

“Cost of Freedom” American Veterans Traveling Tribute & Traveling Wall

On March 30, 2011 "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" by a resolution of Congress; the AVTT Traveling Vietnam Wall and a contingent of vehicles entered Benbrook Texas escorted by dozens of American Legion Riders from Benbrook Post 297 and Patriot Guard Riders.



Thursday March 31, 2011 shortly after noon the “Wall” had been erected and booths including reception, VFW, American Legion and flag displays from the Patriot Guard were complete. The American and Texas Flags were posted by American Legion Post 297 Commander Larry Sutton and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10429 Commander Peter Kau.



(center) “Gold Star” Wreath placed by Tuskegee Airman Claude R Platte & Gold Star Mom Dorothy Schafernocker

(left) Former POW John Yuill LTC (ret) and MSgt Patricia Stover placed the POW/ MIA Wreath

(right) Capt. Hartmen & Officer Lawrence of the Benbrook Fire & Police Dept. placing 911 Wreath

Gold Star Mother Dorothy Schafernocker and Tuskegee Airman Claude R Platte presented the “Gold Star” Wreath. They were followed by MSgt Patricia Stover from the 301st Fighter Wing and former POW John Yuill LTC (ret) placing the POW/ MIA Wreath and Patrol Officer Rafe Lawrence and Capt. Jackie Hartmen of the Benbrook Police and Fire Departments placing the 911 Wreath



Benbrook Boy Scouts from Langhorn Council: Troop 95 color guard on 1 April 2011



Benbrook Girl Scouts USA Texas Oklahoma Plains Troop 3202 gave cards and cookies to all Veterans & Troops.

Friday proved another beautiful day starting with student field trips and many visitors. Colors were posting by Boy Scout Troop 95 and Police Chief James Mills and Fire Chief Tommy Davis gave a tribute to all those that perished in the 911 attack and appreciation to all who serve. Visitors came around the clock.

Saturday welcome many citizens and dignitaries to hear the Western Hills HS Choir & Cougar Band.

Western Hills High School ROTC posted the colors and speakers included Congresswoman Kay Grainger, Purple Heart Recipient Brian Fleming, Commander NAS/JRB Fort Worth, USN Captain T.D. Smyers and Mr. Gordon England, former Sec. of the Navy, Dep. Sec. of Homeland Security and Defense.



Brian Fleming, Purple Heart Recipient, USN Captain T.D. Smyers, Commander NAS/JRB Fort Worth, Congresswoman Kay Grainger and Legion Members in 2nd row



Customer service volunteers Bill Kuehner [SAL squadron 297], Neal Henke [DAV Chapter 20] and Shay Grannan [Legion Auxiliary Unit 297]

The day was filled with conversation, learning, shared and sharing experiences. The formal activities concluded with an Evening Candle Light Vigil.

Sunday was the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars appreciation and a wrap-up day.

I was particularly impressed by the daily Reveille and Taps by Roland Paquette; around the clock duty by Benbrook "Citizens On Patrol", daily volunteers from the American Legion, VFW, DAV, Patriot Guard and others. The outstanding coordination by Patty Bissey and courteous and thoughtful assistance from all the city of Benbrook folks made for an inspiring experience. Very good pictures of the wall can be found at www.AVTT.org.



DAV Officer Roland Paquette played reveille and taps daily

Submitted by Ken Cox, District 12 Hubmaster