

Large Kentucky Sundial Has memorialized fallen veterans for nearly 40 Years

A tribute at the Kentucky Vietnam Veterans Memorial has a unique way of honoring soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice

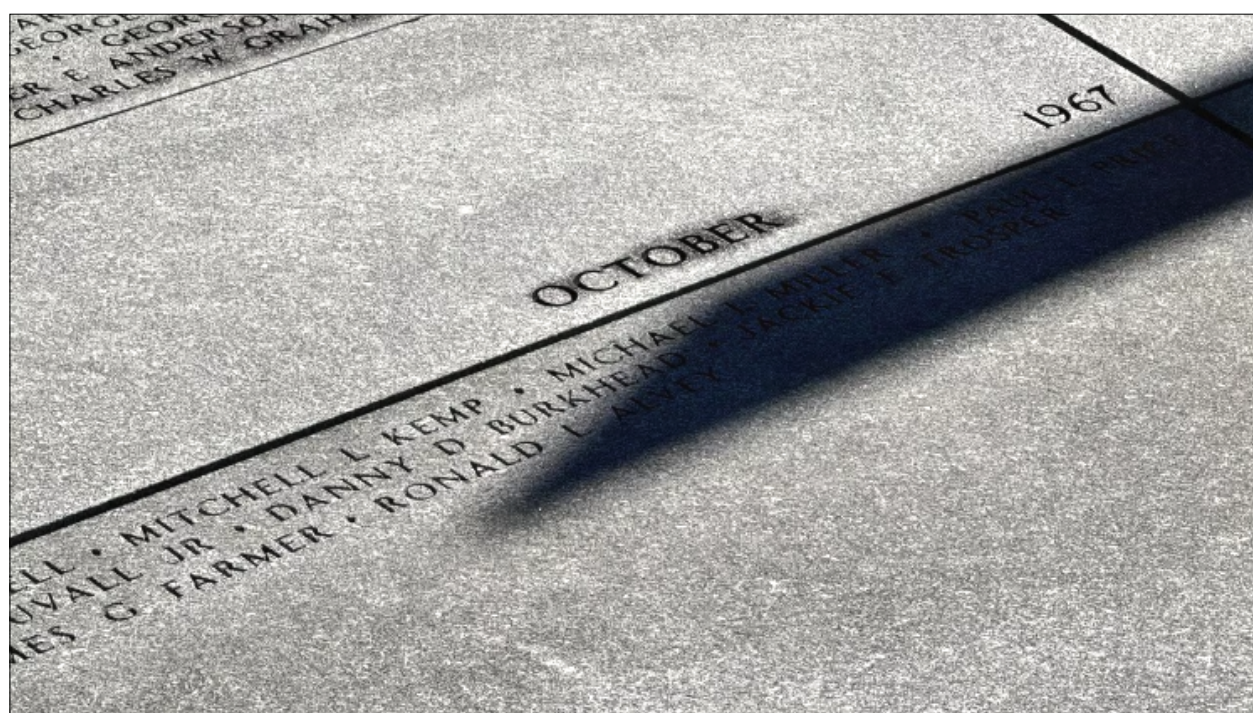
By Kevin Damask
Military.com

Memorials across the country often find special ways to honor fallen veterans. The Kentucky Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Frankfort makes sure veterans are honored every day.

Since Veterans Day 1988, a sundial has highlighted each veteran listed at the memorial. On the anniversary of each veteran's death, the tip of its shadow touches the engraved name of every veteran etched onto a large blue-gray granite plaza.

The sundial was designed by the late Helm Roberts, who won a design contest hosted by the Kentucky Vietnam Veterans Memorial in the late 1980s. Roberts, a veteran, received the 2003 Sawyer Dialing Prize from the North American Sundial Society (NASS) for his work.

"(Helm) designed the memorial so every day is Memorial Day for a Kentucky Vietnam Veteran," according to the Kentucky Vietnam Veterans Memorial. "It is a masterpiece of design, mathematics, history, honor and beauty."



