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FREEDOM ROCK[®]

Visitor's Guide



WESTERN IOWA TOURISM REGION
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THE FREEDOM ROCK®

The Freedom Rock® Story

Inspired by the movie, *Saving Private Ryan*, Greenfield artist Ray “Bubba” Sorensen II began painting a large rock north of Greenfield in 1999, when he was 19.

Sorensen wanted to give veterans a unique recognition on Memorial Day to say “thank you” to our nation’s veterans and to honor their service to our country. It has become known as The Freedom Rock® and he repaints it each year in time for Memorial Day.

Since painting the original Freedom Rock®, Sorensen has been on a mission to create a Freedom Rock® in each of Iowa’s 99 counties. He has completed a Freedom Rock® in all of the Western Iowa Tourism Region counties except for Buena Vista, Harrison, Montgomery and Palo Alto which have been booked but are yet to be completed.

Sorensen’s work is known internationally and he has painted patriotic murals throughout the United States. To find out about the Freedom Rocks® in other Iowa counties, visit the official Freedom Rock® website.

Acknowledgements & Thanks

- The Rural Iowa Annual Mural Painting for our Veterans Painted by Ray "Bubba" Sorensen II, Freedom Rock® images Copyright Ray “Bubba” Sorensen II
- The Freedom Rock® Official Website: thefreedomrock.com
- Photos of Freedom Rocks® courtesy of John Zeman, www.johnzeman.com
- Community organizers who provided the local cultural history and Veteran’s stories that inspired their county’s Freedom Rock®.

How to Create Your Own Interactive Itinerary

1. Click here to open the [Western Iowa Freedom Rock Map](#)
Or paste this address into your browser
https://www.easymapmaker.com/map/WITR_FreedomRocks



2. In the upper left corner of the map, click on the tab **More Options** to show **Directions Nearby**.




3. Put your cursor in the **Start** field and then click on the map point where you want to start your route, for example 1. Menlo.



4. Put your cursor in the **End** field and then click on the map point where you want to travel next. For example, 13. Guthrie Center.



5. Click on the **Get Directions** button and you’ll get the route instructions and picture on the map. To plot your next stop, press the **Clear** button and repeat Steps 3-5.

6. If you want to start over, go to the upper right corner of the map and click on the icon to reset the map. 

THE FREEDOM ROCK®

How to Use this Guide

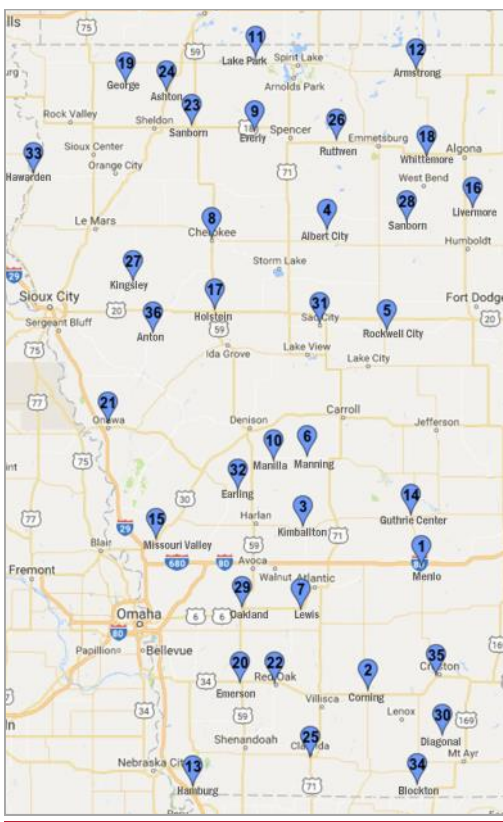
This guide is organized in alphabetical order by county with the numbered map points being keyed to the towns in Western Iowa where a Freedom Rock® is located. There is a brief description of the thoughts behind the illustrations on each Freedom Rock® and those lowans that are memorialized. Information will be updated when the Buena Vista, Harrison, Montgomery, and Palo Alto Freedom Rocks® are completed.

