

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of County Commissioners

October 18, 2021



**DESTIN
FORT
WALTON
BEACH
FLORIDA**

OKALOOSA COUNTY SET TO UNVEIL WOMEN VETERANS MONUMENTS

Okaloosa Island, Fla. – Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners are proud to announce the Grand Unveiling of the Women Veterans Monuments at Veterans’ Park. We invite the public and media to attend the ceremony, to be held on Veterans Day, Thursday, November, 11, 2021. Presentations will begin promptly at 2 p.m. on Bayview Plaza outside of the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center on Okaloosa Island, adjacent to Veterans’ Park.

The eight bronze statues pay homage to the military which has played an integral role in sculpting our community. Florida is home to the second-largest population of women veterans in the nation, second only to Washington, D.C. What makes this memorial one-of-a-kind is that all of the statues pay tribute to women who have served throughout history.

“The Nation will be proud and residents, along with guests will embrace the detail, quality and effort that has gone into honoring women who have given such dedication to our country,” said Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners Chairman Carolyn Ketchel. “Additionally, the statues will be situated along the trail in a way that preserves the natural habitat of native wildlife and vegetation.”

Honorees chosen by the Women Veterans Monument Advisory Committee and approved by the Board include the following: Margaret Corbin (Revolutionary War, Army), Cathay Williams (Civil War, Army), Lenah Higbee (World War I, Navy), Jacqueline Cochran (World War II, Air Force Reserves), Jonita Ruth Bonham – Bovée (Korean War, Army Air Corps / Air Force), Sharon Ann Lane (Vietnam War, US Army Nurse Corps Reserve), Leigh Ann Hester (Persian Gulf War, Army National Guard), Naseema (War in Afghanistan, US Air Force). Learn more about the honorees at myokaloosa.com/bcc/women-veterans-memorial.

The Women Veterans Memorial includes a dedication plaza, ADA sidewalks, parking, landscape with irrigation and eight life-size bronze statues, made possible, entirely by Okaloosa County Tourism Development funding.

A Living Shoreline, funded by a RESTORE grant, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and matching funds from Tourism Development, will be constructed to protect 2,200 linear feet of shoreline by reducing the impact of wave energy and providing an oyster habitat, a seagrass

recruitment area and a salt marsh shelf. There is a boardwalk planned, along with an education component and post-construction monitoring.

Parking for the unveiling is available onsite at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center located at 1250 Miracle Strip Parkway SE, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548.

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