

Rangers remembered

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By Kristin Molinaro, *The Bayonet*



CPT Adam Snyder was one of the 230 names added to the National Ranger Memorial over the summer. He was a member of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point's 2004 graduating class. CPT Snyder died Dec. 5, 2007, in Balad, Iraq, from wounds suffered when his vehicle encountered an improvised explosive device. Following the dedication ceremony, his mother used paper and a pencil to make a rubbing of his paver on the memorial's walkway.

FORT BENNING, Ga. - The names of 230 fallen Rangers were added to the National Ranger Memorial in a ceremony Friday attended by family members, widows and dignitaries including GEN(R) Barry McCaffrey, adjunct faculty member at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., and an analyst for NBC News, MG Michael Ferriter, Fort Benning and Maneuver Center of Excellence commanding general, and MG(R) Ken Leuer, a former Fort Benning commander.

The Rangers spanned several wars and conflicts, but all had one thing in common - they were graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. The event was hosted by the West Point Alumni Association and the Ranger Training Brigade.



GEN(R) Barry McCaffrey spoke at the memorial Friday.

"It's painful for many of us to reopen those parts of our lives," said GEN(R) McCaffrey, key speaker at the event, recalling the fallen Rangers, most of whom lost their lives during the Vietnam War.

"There were great (Soldiers) we were horrified we lost ... like Terry Allen, "Rocky" Versace and Bill Deuel ... a whole roster of our classmates still frozen in time. What we are doing here today is trying to remember the example they set for us."

The names of the fallen are etched onto plaques made of Virginia granite that pave the path leading up to the monument.

More than 5,800 names have been added to the memorial since it opened Aug. 25, 1994 on the grounds of Ranger Field, said Joe Leuer, executive secretary for the National Ranger Memorial Foundation.

CPT(R) Jack Price, of West-Point.Org, talked about the years-long process to locate, investigate and bring the names of Ranger USMA graduates to the monument. West-Point.Org is a nonprofit organization connecting thousands of USMA graduates, parents and friends of West Point.

"The (West Point graduating) classes in the early 60s suffered some pretty serious casualties in Vietnam, high numbers of losses," said the captain, who was a graduate of the class of 1964.

"There was a movement in those early classes to do what we've done today, but they were having a difficult time getting organized and raising the funds. The West Point community has an organization called West-Point.Org run by graduates and they brought the tools to the table to allow this mission to be accomplished."

Several others "critical" to the project, he said, included MG(R) Leuer, archivists at West Point and Soldiers with the Ranger Training Brigade, who searched through hundreds of Ranger School graduate records to vet the names for the monument.

"Today we start with 230 and it is my hope that at some point in the future all the names for all these Rangers will be inscribed in this monument," CPT(R) Price said.

Most of the 230 names have already been added to the monument, with seven scheduled to be added next year.



Hundreds gathered Friday at the National Ranger Memorial for a ceremony honoring Rangers and graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point who were killed in action since the Vietnam War. Their names were added to the memorial over the summer as part of a collaborative effort.

About the memorial

The National Ranger Monument began as a sketch drawn on a napkin by two anonymous Rangers in a mess hall. From such humble beginnings has arisen a magnificent testimony to the contributions Rangers have made to the common defense of the United States and around the globe.

The memorial is composed of a large Fairbairn-Sykes fighting knife sitting between two large marble pillars as the centerpiece. This knife was issued to British Commandos and the men of the newly formed 1st Ranger Battalion prior to the invasion of Europe during World War II.

Another part of the monument is the walkway to the centerpiece, which passes under a stone Ranger tab. The walkway is composed of pavers etched with the names of former and current Rangers. No rank is indicated, only the word "Ranger" as the first line.

The monument is contained inside an arrow-shaped hall of fame wall and eight black marble monuments recognizing specific eras and friends of Rangers.

A stone locator book helps visitors locate specific names.

The monument is maintained by the National Ranger Memorial Foundation, a nonprofit organization that raises funds to support the monument, assist Ranger families in distress and provide scholarships for Rangers and dependents.

Source: National Ranger Memorial Foundation