



Gary L Thompson



## Project Description

It has been a long time since I set out along the path of my Eagle project. As I sit here reflecting on everything that has happened over its course, I can't help thinking about why I undertook the project that I did. As I was relaxing one evening, I started to wonder what my Eagle project was going to be. In the back of my mind, I knew that it had to benefit my community, church, or school in some way. Another thought that was floating around in the back of my head was the fact that I had realized that Worthington did not have a suitable memorial on the Village Green to those veterans who had fought for this great country. With both of these thoughts in mind the idea suddenly hit me that I had a chance to provide Worthington with an appropriate memorial to those who had made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country. This memorial would consist of an inscription on a bronze marker set into a large granite boulder to be placed on the Village Green in Worthington in order to remind the living of the contribution that others had made for their liberty, democracy, and freedom. On May 16, 1980, I took the first step in the project by meeting with Mr. James Brimeyer who was the City Manager at that time.

From this meeting, Mr. Brimeyer and I formulated the first phase for the project. This was to meet with the veterans' organizations and acquire their feelings for my idea. I sent letters out to the American Legion, Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, on June 28, 1980, to begin this process. A short time passed before I received the first response to my



letters. This response came from the American Legion who called on July 3, 1980, and we set up a meeting to occur during the month of August. Following this call from the American Legion, I received a letter from the Veterans of Foreign Wars on July 14, 1980, inviting me to attend their committee meeting on August 4. The final letter I was to receive came from the Daughters of the American Revolution. Due to the fact I would not be able to attend the Daughters of the American Revolution's committee meeting in September, I wrote them a letter explaining my project so that it could be presented in my absence. As both the meeting with the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars came and went, I had received the full support of both groups for the entirety of the project. With all this work behind me, this phase of the project was completed.

With the completion of what I had set out to do to get my project started, I returned to Mr. Elder, the interrim City Manager. With my results, Mr. Elder felt that the support I had received was a firm base to build upon with more details that would have to be worked on. With this, I entered phase two of the project which was to assimilate information which would aid in the process of figuring out the logistics behind putting together a memorial. The first problem to be encountered was to decide upon an inscription to be engraved upon the bronze marker. After doing some research on various quotations, both veterans' groups felt that a personal thought would be better than a quotation.



