location: U.S. Highway 64 and Budleigh Street

Dedicated:

Presented by: Garden Club of North Carolina



Mebane, Alamance County

Location: U.S. Highway 70 at the Veteran's Memorial Garden

Dedicated:

Presented by: Mebane Council of Garden Clubs



Monroe, Union County

Location: Union County Public Library, Monroe Branch *

Dedicated: early 1980's

Presented by: Monroe Garden Club

* Originally dedicated in the early 1980s at the Monroe City Hall, moved to the library on May 25, 2004



Murfreesboro, Hertford County

Location: Highway 158

Dedicated: 1972

Presented by: Southern Belles High School Garden Club



Murphy, Cherokee County

Location: U.S. 64 West of Murphy

Dedicated:

Presented by: The Garden Club of North Carolina



Newport, Carteret County

Location: U.S. Highway 70 East and Howard Boulevard

Dedicated: February 15, 1971

Presented by: Newport Bud 'N Shrub Garden Club



Pilot Mountain, Stokes County

Location: Pilot Mountain Scenic Overlook

Dedicated: November 10, 2013

Presented by: The Pinnacle Garden Club, the Pilot Mountain Garden Club and the Evening Bloomers Garden Club



Pine Knoll Shores, Carteret County

Location: Highway 58

Dedicated: November 9, 2016

Presented by: Pine Knoll Shores Garden Club



Reidsville, Rockingham County

Location: U.S. Highway 158 West (Richardson Drive) and U.S. 29 South Business (Freeway Drive) on the access ramp.

Dedicated:

Presented by: Reidsville Council of Garden Clubs



Rocky Mount, Nash County

Location: At the intersection of Wesleyan Boulevard and May Drive

Dedicated:

Presented by: Garden Club of North Carolina



Smithfield, Johnston County

Location: Hwy. 301 (Brightleaf Blvd.) at Hospital Road

Dedicated:

Presented by: The Smithfield Garden Club, The Garden Club of NC, and The NC Highway & Public Works Commission



Spivey's Corner, Sampson County

Location: Spivey's Corner Fire Station

Dedicated: May 25, 2013

Presented by: Just-A-Mere Garden Club and Woodmen of the World-Lodge 1034



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Statesville, Iredell County

Location: Intersection of U.S. Highway 64 and U.S. Highway 21 in east Statesville

Dedicated: 1950's

Presented by: The Brookdale Garden Club



Statesville Mount, Iredell County

Location: Jennings Rd & Snow Creek Rd

Dedicated: June 22, 2013

Presented by: Field and Stream Garden Club and the North Iredell Ruritan Club



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Tarboro, Edgecombe County

Location: Highway 64A at Lake Valley Dr.

Dedicated:

Presented by: Garden Club of North Carolina and The NC Highway & Public Works Commission



Trent Woods, Craven County

Location: Chelsea Road near Trent Woods Town Hall

Dedicated: September 9, 2012

Presented by: Trent Woods Garden Club, Town of Trent Woods, and the National Garden Clubs, Inc.



• Rest Areas and Visitor's Centers Blue Star Memorial Markers •
I-77 Surry County, Welcome Center

Location: Milepost 105, at the Virginia State Line on I-77

Dedicated: July 21, 2006

Presented by: Modern Gardeners Farden Club Surry County Appearance Commission



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I-40 Duplin County Rest Area Warsaw

Location: Milepost 364, in median of I-40 and N.C. 24 interchange, 2 miles west of Warsaw on I-40

Dedicated: April 6, 2005

Presented by: Garden Club of NC, Inc.



I-40 Catawba County Rest Area, East Bound Lane

Location: Milepost 136, 10 miles East of Conover on I-40

Dedicated:

Presented by: Garden of Eden Garden Club, Dist. 2



I-40 McDowell County Welcome Center, West Bound Lane

Location: Milepost 82, 3 miles southwest of Marion

Dedicated:

Presented by: The Marion Council of Garden Clubs



I-40 Davie County Rest Area

Location: Milepost 177, I-40 East

Dedicated:

Presented by: Bermuda Run Garden Club



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I-26 Polk County Rest Area, West Bound Lane

Location: At Milepost 36 South of Columbus on I-26

Dedicated:

Presented by: Daffy Jills Garden Club



I-26 Buncombe/Henderson County, West Bound Lane

Location: Milepost 10, 12 miles South of Asheville on I-26

Dedicated: July 18, 2008

Presented by: The Asheville Garden Club



I-77 Mecklenburg County, Welcome Center

Location: Milepost 1

Dedicated: October 29, 2016

Presented by: Charlotte Council of Garden Clubs and the NC DAR District 3



I-85 Davidson County (south bound), Rest Area

Location: Milepost 99

Dedicated: May 19, 2014

Presented by: Garden Clubs of Davidson County, Davidson County Veterans Council



I-85 Davidson County (north bound), Rest Area

Location: Milepost 99

Dedicated: May 19, 2014

Presented by: Garden Clubs of Davidson County, Davidson County Veterans Council



I-95 North Hampton County, Roanoke Rapids

Location: Milepost 181, 1 mile south of Virginia State Line on I-95

Dedicated:

Presented by: The Garden Clubs of District XII



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I-95 Robeson County, Welcome Center

Location: Milepost 5

Dedicated: November 13, 2016

Presented by: Youth Garden Club

This is the first Youth Garden Club sponsored Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker in North Carolina.



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CONTACT

If you would like to receive more information concerning the Blue Star Memorial Marker Program please click on: [contact us](#)