

Blue Star Memorial Marker Dedication on Nov. 9 to Honor Our Nation's Armed Services



BY CYNTHIA JUPP, PHOTO BY JACKIE WHITAKER PHOTOGRAPHY



The use of the blue star symbol to recognize heroism dates back to circa 400 B.C. when Alexander the Great used the blue star to honor the bravest of his soldiers.

Over 70 years ago, the National Council of State Garden Clubs (now National Garden Clubs, Inc.) proposed a coast to coast Memorial Highway System dedicated to honoring all who served in World War II. The Blue

Star was chosen to designate the new project. The roadside beautification project was the first to be attempted on a nationwide basis. The goal was to create living memorials as a fitting expression of the nation's gratitude for all who had served.

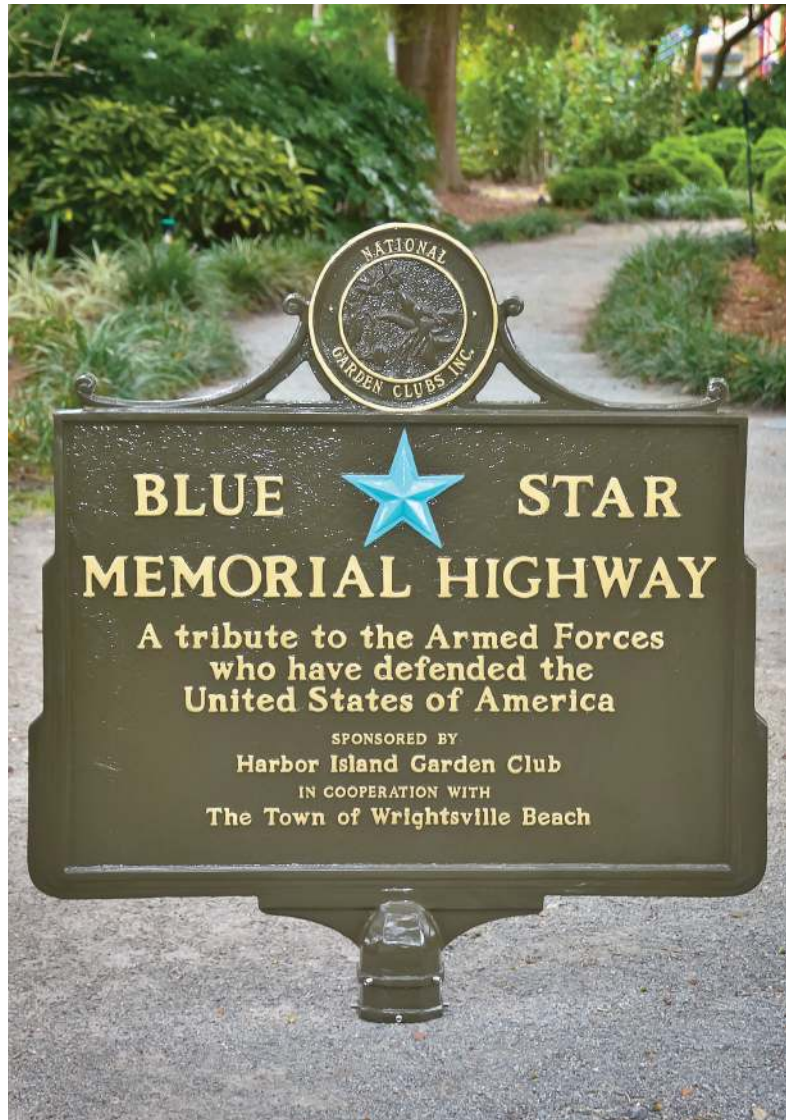
In 1946, funds were donated for a forging die to create a double sided aluminum, polychrome painted memorial marker. The Department of War (now Department of Defense) was consulted and approved the design. Sewah Studios in Marietta, Ohio was selected to manufacture the markers and remains the exclusive manufacturer today.

Over the years, the project became a ribbon of living memorials traversing every state. While it originally began to honor World War II Veterans, the mission was expanded in 1951 to include those who have served, those who are presently serving, and those who will serve in the nation's armed forces.

The marker is 41" high x 45" wide. Apart from the gold-colored embossed lettering on the Blue Star Memorial Markers, the background color originally authorized by the Department of Defense has always been olive drab or "Army Green" - the camouflage paint used by tactical military vehicles since World War I. The modern clearcoat finish darkens the shade of green slightly and adds luster. Unlike the navy blue color of the star in the service banner, the star on the memorial markers is closer in color to a robin's egg blue. In 2013, Sewah Studios replaced oil based paints with powder coating for a harder, more salt tolerant finish to extend the surface coloring lifespan. Unlike the previous oil based paints, powder coatings contain no solvents and release little or no volatile organic compounds into the atmosphere.

National Garden Clubs, Inc., the parent organization for Blue Star Memorial Highways, is committed to placing Blue Star Memorial Markers on our highways and byways in honor of our nation's armed forces. Each time a Blue Star Memorial Marker is dedicated, we show our love and respect for the United States of America and for the Armed Services of America.

"We are thankful and humbled by this opportunity to honor the members, past and present, of the Armed Services of the United States of America. We sincerely thank them for that service,



often at great sacrifice to themselves. They have defended this nation and helped preserve our freedoms as envisioned by our founding fathers," says Wrightsville Beach Mayor Darryl Mills. "We are very grateful to the Harbor Island Garden Club for their efforts in making this tribute possible and bringing attention to the members of our Armed Services."

Harbor Island Garden Club and the Town of Wrightsville Beach invite you to attend the dedication of the newest Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker on Thursday November 9, 2023 at 2:00 PM. at Keel Street and Causeway Drive near Redix Store. Parking is free at this time of year and is available on street. Additional parking for the event is available at the Bluewater Waterfront Grill parking lot. For purposes of planning: RSVP at HarborIslandGardenClub.com