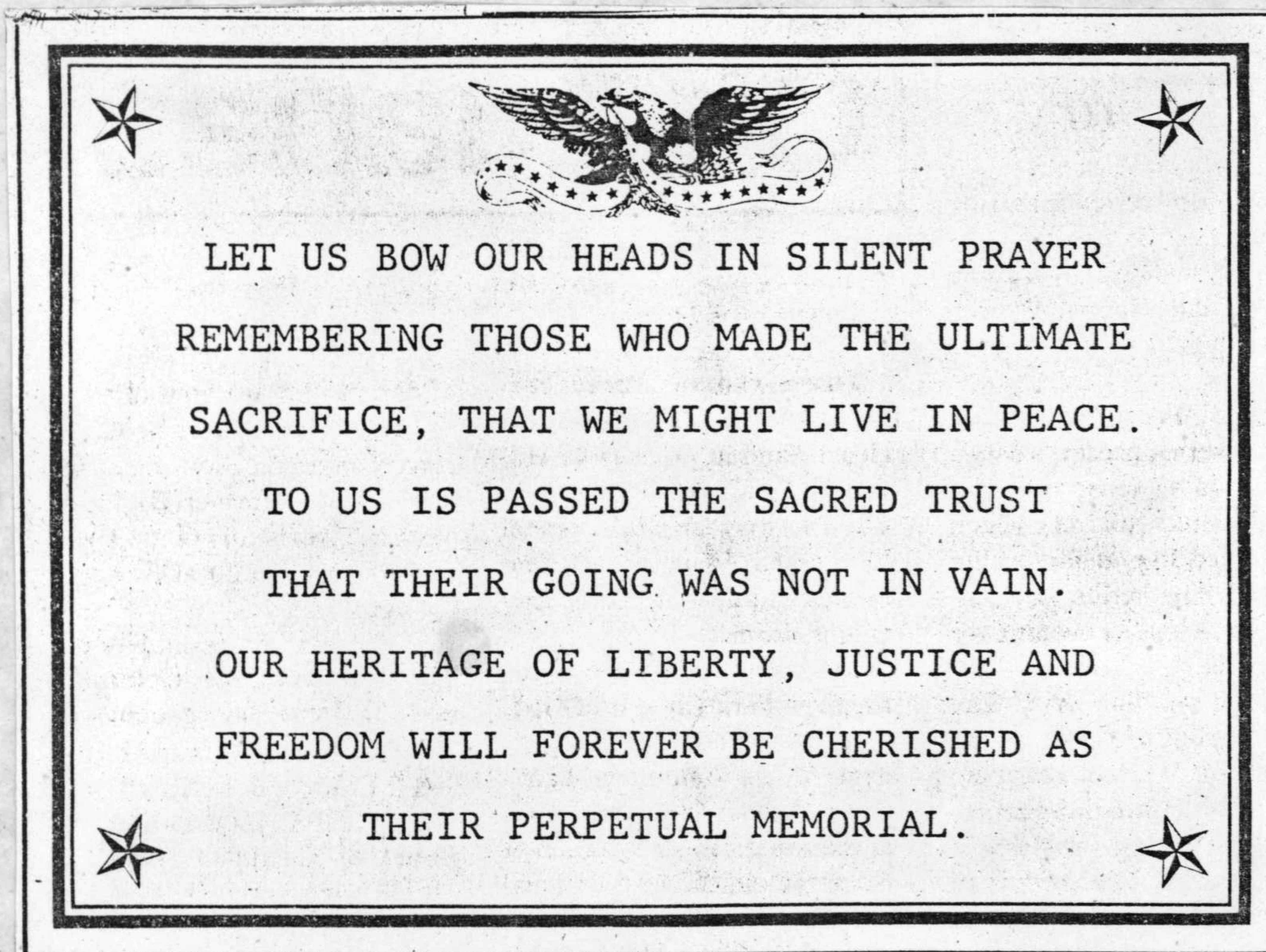


Fig 1. Plaque Inscription

The above thought for the inscription was presented to the Troop Committee of Scout Troop 268 for their approval during its November meeting of 1980. Along with the approval of both veterans' organizations, I could start researching other parts of my project that dealt with the actual memorial. The first one that had to be worked on was the determination of the size for the plaque. In order to work out this problem, I checked other markers around Worthington. After careful consideration of all the variables involved in the decision, the size that was agreed upon for the plaque was 24 inches by 18 inches. With the inscription and size of the bronze marker decided, the time had come to find a company that would engrave it for us. After checking many places, I felt that ELK promotions would be able to provide a quality job at the



lowest cost. Working with them, the next step to be taken care of was having the rough copy sent in for an estimate of cost. The price of four hundred and thirty dollars (\$430.00) to four hundred and eight dollars (\$480.00) that was quoted to me seemed like a fair price for the job. Finally, after all this work, I now knew exactly what I needed in respect to the memorial with the problem of the bronze marker solved, I could begin to ascertain the details associated with the rock that I needed to make the memorial complete. Checking on a lead from the Post Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I contacted the Ohio State Fairgrounds who put me in touch with a Mr. McDaniels who was in charge of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Apparently, the ODNR was having a granite rock brought in from Champagne County for their use, and Mr. McDaniels offered to transport another one over to be used by me for my memorial. This offer really saved me a lot of leg work by saving me the job of hunting down a four ton granite rock. Both the bronze marker and the rock had been tracked down, but one little problem remained. How was I going to get the marker on the rock? Well, Mr. McDaniels had given me a name that I tracked down. The gentleman's name was Mr. Hannigan, and he offered to do the job at a cost between three hundred and fifty dollars (\$350.00) and five hundred dollars (\$500.00). Later into the project, I realized just how lucky I was to be calling this facer so early. Half of the year had elapsed, and I was finally travelling along the road to completing my project.

Before I could go any further along the road, I first had one more light to get through. This light was both the approval from



the scouts and the approval from the city. I felt that I first had to obtain approval from the scouts. I first met with my Troop Committee on November 16, 1980, to gain their approval for the project. Once they had approved it, I met with the District Advancement Chairman as required by the Eagle Scout Service Project Application. Now that the scouts had allowed me to move ahead with the project, I presented my plan to the City Council of Worthington on December 22, 1980. During the time that the City Manager was supposed to bring up new business, Mr. Elder asked the Council to listen to my plan for the project. After I had presented all the details and answered all their questions, the vote was taken. This would be my first real chance to see how well I had prepared for a meeting. For their decision would be based heavily on how I had presented the plan. After the vote was tallied, the President of the Council commented that this was the first time in quite a while that the decision by the Council was unanimous. I was to go ahead with my project and work with Mr. Elder on the rest of the details. The road was clear ahead. All I had to do now was maneuver around a few more chuck holes.





LET US BOW OUR HEADS IN SILENT PRAYER  
REMEMBERING THOSE WHO MADE THE ULTIMATE  
SACRIFICE, THAT WE MIGHT LIVE IN PEACE.  
TO US IS PASSED THE SACRED TRUST  
THAT THEIR GOING WAS NOT IN VAIN.  
OUR HERITAGE OF LIBERTY, JUSTICE AND  
FREEDOM WILL FOREVER BE CHERISHED AS  
THEIR PERPETUAL MEMORIAL.



## *Memorial boulder planned for Village Green*

A large granite boulder will be placed on the Worthington Village Green sometime this spring, bearing an 18" by 24" plaque in memory "of all veterans of all wars" according to Gary Thompson, a member of Boy Scout Troop 268 who is planning the memorial as part of his Eagle Scout project.

Thompson appeared before the Worthington City Council December 22 to ask permission to move the four-ton rock, donated by Champagne County, to a location on the west side of the Green.

The project, complete with a bronze marker with the above inscription, will cost about \$1200, Thompson estimates. Support has already been received from the Leasure-Blackston Post 239 of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the local chapter of the Daughters

of the American Revolution, he said.

"For quite a long time, I have thought that there should be a suitable memorial in Worthington," Thompson told the council, "and as I sat down to consider by Eagle project, I realized that I could personally do something to provide an appropriate memorial to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country."

