

ESSAY PAGE

With our Nation at war, the 101st Sustainment Brigade had no way of honoring Soldiers who paid the ultimate sacrifice. When it came time to complete my Eagle Scout Project, I wanted to contribute something meaningful and lasting. My father is a Soldier in the 101st Sustainment Brigade and was preparing to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. When I decided the direction of my project, I realized that this would be the greatest challenge I would face. I had an opportunity when I was younger to finish up my scouting requirements, but had I completed my Eagle Scout project then, I believe it would have been much simpler and less memorable. As an older and more experienced scout, I possessed the leadership skills, drive, and determination to complete a project of this size and magnitude. My father was beside me every step of the way, from the research and design to the fund-raising and construction, until he deployed to Iraq. Knowing my father was going to deploy sometime during the summer, I pushed through each phase in order to finish the major construction before my dad left.

I could have easily taken on a much smaller project, less time intensive and certainly at a smaller cost. However, I chose to aim high, despite the discouragement from my Boy Scout troop leaders. They felt this project was too large and would require too much time and effort. I would not be discouraged and with their reluctant permission completed a project made of concrete, bricks, and granite to serve as a reminder of our fallen Soldiers, hoping that my father's name never appears on this monument. I was required to recruit volunteers to help me complete this undertaking. Between school, football and my father's impending deployment, we had to work nearly every day for a month to finish the project. My father left five days early, but the major construction was complete. In all, sixty scouts, friends, Soldiers, and teammates came out to help me complete my goal. With over 650 total hours logged and a cost of \$8500, the Fallen Soldiers Memorial is now a reality. With the landscaping in place, I surveyed my completed project and felt an immense sense of satisfaction.

I accomplished what many thought was insurmountable and feel I have in some small way contributed to the legacy of these Soldiers that deserve to be remembered. I persevered because I believed in not only what I could achieve but also in the purpose of the project. I found a way to combine my love and enthusiasm for building things and my genuine desire and passion to make a difference. With the right support and guidance I completed my project. I will continue to aim high and do what I can to reach each of my goals. Through this challenge I learned to believe in myself and execute what I knew in my heart I could accomplish.