

“THE JEWEL IN THE GOLDEN CROWN”

Most everyone living in the United States knows of the first Marine Corps Memorial in Washington D.C. The 32 foot tall statues of six Marines, rising the second flag atop Mt. Suribachi – based on Joe Rosenthal’s iconic photograph during the battle for Iwo Jima, Japan in 1945. But few people today know of the USMC Memorial in Golden, Colorado.

The City of Golden, Colorado has supported this, the only other Marine Corps Memorial of its kind in the country, since the Memorial’s inception in 1974. This lovely historical Front Range community has boasting rights! With large gatherings of local Veterans for Memorial Day and Veteran’s Day every year since its construction in 1977, the Golden, Colorado Marine Corps Memorial has yet to receive the fanfare it deserves. It is now the intention of this next generation of local Marines to change the way Colorado and the entire Western United States thinks of this historic treasure. The planned improvements will soon make the Rocky Mountain Region refer to our United States Marine Corps Memorial as “The Jewel in the Golden Crown”.



Illustration #1: It is estimated that 70,000 automobiles pass this U. S. Marine Corps Memorial daily. But have you ever seen it, or ever investigated what it has to offer? (Photo credit: Dean Glorso)

The U. S. Marine Corps Memorial in Golden was the original brainchild of a Colorado Marine by the name of Staff Sergeant Cyrus “Bo” Bowers. Bo, with other local Marines & supporters met in his Golden, Colorado living room in 1974, to plan and design the monument that currently sits at the triangle intersection of Colfax Avenue and 6th Avenue, just 850 yards east of the lavish Jefferson County Courthouse Building. (See illustration #1). Bo’s \$30,000 original construction budget for the monument gave us the exposed aggregate “tilt-up” wall presently at the site. With volunteer labor they constructed the walls with a bronze colored Marine Corps Eagle, Globe, and Anchor (“E.G.A.”) emblem manufactured with the help of The Colorado School of Mines students. Colorado Governor John D. Vanderhoof signed a proclamation in 1975, designating the land for this U.S. Marine Corps Memorial site. In 1977 U. S. Marine Corps Commandant Louis H. Wilson Jr., A Four Star General & “Top Marine” at that time, dedicated the monument in a public ceremony: **“TO ALL MARINES OF ALL ERAS, LIVING, AND DECEASED, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO GAVE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE IN DEFENSE OF OUR NATION’S FREEDOMS”**. The Memorial will celebrate its 40th Birthday on (Saturday) August 26th, 2017.

Big changes are planned for the Golden Marine Corps Memorial in the next ten years. Ms Paula Sarlls, now President of the USMC Memorial Foundation, a Marine with Vietnam Era Service, has been active in the Memorial Association for a number of years. Paula has also worked on boards of many other noteworthy causes for Veterans of all branches, since I have known her.

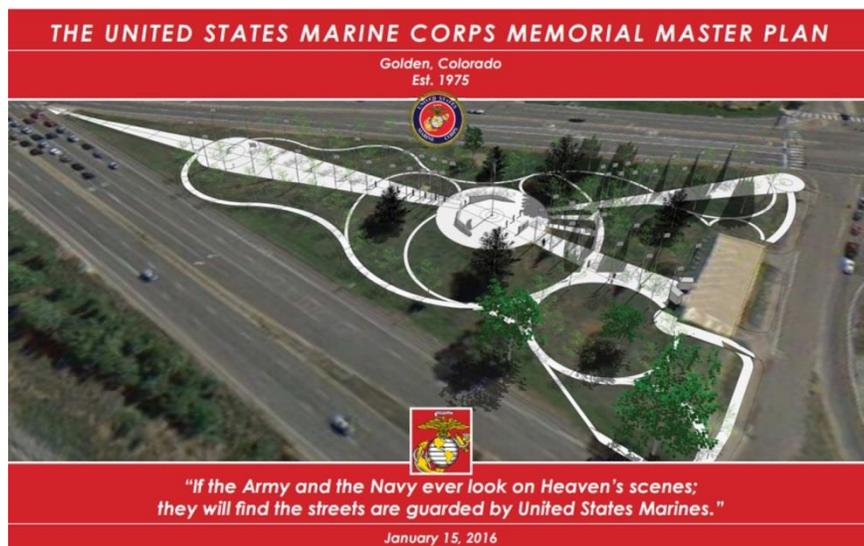
The redesign idea was first introduced by the Leadership Jefferson County Class of 2015. They helped pave the way for several Marine Veteran groups to place “Unit Memorial Stones” on the site and got Matrix Design Group and Ian Anderson,

Architect involved in the preliminary design process. The construction cost, based on the Matrix design is estimated to be 3.2 Million Dollars. The intention at this point is to increase the awareness of veterans, patriots and the general public, so they will enthusiastically promote and make contributions to this very well intended cause.

Over these past 40 years of the Golden Marine Corps Memorial's existence, there have been some improvements to the facility with volunteer work from the Navy Sea Bees, Veterans of all Services, and the Young Marines of Colorado. Currently, the State of Colorado mows the native un-irrigated grasses several times in the summer months. The Foothills Chapter of Young Marines help on a regular basis with site "clean-up". But only a few local Marine Veterans volunteer to help in maintaining the grounds. At some point, a modest source of irrigation water must be developed so the site can be made to look more parklike in nature, while still adhering to Colorado drought tolerant planting practices. Included in the design estimates are startup maintenance costs, with the potential of monies to be set aside for investment CD's, with proceeds to be used for future maintenance of the grounds.

In 2015 a very ambitious Girl Scout already started the improvements in the achievement of her "Girl Scout Gold Award". Girl Scout Debra Zerr volunteered her, family's time, and raised funds to put in the first proposed gravel path on the south side of the memorial, at the location as designated by Matrix Design Group. Debra also wrote a brief history of the site and maintains her pamphlet in a box at the site for visitors to read. Army Veteran, Allen W. Fredenburg a retired Professional Land Surveyor and myself helped to direct Debra in the procedures used in laying out the new walking path.

Some clean-up and cosmetic improvements will be made prior to the 40th Anniversary this August 26, 2017, but the bigger goal is to have all the formal, more costly renovation improvements complete before the 50th Anniversary in August 2027. At the USA TRI-Centennial in 2076, the time capsule that was set at the site in 1976 will be opened for the first time since its placement.



(Illustration #2) Conceptual Design, By: Ian Anderson, Matrix Design Group, Denver, CO

Link to the Marine Corps Memorial Improvement Animated Video by Ian Anderson:

<http://www.usmarinecorpsmemorial.com/project-remodel.html>

Semper Fidelis,
Dean F. Glorso, V.P. USMC Memorial Foundation
USMC Vietnam Veteran 1968-1969
dfglorso@comcast.net