He continued, "It seemed that for the memorial to have the desired effect of reminding the living of the contributions that others had made towards their liberty and democracy that it should be placed on the Village Green which is, after all, the focal point of Worthington."

The boulder, which measures approximately four feet by four feet, will be moved to

the site by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Thompson said. A Memorial Day dedication is being planned for the rock.

The inscription, he said, was reviewed by the Worthington High School English Department and was written "very generally, to include everything that everyone has done since the beginning of this country -- to remind us what these veterans did for our freedom."

Fig 2. Article on memorial in city paper



The first of these chuck holes that I encountered was in respect to the next most important phase of the project. This phase was raising of the funds necessary to meet the cost of the various expenses that would be incurred by the memorial. On November 5, 1980, I met with the American Legion to discuss the aspects of a fund raiser. Our original idea was to run a raffle with the prize being one hundred dollar value in cash or steak. Although the idea had now been conceived, there was still much work to be done to be sure that it could work. The first decisions that had to be made were in respect to the prizes. If the winner was to choose the cash as their prize, there would be no problem, but if they were to choose the steak, we would have to have some place to get it. Rather than buy it at a store, I tracked down a wholesaler which the American Legion had used in some of its functions. Following these decisions, we had to decide on a price for each raffle ticket. Everyone agreed that one dollar (\$1.00) would be a fair price. With these decisions behind us, I could now go ahead with the design of the raffle ticket. With the help of my father, who is a professional artist, I decided what would appear on the raffle ticket, and he took care of the art work. Everything was flowing smoothly as I proceeded to take the next step in organizing the raffle. This step was to get the proper permit from the city. In order to obtain this permit, I was required to present a letter stating that the Boy Scouts of America were tax exempt. At this point, I was closing fast on one of those chuck holes. When I went to the Central Ohio Council offices to get this letter, I discovered the horrible fact that any Scout could not run a raffle. This fact was first known to me during March of 1981. At



which point, all the work that had been done on the raffle went to waste. Now, I had to begin feverish work on another fund raiser to pay for the bills that would quickly be crushing down upon me.

After tossing around several ideas that many people suggested, I decided upon a concerted effort by the Troop in a door to door solicitation of funds which was probably the best idea in the end. This may sound funny, but this way everyone in Worthington could have a "piece of the rock." With the solicitation idea conceived, the easy part was over. Once again, I had to begin the work of organizing the solicitation effort. There were several areas that had to be covered. These were getting together the material for a solicitation, organizing those who would help solicit funds, and making a personal effort by visiting local merchants. In order to run a successful solicitation, it is necessary to have something that will inform your solicitors of what you are asking to have them donate to. This was resolved by putting together an informational flyer that showed a copy of the rock's inscription, what the money was for, and who was sponsoring me in my efforts. After showing the flyer outline to both the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Mr. Strohl, who is my Scoutmaster, had several hundred of them printed. With these, the first part of the fund raiser was finished. Now I had to organize those who were going to help me solicit the funds. This second task went smoothly as many boys wanted to help. Organizing their help was a bit more interesting though. During one of our troop meetings, I had to explain what I wanted and how they could help me. Since there



were about twenty-five younger scouts in my troop, it was natural to have to explain it about twenty-five times! Once I got through to them what I wanted done though, they went out and collected \$167.50. As with any solicitation, some boys did more work than others. To these boys, I said a special thank you for their help. While the boys were out doing their share, I also was working to collect funds. To begin my solicitation, I chose several streets in town that I felt had enough businesses on them and started to walk. These are some of the places I visited:

- 1) Celina
- 2) Transamerica
- 3) State Savings
- 4) Baskin-Robbins
- 5) Domino's
- 6) General Electric
- 7) Banning & Pickett
- 8) Whaling Station
- 9) Dollar Savings
- 10) Buckeye Federal
- 11) Toledo Scale
- 12) Huntington Bank
- 13) Worthington Industries
- 14) Liebert
- 15) James Tavern

After leaving many flyers and not making much progress, I decided that another approach was needed. The way that I felt would produce



the best results was to send out flyers to selected businesses and organizations along with an explanatory letter. Here are a few of the places that I sent letters:

- 1) Kiwanis Club of Linworth-Worthington
- 2) Greater Worthington Sertoma Club
- 3) Lions Club of Worthington
- 4) Worthington Historical Society
- 5) Worthington Chamber of Commerce
- 6) Worthington Senior Citizens Club
- 7) The Worthington Inn
- 8) Home Market
- 9) Worthington Hardware
- 10) Worthington Public Library
- 11) Worthington Industries
- 12) Dollar Savings
- 13) Banc Ohio National Bank
- 14) Potters Lumber & Supply Co.
- 15) Blue Shield
- 16) B. P. Donahue Inc. Realtors
- 17) Volkswagen North

This method proved to be the best as results rolled in immediately. Several groups responded, and I ended up collecting \$210.00. With the total expenses adding up to \$867.48, I still was short by a large amount. In order to make up for this deficit, I went to my Scout Troop, the American Legion, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. When they realized the hole I was in, they were more than glad to



help. My troop kicked in fifty dollars (\$50.00), the Veterans of Foreign Wars, two hundred and twenty five dollars (\$225.00), and the American Legion, two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00). Thanks to their generosity all of the bills would be covered. In the end, I wasn't glad that the raffle fell through, but it forced me to set up another fund raiser that taught me more about leadership and allowed me the chance to get out and meet some of the businessmen of my town.