The Kentucky Vietnam Veterans Memorial sundial casts a shadow below each veteran's name on the anniversary of their death. (Kentucky Vietnam Veterans Memorial).

On Friday, members of the NASS got to see the sundial up close when they visited the memorial as part of the organization's 31st annual conference, held June 25 to 28 in Louisville, Ky.

For Ret. Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Michael W. Davidson, the memorial carries a personal connection.

Davidson, president of the Kentucky Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., entered the Army in

August 1969 in the midst of the Vietnam War. He served until July 2001, primarily in Special Forces and Ranger units. He spent the final six years of his career at the Pentagon.

He said the sundial presents a daily tribute to the 1,110 Kentuckians who lost their lives in Vietnam from 1962-1975. More than 125,000 Kentucky residents served in the war.

"It's a dynamic recognition every day based on

the movement of celestial bodies," Davidson told Military.com.

While building a sundial is a rare way to honor fallen veterans, Davidson said other memorial organizations could follow suit, but the design must be the right fit for the organization and its surrounding community.

"(The) design is an intensely individual decision by each group," Davidson said. "We

encourage by example but do not interfere with the design decision process by other groups."

The tribute is one of the largest granite memorials in the U.S., containing 327 custom panels weighing more than 215 tons. Memorial officials used the same carving style seen at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. to memorialize the names and dates of each veteran.

The Kentucky memorial was constructed in the late '80s, when honoring Vietnam veterans wasn't as common as it is today.

"The memorial was built through the leadership, resolve and perseverance of Vietnam veterans at a time when many people were deaf to the need for such a tribute," according to the memorial's website.

The sundial is a prime attraction in the Bluegrass State, becoming one of the most visited landmarks in Kentucky for teachers and students, civic groups, tour groups and veterans. Visitors can see the memorial at any time of year.

Other similar sundials exist across the United States. One in Indianapolis, Ind., was erected in 1951 to honor the entire U.S. Armed Forces. The Anthem Veterans Memorial in Arizona, while not a traditional time-telling sundial, features five marble pillars that represent all U.S. military branches and at exactly 11:11 a.m. annually on Veterans Day, sunlight hits perfectly to illuminate the Great Seal of the United States.

Governor Beshear provides Team Kentucky Update

Governor Andy Beshear's
Office Press Release

FRANKFORT, Ky. – Today, Gov. Andy Beshear provided updates on emergency response efforts following recent storms and flooding, economic development, state parks and tourism, projects to improve local bridges, housing in Eastern Kentucky, and upcoming Independence Day celebrations. First Lady Britany Beshear provided an update on the commonwealth's efforts to fight domestic violence. Dr. Steven Stack, secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, provided an update on the Our Healthy Kentucky Home initiative. The Governor named first responders and volunteers who have helped with emergency response and recovery efforts this past week as Team Kentucky All-Stars.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY EFFORTS FOLLOWING RECENT FLOODING

The Governor provided an update on the dangerous flooding that impacted most of the state over the weekend. Yesterday, Gov. Beshear visited with families and toured the damage in two of the hardest hit areas: Cumberland and Madison counties.

On Saturday, the Governor declared a state of emergency for the commonwealth.

Twenty-six cities and counties also declared a local state of emergency. Large amounts of rainfall hit during short periods of time, with some areas receiving more than 8 inches. Over 63 water rescues and evacuations have been conducted.

Currently, emergency management teams are conducting damage assessments in affected areas. Team Kentucky asks that people who were impacted fill out a damage assessment survey. The Governor noted that flooding has left behind debris and advised Kentuckians to proceed with caution, especially boaters on lakes or rivers this holiday weekend. Additionally, many roadways and bridges are closed due to damage. Visit goky.ky.gov for up-to-date road conditions.

If you would like to support Kentuckians affected by this severe weather event, please visit the Team Kentucky Emergency Relief Fund. All donations go directly to survivors of emergency events in the commonwealth.

