

‘We’re All Brothers and Sisters’

VFW Post 9186 and Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 1836 in San Antonio, Texas, collaborate to erect a statue dedicated to the service of all veterans

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On May 23, a brand new statue was unveiled just a few steps away from the front doors of VFW Post 9186 in San Antonio, Texas.

“The Price of Freedom” is a bronze statue depicting three soldiers — two men, who are embraced shoulder-to-shoulder, carrying one another, and a woman, who is providing close support from behind. It stands adjacent to the Post’s flagpole, atop a marble pedestal on the corner of Padre Drive and VFW Boulevard.

Each soldier symbolizes a different armed conflict that the U.S. has been involved with. The soldier in the center represents the Vietnam and Korean Wars, the soldier to his left represents WWII and the soldier standing behind the pair represents the Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan Wars.

“We’re all brothers and sisters, regardless of the conflict or war we served in,” said Antonio “Tony” Ramon, commander of Chapter 1836 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart when asked about the significance of the statue representing different eras.

The original idea for a statue came from Vietnam veteran and local artist Michael Boyett, who served as an infantryman in Vietnam. Boyett created the original design for the statue, however after Boyett’s death in April 2015, the project was put on hiatus.

Ramon, along with the rest of Chapter 1836, eventually picked up the project. They wanted a memorial that emphasized different eras of U.S. military conflicts. However, the project was put on hiatus once again when they began to have trouble establishing a location for the statue.

After connecting with Post 9186, they were able to coordinate the statue to be placed in the

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Veterans Memorial Garden, just outside the doors to the Post.

To help pay for the statue, the Post began to hold fundraisers. However, once news of the statue reached the ears of Michael Lynd, who served as a first lieutenant during the Vietnam War and founded Lynd Management Group, he offered to pay for the whole statue — so long as “he could get one of his own.” Lynd’s statue, “Vet Fully Loaded,” can be found outside the Lynd corporate office in San Antonio.

The unveiling ceremony of “The Price of Freedom” at Post 9186 was a success. San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg, along with retired Army major general and Medal of Honor recipient Pat Brady, were guest speakers at the event, which included Harlandale High School JROTC members presenting colors and mariachi performers from Southwest High School.

Post members took an immediate liking to the statue.

“Words cannot describe how beautiful this statue is,” said past-VFW Post 9186 Commander Ralph Alvarado. “All of us at VFW Post 9186 are proud to have erected this statue on the grounds of our Memorial Garden.”

Ramon praised the cooperation between the Military Order of the Purple Heart and VFW.

“It was an awesome ceremony,” said Ramon said. “The Purple Heart and VFW worked together as a team. Different organizations can get together to accomplish something for these veterans.”

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