With all of these things out of the way, I was down to the last area that had to be organized. This was having the rock placed, the marker set into it, and having it dedicated. While I was organizing everything else, I had sent out invitations to Senator Kasich, Congressman Wylie, Senator Glenn, and Senator Metzenbaum, during the early part of February. Two men responded quickly that they would not be able to attend. They were Senators Glenn and Metzenbaum. The other two invitations were a bit more interesting. I shall start with the story of how I got Senator Kasich to attend the dedication. It was during the latter part of March when I still hadn't received an R.S.V.P. from him that I decided to see what was going on. This was when the fun started. I called his office to see if I could get in touch with him. Each time I called he was busy and although I left messages for him to return my calls, I still received no response. He proved to be elusive for a while longer, yet after a tirade of phone calls from me, he finally decided to talk with me. At last, I could talk to him and describe what was going on. When he understood what I was trying to do, he expressed his apologies for not being able to get

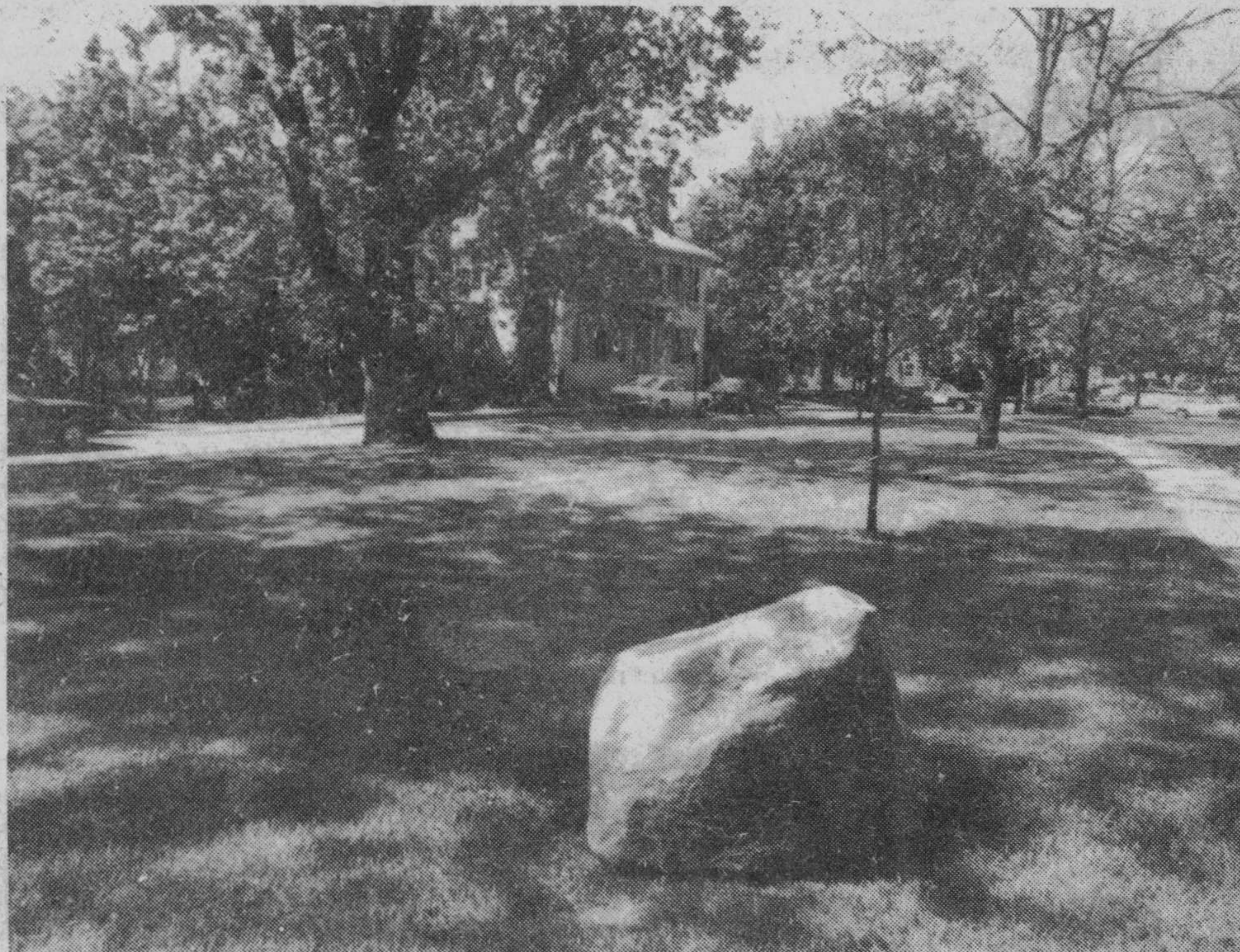


in touch with him and also accepted my invitation to the dedication service. The story of how I was to get Congressman Wylie to the dedication service is just as interesting as the latter. When he sent a letter in return to my invitation, he mentioned the fact that he was tentatively involved in a parade on Memorial Day. Little did I know that he was going to be in Worthington's parade. So as coincidence would have it, my father happened to see him at Krogers while the congressman was spending time away from Washington. This was about a month before the planned dedication. While we thought he wasn't coming to the dedication all this time, he thought he was. I suppose there was a mix-up with his secretary or something of that order. So fortunately, my father got the issue cleared up, and the congressman asked him to tell me to call him in Washington so that we could get everything set up. I followed this up, and after I was asked several questions by his secretary, we had everything cleared up. Although I was very happy to have both these gentlemen show up for my dedication I didn't have time to celebrate. I had to get all the other details organized for the dedication.

On April 15, I went down to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to look at the rock and discuss how we were going to get it to the green in Worthington. With this being the first time that I had seen the rock I didn't know what to expect, but when I saw it, I was extremely happy. It was very large and had a flat side that was perfect for the plaque. If this wasn't enough to make my day perfect, we were talking about transportation next. While I didn't want to force having the rock on the green as soon as



possible, they said that they had to have it in place by the end of the week because their bulldozer had to be somewhere else after that. So after telling them how I wanted it placed on the green and how to get to our green in Worthington, this very significant part of the dedication was solved. Later that week, I went by the green to see how it looked. Since a picture is worth a thousand words, I will let this newspaper clipping do the talking.



**MEMORIAL DAY DEDICATION PLANNED**—Worthington Boy Scout Troop 268 member Gary Thompson is planning a Memorial Day dedication for a large rock he recently had moved to the southwest corner of the Worthington Village Green.

The large boulder will bear an inscription in recognition of "all veterans of all wars" and is part of Thompson's work towards his Eagle Scout Award.

After receiving permission from the City of Worthington, Thompson arranged to have the rock moved from Champagne County to Worthington by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