The Governor also provided an update on current weather conditions, as much of the commonwealth is still under an extreme heat warning. Team Kentucky encourages Kentuckians to stay hydrated, wear light clothing, stay in the air conditioning as much as

possible, avoid going outdoors during the warmest hours, bring pets inside, and check vehicles before locking the doors to make sure no children or pets are inside. Team Kentucky has also set up cooling centers across the state.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Yesterday, Gov. Beshear joined local officials and leadership from Horse Soldier Bourbon to celebrate the grand opening of the company's new \$200 million distillery and full-scale bourbon tourism attraction in Pulaski County, adding another signature project to Kentucky's growing bourbon and tourism industries.

KENTUCKY STATE PARKS AND TOURISM

Gov. Beshear announced that Kentucky State Parks generated \$1.1 billion in economic impact in 2024, supporting 8,600 jobs and helping fuel economic growth across the commonwealth.

Since the beginning of his administration, the Governor has signed legislation allocating \$213 million for state park renovations to ensure this success continues.

In June, Team Kentucky cut the ribbon on a \$3.8 million campground renovation at Carter Caves State Resort Park. Click here for a Good News update on this project. Team Kentucky also invested \$7.4 million at Lake

Cumberland State Resort Park to renovate the lodge and conference center. Click here for a Good News update on this project. To follow the progress of Kentucky State Parks renovation projects, visit parks.ky.gov for improvements.

Gov. Beshear also announced that seven Certified Local Government Program communities received \$113,500 in federal grant funding to support projects focused on preservation efforts, including public education, documentation, and community revitalization.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DASHBOARD AND ANNUAL REPORT

Today, to further protect against domestic violence, combat human trafficking, and support survivors, the First Lady announced that Team Kentucky has launched an interactive data dashboard for the public to more easily view data; compare statewide statistics by county and area development district; and gather specific information on offenders, domestic violence shelters and support services, as well as law enforcement-related outcomes. The dashboard includes data from each of Kentucky's annual domestic violence data reports.

Today, Team Kentucky also released the 2025 Domestic Violence Data Report, which is

reflected in the new dashboard. For more, see the full release.

AWARDS TO IMPROVE LOCAL BRIDGES

The Governor announced \$5.5 million to repair or replace 10 bridges across eight Kentucky counties and two cities. The funding will reconnect and restore safe traffic flow on previously closed or weight-restricted routes.

EASTERN KENTUCKY HOUSING

Gov. Beshear provided an update on housing for communities affected by flooding in the east. The Governor announced that Team Kentucky is providing over \$1.7 million to the Perry County Fiscal Court to build five homes outside the floodplain, along with the necessary infrastructure, in the Chavies community. The Governor also noted progress being made at Chestnut Ridge, one of the eight high-ground sites in Eastern Kentucky. At Chestnut Ridge in Knott County, three more homes will be framed and sided by the end of this week. Eight high-ground communities will eventually provide over 500 new homes for flood survivors outside the floodplain.

OUR HEALTHY KENTUCKY HOME

Dr. Stack provided an update on Our Healthy Kentucky Home, an initiative to promote

simple, positive, and attainable goals to inspire and motivate Kentuckians on a journey to health and wellness. Dr. Stack highlighted important resources such as the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, the Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs, and kynect.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

The Governor noted Saturday, July 4, was Independence Day and a celebration of 250 years of our democracy. Team Kentucky hosted a celebration in Frankfort on the Kentucky Historical Society campus. For more, visit history.ky.gov.

TEAM KENTUCKY ALL-STARS

Following recent storms and flooding, the Governor named first responders and volunteers who have helped with emergency response and recovery as this week's Team Kentucky All-Stars.

"From our swift water teams who conducted more than 63 rescues and evacuations, to our state and local emergency management, KSP, law enforcement, and more, these teams helped save lives, and we are grateful," said Gov. Beshear. "This is the spirit of Team Kentucky. This is who we are. We lead with kindness and love, and our resilience and strength help us overcome. These heroes are true Team Kentucky All-Stars."