North Carolina
Blue Star Memorial
Marker Program
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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 State Garden Clubs at the time), like other public-spirited groups, were seeking a suitable means of honoring U.S. service men and women. Garden Clubs 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 Mrs. Vance Hood, roadside chairwoman of the Garden Club of New Jersey, had an inspired idea: Plant 1,000 flowering dogwood trees along 5 miles of highway that had been designated the Blue Star Drive by the state lawmakers. No billboards would 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.

At the 1945 National Council of State Garden Clubs Annual Meeting in New York City, Spencer Miller, New Jersey’s state highway commissioner who helped to implement the New Jersey project, 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 from 1930 to 1933) designed a marker that 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.

Although it began as a way to honor World War II veterans, its mission expanded in 1951 to include all men and women who served, were serving or would serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. The need for an extension of the program to accommodate other than dedicated highways became apparent. As a result, a smaller Byway 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 was 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 and Caldwell streets

Dedicated:

Presented by: Brevard Garden Club
Chimney Rock, Rutherford County

Location:  U.S. 74A across from Chimney Rock State Park entrance

Dedicated:  

Presented by:  High Point Council of Garden Clubs; Garden Club of North Carolina
Clinton, Sampson County

**Location:** 1901 Sunset Avenue at Clinton Community Church

**Dedication:** Nov. 5, 2019. This is the first club to dedicate both a Blue Star Memorial marker and a byways marker at the same event. The byways marker was installed at the Sampson County History Museum (313 Lisbon St.).

**Presented by:** The Clinton Garden Club
Dunn, Harnett County

Location: Dunn Veterans Park
Dedicated: Nov. 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

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Emerald Isle, Carteret County

Location:  N.C. 58 at Crystal Coast Visitors Center
Dedicated:  Nov. 11, 2015
Presented by: Emerald Isle Garden Club; Town of Emerald Isle; Garden Club of North Carolina
Fayetteville, Cumberland County

Location: Hay Street at Freedom Memorial Park
Dedicated: March 3, 1956
Presented by: Cross Creek Garden Club
Gastonia, Gaston County

Location: East Franklin Boulevard, near South Marietta Street (Gastonia Conference Center)

Dedicated: May 20, 2015

Presented by: Gastonia Council of Garden Clubs; City of Gastonia; Keep Gastonia Beautiful
Goldsboro, Wayne County

Location: Intersection of Spence Avenue/U.S. 70

Dedicated: Nov. 20, 2013

Presented by: Evergreen Garden Club; Citizens and Veterans of Wayne County
Greensboro, Guilford County

Location: In clover leaf at East Wendover Avenue and Huffine Mill Road
Dedicated: 1976
Presented by: Greensboro Council of Garden Clubs, Inc.
Hamlet, Richmond County

Location: U.S. 74, on site of New Hamlet Senior Center
Dedicated: Oct. 18, 1984
Presented by: Hamlet Garden Club

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Hickory, Catawba County

Location: 1855 U.S. 70, eastbound lane
Dedicated: Oct. 18, 1984
Presented by: Hickory Garden Council

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Jacksonville, Onslow County

Location:  Lejeune Boulevard, at New Bridge Street (originally N.C. 24, near City Hall, going toward Camp LeJeune)

Dedicated:  May 27, 1984; moved July 6, 2017

Presented by:  Jacksonville Beautification and Appearance Commission; Onslow County Garden Council
Jacksonville, Onslow County

Location: NCDOT District Office (295-A Wilmington Highway); originally U.S. 17 South

Dedicated: Between 1985 and 1993; moved July 6, 2017

Presented by: Onslow County Garden Club Council

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Knightdale, Wake County

Location: Knightdale Veterans Park (originally First Avenue/Main Street)

Dedicated: Originally, unknown; moved and rededicated Nov. 11, 2018

Presented by: Two Green Thumbs Garden Club

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Lewisville, Forsyth County

Location: U.S. 421
Dedicated: May 5, 2012
Presented by: Lewisville Garden Club

BLUE STAR MEMORIAL
A tribute to the Armed Forces that have defended the United States of America
Sponsored by
The Lewisville Garden Club
IN COOPERATION WITH
North Carolina Department of Transportation
American Legion Post 522
AND
The Lewisville Civic Club, Inc.
Lillington, Harnett County