He is now attempting to raise some \$900 to pay for a bronze plaque and the facing of the rock, so that the plaque can be permanently attached. Father Peter Beckwith of St. John's Episcopal Church will officiate at the 8:30 a.m., May 25 dedication and local government officials also are invited to attend. Local Leasure-Blackston Post 239 of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars also are helping to support the project, and anyone wishing to make a contribution should send it to Memorial Rock, American Legion Post 239, 700 Morning Street, Worthington, Ohio 43085.

Fig 3. Article in paper about dedication



Still there was one last important detail that had to be taken care of before the dedication could be made possible. It was the important item known as the plaque. It was fortunate as I said earlier that I had got in touch with Mr. Hannigan early in the winter to have the job done because if I hadn't, his busy schedule at this time of year would not have allowed him time to take care of my plaque. When I called him to say that the rock was on the green, he said that he would call me one morning before I went to school so that I could show him what I wanted done. Well one morning I decided to go to school early, and as I was sitting in front of the library, I heard my name being paged by the Central Unit Office. When I arrived at the office, my mom was on the phone. She told me that Mr. Hannigan had called. I immediately got in touch with him to see what was going on. To my surprise he wanted to meet me at my house at 9 o'clock so we could go to the green and start putting the plaque on the rock. Fortunately, I was able to get a pre-excused slip from the office, and I was able to meet Mr. Hannigan. As the rock was having the plaque put on it, I liked looking at it this way, "The Eagle Has Landed." By the time school let out, they were finished, and it looked wonderful.

I now had finally reached the last part of the project, and the part of the project that I had waited for close to a year to do. This was to dedicate the rock to the Veterans which it was meant for. There were several details that I had to take care of. The first of which was a few more invitations. These invitations were sent to the members of City Council, members of the American Legion, the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Dr. Cavanaugh, my



principal at that time. Not only were these veteran organizations going to send members to the dedication, but also a color guard. Along this same line, I was thinking that since this memorial was to the veterans that some one from the armed forces should be present at the dedication. So after sending the Adjutant General an invitation, I called just to make sure and although the Adjutant General was not going to be able to make it, Lieutenant Colonel Jack R. Sanford was sent over in his place. There was one last invitation that had to be made. This was to Father Peter Beckwith of St. John's Episcopal Church, who I hoped would give the invocation at the dedication. After school one day, I went to the parish offices to speak with him. After describing to him what I wanted, he was more than pleased to be able to help out. Now that these invitations were out of the way, all I had to do was organize the order I wanted everyone to speak. It was to go something like this:

- 1) Commander Kent Bruce (American Legion)
- 2) Gary Thompson
- 3) Congressman Chalmers P. Wylie
- 4) Senator John R. Kasich
- 5) Commander Chuck Perkins (Veterans of Foreign Wars)
- 6) Father Peter Beckwith (Invocation)
- 7) Gary Thompson (Closing)

As the day of the dedication drew near, I had to make final preparations for the reception that was to follow the dedication service. The first thing that I had to firm up was for the use of the Parish Hall during the reception. At the same time I was receiving this approval, the lady there described how all the coffee makers and the



like worked and also gave me the key to get in to the church hall. Let's see, what else did I have to do? Oh yes! There were the refreshments that were to be served at the reception. I picked up some coffee, tea, orange juice, and some doughnuts along with the necessary accoutrements for the coffee and tea.

