

Walk of Honor

Mork Raising Funds for Veterans Monument

By Ben Rogers

Area Veterans who received in combat could soon have some extra recognition. Lyle Mork is currently in the process of raising funds for the Walk of Honor Monument at the American Legion Sheveland-Taylor Veterans Memorial Park.

"These people have received medals," said the Post 14 member. "It's everything from the Medal of Honor down through the Purple Heart and the Prisoner of War Medal."

"It's Just honoring these people, he said. "I just think it's nice to honor them."

While Mork is the project organizer for this particular monument, he is also no stranger to raising the funds for similar projects. Previously he raised \$50,000 for a memorial to Gold Star, or fallen soldiers, as well as \$30,000 for a memorial to all who have served from the area. Both are on display at the park.

Mork's plans include a 39-foot long by 17-foot wide stretch that will feature the monuments. It will be for all veterans from the area from the Civil War to current conflicts.

The Navy veteran was a Corpsman, has plenty experience with memorials like this one. "We have had other Veteran's groups come over to the park and they're interested in doing something similar to what we're doing," Mork said.

He isn't surprised that other smaller communities are planning memorials. "I just think because the communities are closely knitted together more, a lot of the people know these people personally, or their families," Mork said.

Now comes the hard part, raising the money to complete the monument. Mork will start out by sending out 150 letters asking for donations. Even though not one has hit the post office yet, he has already received his first donations. "We have already received \$1,500," he said smiling.

If everything goes to plan, he wants to have the monument open for Flag Day, 2018.

Iola Village President Joel Edler said the cause is a worthy one, but the goal of raising the money will be a challenge. "It is a noble cause that he is working on and we thank him for all his work," Edler said. "I just don't know how much more they can get for the Veterans Park in Iola. That's where the rub is I think, because that's a lot of money."

He said the village will help, but the exact amount is unknown at this time. "I wish him nothing but the best and we will as a village do what we can, but I'm not sure what that's going to be," Edler said. "we will know more after the next board meeting that's coming up."

Through research and contacts with other veterans, Mork has some names, but he also wants to make sure everyone has a chance to be included. The medals include The Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross (also known as Navy Cross and Air Force Cross), Defense Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Soldiers Medal (also known as Navy/Marine Corps Medal and Airman's Medal), Bronze Star, Purple heart and Prisoner of War Medal.

So far Mork has more than 60 medal recipients on his list. In order to be placed on the monument, a veteran's DD-214 discharge papers are required.

To help the American Legion reach their goal, see Mork or any other American Legion member at the park or historical society on Memorial Day.

Donations can also be sent to Lyle Mork; c/o The American Legion; 295 Blaine Street; Iola, WI 54945. Make checks payable to The American Legion Post 14.