Location: Veterans Memorial Park
Dedicated: May 30, 2016
Presented by: Four Seasons Garden Club
Maysville, Sampson County

Location: 708 Foy Ave. at William Frost Park

Dedicated: September 20, 2019

Presented by: The Green Leaf Garden Club

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Mebane, Alamance County

Location: U.S. 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 1980s

**Presented by:** Monroe Garden Club
Mount Airy, Surry County

Location: Corner of West Pine and South Main streets
Dedicated: Nov. 9, 2018
Presented by: Mountain View Gardeners Garden Club; Dr. John L. Gravitte Family Dentistry

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Murfreesboro, Hertford County

Location: U.S. 158
Dedicated: 1972
Presented by: Southern Belles High School Garden Club
Murphy, Cherokee County

Location: U.S. 64, west of Murphy

Presented by: Garden Club of North Carolina Inc.
New Bern, Craven County

Location:  U.S. 70 West at Country Club Road (Exit 416)
Dedicated:  Unknown
Presented by:  New Bern Garden Club; Garden Club of North Carolina Inc.; NCDOT
Newport, Carteret County

Location: U.S. 70 East and Howard Boulevard
Dedicated: Feb. 15, 1971
Presented by: Newport Bud 'N Shrub Garden Club
Pilot Mountain, Stokes County

Location: Pilot Mountain Scenic Overlook

Dedicated: Nov. 10, 2013

Presented by: Pinnacle Garden Club; Pilot Mountain Garden Club; Evening Bloomers Garden Club

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Pine Knoll Shores, Carteret County

Location:  N.C. 58

Dedicated:  Nov. 9, 2016

Presented by:  Pine Knoll Shores Garden Club

Blue Star Memorial Highway

A tribute to the Armed Forces who have defended the United States of America

Sponsored by
Pine Knoll Shores Garden Club

In cooperation with
The Town of Pine Knoll Shores

and
The Garden Club of North Carolina
Reidsville, Rockingham County

Location: Access ramp at U.S. 158 West (Richardson Drive) and U.S. 29 South Business (Freeway Drive)

Dedicated:

Presented by: Reidsville Council of Garden Clubs
Rocky Mount, Nash County

Location: Sunset Avenue at Highway 301 (North Wesleyan Boulevard)

Dedicated: This marker was originally installed in 1949. It was reinstalled to its present location on Nov. 20, 2019 following a two-year road construction project.

Presented by: The Rocky Mount Garden Club in cooperation with The Garden Club of NC
Smithfield, Johnston County

Location: U.S. 301 (Brightleaf Boulevard) at Hospital Road

Dedicated:

Presented by: Smithfield Garden Club; Garden Club of North Carolina; North Carolina Highway & Public Works Commission

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Spivey's Corner, Sampson County

Location: Spivey's Corner Fire Station
Dedicated: May 25, 2013
Presented by: Just-A-Mere Garden Club; Woodmen of the World Lodge 1034

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Statesville, Iredell County

Location: U.S. 64/U.S. 21 intersection in east Statesville

Dedicated: 1950s

Presented by: Brookdale Garden Club
Statesville, Iredell County

Location: Jennings Road and Snow Creek Road

Dedicated: June 22, 2013

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

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Tarboro, Edgecombe County

Location: 3503 N. Main St., west of Indian Lake Recreation Complex (originally U.S. 64A at Lake Valley Drive)

Dedicated: Originally unknown; renovated and moved March 28, 2018

Presented by: Garden Club of North Carolina; North Carolina Highway & Public Works Commission
Trent Woods, Craven County

Location: Chelsea Road near Trent Woods Town Hall

Dedicated: Sept. 9, 2012

Presented by: Trent Woods Garden Club; Town of Trent Woods; National Garden Clubs, Inc.
I-26 Buncombe/Henderson County