As Memorial weekend arrived, I had all these last minute details taken care of. Now all I could do was wait for Memorial Day to arrive and that it did. Since there was some setting up to do, I arrived at the green early. Following is a diagram of what I hoped to have the dedication area look like.

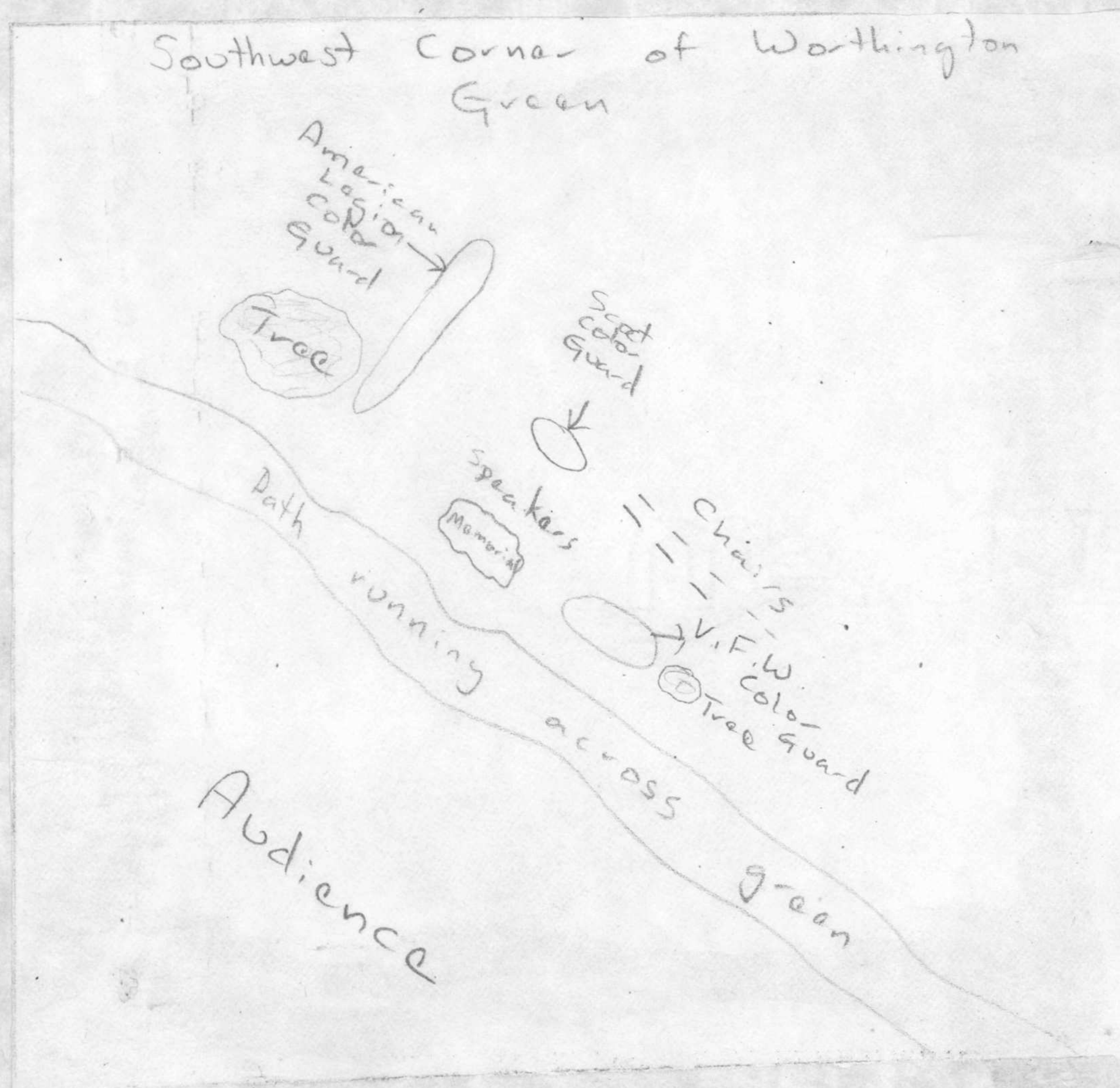


Fig 4. Diagram of set-up for dedication



To start off, I began by setting up everything for the reception, and when this was out of the way, I went over to the green to set up the chairs for my guests that were to speak. As I finished arranging the chairs, the people began arriving. First to arrive were the color guard from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Congressman Wylie. After greeting them and chatting for a short while, a reporter from the Columbus Dispatch showed up. I answered several of his questions, and then pictures were taken with Congressman Wylie and Commander Perkins. As if this wasn't enough, the color guard from the American Legion and my color guard from Troop 268, showed up. With all the color guards assembled, I could get them in place for the ceremony. By looking at the diagram on the previous page, one can tell exactly how they were placed for this eventful morning. Father Beckwith and Lt. Col. Jack R. Sanford were the final two to arrive. I still had a chance to chat with both of them and found that they were both very amiable. Unfortunately, Senator Kasich had picked up a head cold and wasn't able to make it. By 8:15 A.M. we were ready to start and quite a crowd had gathered. After the presenting of the colors, the morning went as planned. Although I left my speech in the Parish Hall, I had practiced it enough that this wasn't evident. Each one of my speakers had prepared speeches that made this dedication even more exhilarating. Then, Father Beckwith dedicated the Memorial with a beautiful prayer. As the dedication ended, the reception followed. I think that it would be nice to conclude with some pictures and my speech as said at the dedication.





