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House of Representatives

The Honorable William R. Keating

June 11, 2014

In Recognition of War Veterans Memorial Park, Vineyard Haven

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize War Veterans Memorial Park in Vineyard Haven and the generous contributions by residents of this Martha's Vineyard town that helped to create this memorial to our nation's veterans.

Legionnaires at the General George W. Goethals Post #257 in Vineyard Haven wanted their memorial to be something that could be enjoyed by Vineyarders, and not simply observed by them. Instead of a statue or other traditional sculpted war memorial, these men deemed a park with playing fields and a playground would be a more suitable tribute to their brave service to America. As such, construction began on 10 acres of an undeveloped swamp in 1951.

Construction on the Memorial Park engaged the Vineyard Haven community in a variety of fundraising events such as bean suppers, dances, and auctions. Over the last 8 years, many contributions by Islanders have made possible the leveling and developing of the Park's land, laying down a grass surface, and replacing over a thousand yards of peat with top soil.

The War Veterans Memorial Park in Vineyard Haven will serve as a proactive memorial to the men of Legion Post #257 and General George W. Goethals himself, distinguished nationally for his role in digging the Panama Canal and, locally, as a member of the Martha's Vineyard community.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to honor these veterans as well as recognize the vast and generous contributions by Vineyard Haven residents who made possible this memorial park and engaging community center.