Location: I-26 West at milepost 10, 12 miles south of Asheville

Dedicated: July 18, 2008

Presented by: Asheville Garden Club
I-26 Henderson County Rest Area

Location: I-26 West rest area in Henderson County
Dedicated: Unknown
Presented by: NA
I-26 Polk County

Location:  I-26 West at milepost 36, south of Columbus
Dedicated: September 1977; refurbished and rededicated April 4, 2017
Presented by: Daffy Jills Garden Club; Garden Club of North Carolina; NCDOT
I-40 Catawba Rest Area

Location:  I-40 East at milepost 136, 10 miles east of Conover

Dedicated:

Presented by:  Garden of Eden Garden Club, District 2
I-40 Davie County Rest Area

Location:  I-40 East at milepost 177

Dedicated:

Presented by:  Bermuda Run Garden Club
I-40 Duplin County Rest Area

Location: I-40 at milepost 364, in median at N.C. 24 interchange, 2 miles west of Warsaw

Dedicated: April 6, 2005

Presented by: Garden Club of North Carolina, Inc.
I-40 McDowell County Welcome Center

Location:  I-40 West at milepost 82, 3 miles southwest of Marion

Dedicated:

Presented by:  Marion Council of Garden Clubs

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I-77 Iredell County Rest Area

**Location:**  I-77 Iredell County rest area (Originally I-77 South Mooresville Rest Area north of Statesville)

**Dedicated:**  Originally unknown; moved to new location Feb. 1, 2018

**Presented by:**  Statesville Garden Council; Garden Club of North Carolina; NCDOT
I-77 Mecklenburg County Welcome Center

Location:  I-77, milepost 1
Dedicated: Oct. 29, 2016
Presented by: Charlotte Council of Garden Clubs; North Carolina DAR District 3

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I-77 Surry County Welcome Center

Location:  I-77 milepost 105, at Virginia state line

Dedicated:  July 21, 2006

Presented by:  Modern Gardeners Garden Club; Surry County Appearance Commission
I-85 Davidson County Rest Area

Location: I-85 North at milepost 99
Dedicated: May 19, 2014
Presented by: Garden Clubs of Davidson County; Davidson County Veterans Council
I-85 Davidson County Rest Area

Location:  I-85 South at milepost 99
Dedicated:  May 19, 2014
Presented by:  Garden Clubs of Davidson County; Davidson County Veterans Council
Location: Milepost 142, 1.5 miles north of Dortches, N.C.

Dedicated: This marker was originally dedicated in 1949 and was located at the intersection of Wesleyan Boulevard and May Drive. It was relocated to this rest area as a result of a road widening project that impacted the original location. This marker was rededicated on Nov. 15, 2019

Presented by: Rocky Mount Garden Club
I-95 Northampton County, Roanoke Rapids

Location:  I-95 at milepost 181, 1 mile south of Virginia state line

Dedicated:

Presented by:  Garden Clubs of District XII
I-95 Robeson County Welcome Center

Location:  I-95 at milepost 5
Dedicated:  Nov. 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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U.S. 17 Beaufort County Rest Area

Location: U.S. 17 rest area in Chocowinity

Dedicated: Nov. 10, 2018

Presented by: Washington Garden Club; American Legion Auxiliary Unit 15
U.S. 17 Brunswick County Rest Area

Location: 394 Whiteville Road, Shallotte

Dedicated: June 19, 2019

Presented by: Long Bay Garden Club

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U.S. 64 Dare County Rest Area

Location: U.S. 64 Rest Area in Roanoke Island (originally U.S. 64 and Budleigh Street)

Dedicated: Originally, Feb. 2, 1950; renovated and moved May 5, 2011

Presented by: Garden Club of North Carolina

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U.S. 70 Craven County Rest Area

Location: U.S. 70 rest area in Craven County
Dedicated: Sept. 8, 2017
Presented by: Trent Woods Garden Club; Craven County Veterans Council; Elks Post #764, Knights of Columbus; NCDOT
For more information about the Blue Star Memorial Marker Program, please contact the N.C. Department of Transportation.