Fig 5. Meeting the guests

"As I stand behind this Memorial on this exhilarating morning, I begin to think back to the beginning of this project and the reasons why I undertook this Memorial as my Eagle project. About a year ago when I was trying to decide on a project, I suddenly realized that Worthington did not have an appropriate memorial on the green to those who gave their lives in the service of their country. With this thought in mind, I started to formulate my Eagle project around this idea. For the past year, I have been



Fig 6. Turning the Memorial over to the citizens of the community



able to work through each difficulty that I have encountered by remembering the cause I was working towards and realizing that it was a real honor to be able to commemorate those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country and its ideals. So as I stand here with a lot of work behind me, I want to say that it was worth it. All the difficulties, all the milestones, every minute of work was worth being able to see this final product. But as of this morning, this is no longer an Eagle project, it is Worthington's memorial to serve as a constant reminder



Fig 7. Ground-level perspective of the memorial



of the veterans of all wars, for without them we may not have the freedom to be dedicating this memorial to them. With these thoughts in mind, I would like to read the inscription:

'Let us bow our heads in silent praye  
remembering those who made the ultimate  
sacrifice, that we might live in peace.  
To us is passed the sacred trust that  
their going was not in vain. Our  
heritage of liberty, justice, and free-  
dom will forever be their perpetual  
memorial''



Fig 8. The completed product of an Eagle project

Now that I am at the end of the long road of my Eagle project, I now have a chance to look back and reflect on all the different aspects, good and bad, that have happened during its course. When I began this project over a year ago, I was just fifteen, rather shy, had never dealt with lots of people, and had never really organized something on a large scale. As I started to think about my Eagle project, I thought about these many things that I had never



done. Well, one can imagine how I felt about what I was going to do. As each day passed after I had started my project, each meeting, telephone call, or problem that came up was dealt with, and after it was solved, I suddenly realized that I was doing all of those things that I thought I'd never achieve. Before I close, I would like to add one remaining thought to everything about my project I have already mentioned. This is a personal thought on the value of my Eagle project. As I sit here now and reflect on my undertaking, the one thing that stands out above everything else are the many valuable lessons I have learned; such as, preparing for meetings, making calls to organize something, and preparing letters. Each one of these things has to do with leadership and organization. The two virtues that will remain with me always as a result of this experience.

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Scout Gary Thompson's mother, Jean, and grandmother, Elsie Colverhouse, watch attentively as B.S.A. Troop 268 [St. John's] Scoutmaster, Robert Strohl, presents Gary his Eagle Award in ceremonies at the Memorial on the Village Green.

## ***Receives Eagle Award***

Gary Thompson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Thompson, received his Eagle Award at a Court-of-Honor held April 25 on the Village Green, Worthington. Members of Troop 268 (St. John's), along with Gary's family, participated in the ceremony.

Gary, a senior at Worthington High School, has been a member of Troop 268 since 1976 and has served as Den Chief, Patrol Leader and Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. He has been involved with the vestry at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and the youth program in the Diocese of Southern Ohio. He has been active with the municipal government through programs at the high school.

Gary's Eagle project involved the planning, financing and placing of a

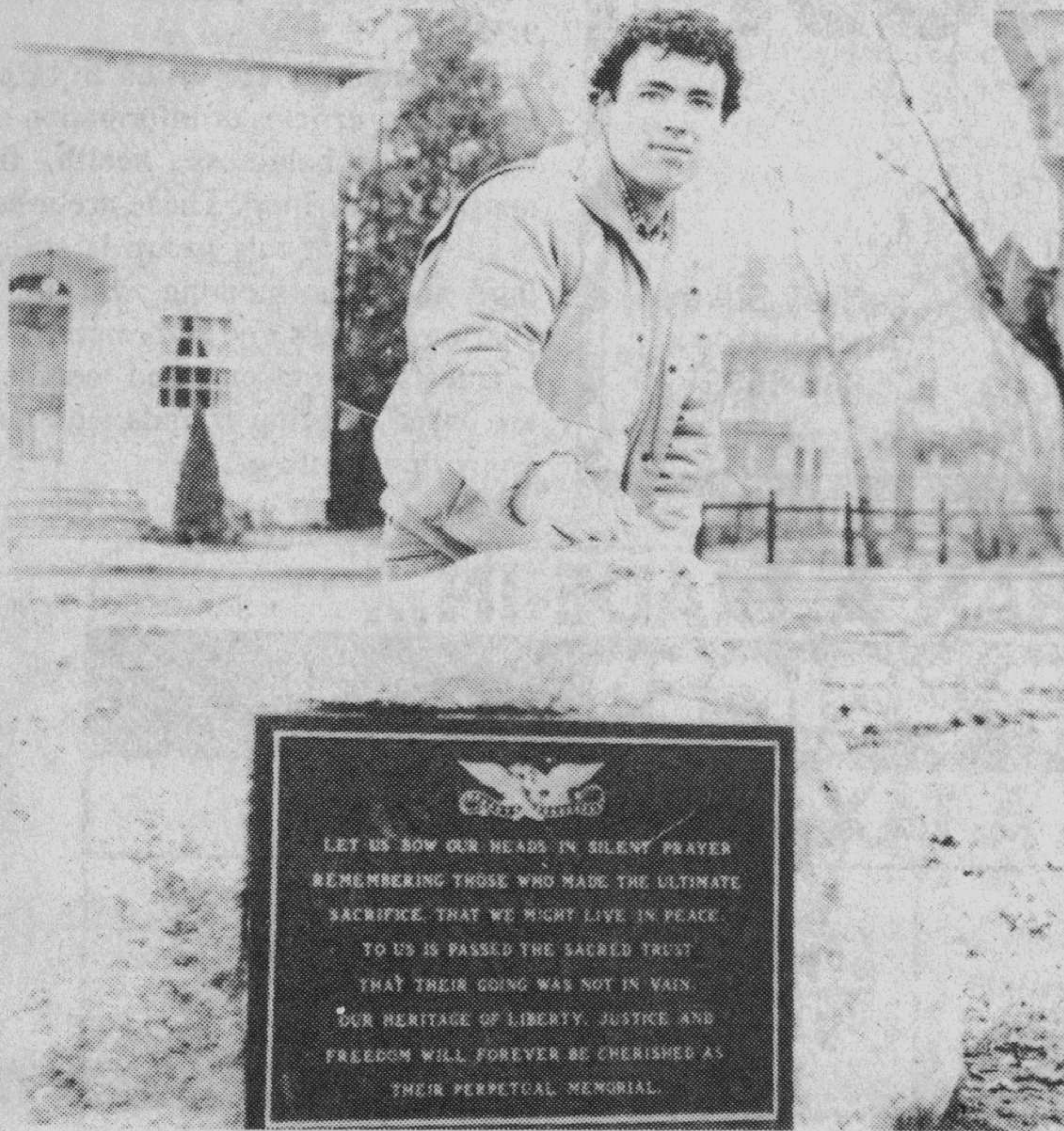
memorial to the war dead of all the United State's wars. A granite boulder bearing a plaque with the following inscription has been on the Green for several months:

"Let us bow our heads in silent prayer remembering those who made the ultimate sacrifice that we might live in peace. To us is passed the sacred trust that their going was not in vain. Our heritage of liberty, justice, and freedom will forever be cherished as their perpetual memorial."

Gary, assisted by troop members, financed the memorial with contributions from the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, various service organizations, neighbors, friends, and family.



# Gary Thompson honored for memorial



**Gary Thompson, son of Roy and Jean Thompson of 153 Larrimer Ave., visits the memorial he erected on the Village Green in 1982. He recently won the Bronze Citizenship Award from the Sons of the American Revolution for his work.**

**By Candy Brooks**

Gary Thompson only comes home for visits and vacations these days. He is a freshman at Northwestern University now, studying economics and political science in preparation for a career in law.

His contribution to the City of Worthington and his tribute to those who died for our country remains here, though. That tribute, in the form of a 4-ton rock engraved with words of thanks to those who died in war, will probably still be read and appreciated by visitors to the Village Green when Gary is a graying,

distinguished attorney.

Gary is the young man who is responsible for the placement of the memorial rock on the southwest quadrant of the Village Green.

He worked on the memorial throughout 1981 to fulfill a requirement for his Boy Scout Eagle rank and to demonstrate his own thanks. The rock was dedicated on Memorial Day, 1982.

Since then, Gary has received his Eagle ranking, graduated from Worthington High School, and was accepted and earned several scholarships and grants at Northwestern.

Now he is so busy that he couldn't

even make it home on Jan. 31 when he was given the Bronze Citizenship Award for his work on the memorial. Gary's father, Roy, of 153 Larrimer Ave., proudly accepted the award for his son.

The award was presented by The Sons of the American Revolution for the Outstanding Service Project of 1983. (Though the memorial was dedicated in 1982, Gary completed the remaining Eagle requirements in 1983). His project was chosen over 134 projects from the Central Ohio Council of Boy Scouts and will now be eligible for the statewide award given annually.

Gary, of course, is pleased that his work is being recognized. But, he insists, he would have tried to erect a memorial regardless of his Scouting requirements or any awards he might win.

"People often don't stop to realize the opportunities that are there that wouldn't have been there if these people hadn't fought and been willing to give up their lives for us," Gary explained.

"I have always wanted to give visible recognition to the people who fought for our country," he added. "This is my way of saying 'thank you'."

Gary also wants to thank the Boy Scouts, which he joined in 1976. He plans to help out with the organization following college.

As a member of Troop 268 at St. John's Church, under the leadership of Bob Strohl, he learned not only how to tie a knot and survive on his own, but also how to live, he said.

"Scouting taught me independence and what it really means to be free and to respect that," Gary said.

"I have gotten a lot out of Scouting, it is only right that I give some of that back."