Click here to open the [Western Iowa Freedom Rock Map](https://www.easymapmaker.com/map/WITR_FreedomRocks)

Or paste this address into your browser

https://www.easymapmaker.com/map/WITR_FreedomRocks

#	County	Town.....	Page	
1	Adair	Menlo.....	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	Adams	Corning.....	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Audubon	Kimballton.....	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Buena Vista*	Albert City.....	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Calhoun	Rockwell City.....	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Carroll	Manning.....	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Cass	Lewis.....	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Cherokee	Cherokee.....	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Clay	Everly.....	8	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Crawford	Manilla.....	8	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Dickinson	Lake Park.....	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Emmet	Armstrong.....	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Fremont	Hamburg.....	10	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Guthrie	Guthrie Center.....	10	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Harrison*	Missouri Valley.....	11	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Humboldt	Livermore.....	11	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Ida	Holstein.....	12	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Kossuth	Whittemore.....	12	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Lyon	George.....	12	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	Mills	Emerson.....	13	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	Monona	Onawa.....	13	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	Montgomery*	Red Oak.....	13	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	O'Brien	Sanborn.....	14	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	Osceola	Ashton.....	14	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	Page	Clarinda.....	15	<input type="checkbox"/>
26	Palo Alto*	Ruthven.....	15	<input type="checkbox"/>
27	Plymouth	Kingsley.....	15	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	Pocahontas	Rolfé.....	16	<input type="checkbox"/>
29	Pottawattamie	Oakland.....	16	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	Ringgold	Diagonal.....	16	<input type="checkbox"/>
31	Sac	Sac City.....	17	<input type="checkbox"/>
32	Shelby	Earling.....	17	<input type="checkbox"/>
33	Sioux	Hawarden.....	18	<input type="checkbox"/>
34	Taylor	Blockton.....	18	<input type="checkbox"/>
35	Union	Creston.....	19	<input type="checkbox"/>
36	Woodbury	Anthon.....	19	<input type="checkbox"/>



*Counties with Freedom Rocks® yet to be painted include: Buena Vista, Harrison, Montgomery, and Palo Alto. The map reflects the sites where they will be located.

Adair County—Menlo

The Freedom Rock®, 2301-2319 120th St, Menlo, IA 50164

Established 1999 | Repainted every Memorial Day

The original Freedom Rock for 2017 features well-known artist, the late Bob Ross, who served as a staff sergeant and member of the U.S. Air Force for 20 years. Artist Bubba Sorenson was inspired by Ross years before he began painting the original Freedom Rock.

The upper left of the north side features pictures of Medal of Honor recipients Lt. Col. Bruce Crandall and Maj. Ed Freeman. Both men repeatedly flew their choppers into enemy machine gun and rifle fire in their quest to evacuate wounded U.S. soldiers and Marines.

They are depicted with the Huey helicopter, a Vietnam War scene that is featured annually. For several years the ashes of Vietnam War veterans has been mixed into the paint used for this helicopter. This year's painting brought the number to 100. The lower portion shows Lee Hazen, a Prisoner of War during World War II who was a native of Adair County.

U.S. Army Pvt. First Class Desmond Thomas Doss, a Medal of Honor recipient, is featured on the west side of the Rock. Doss, a conscientious objector who served as a medic and would not carry a weapon in World War II, served as the inspiration for the movie, "Hacksaw Ridge."

The east side of the Rock features "man's best friend," depicted in a trio of service dogs, including the famous U.S. Army Sgt. Stubby, of World War I, a service dog decorated for his work in saving his regiment from surprise mustard gas attacks.

Adams County—Corning

Corning Freedom Rock®, 400 444 6th St, Corning, IA 50841

Painted in 2013 | Number 8

The Freedom Rock® features battleship, a fighter jet and a soldier with the words "Remembering Our Heroes". The rock pays tribute to three servicemen from Adams County who were killed in action during their service to our country: Ronald Bunting was in the Army in Vietnam. Billy Cooper served as a Navy Hospital Corpsman in Korea. John Thuman served in the Navy in WWII. A banner streaming from the beak of a bald eagle bears Iowa's motto, "Our Liberties We Prize and Our Rights We Will Maintain".

Adair County—The Original



Adams County



Audubon County—Kimballton

Kimballton Freedom Rock®, 150 Esbeck St, Kimballton, IA 51543

Painted in 2014 | Number 13

Kimballton is a proud Danish settlement and home to a replica of the Little Mermaid statue that sits in the Copenhagen harbor. The Mermaid illustrated on the Kimballton rock holds American and Danish flags representing the many local Danish American soldiers who served our country.

Other images reflect Audubon County's iconic attractions including the Heritage Rose Garden in Gray, the Albert the Bull statue in Audubon, the Plow in the Oak in Exira and the Tree in the Middle of the Road in Brayton. Since the county was named for artist John James Audubon, who created "The Birds of America", the rock includes Iowa's state bird, the American Goldfinch.

Audubon County



Buena Vista County—Albert City

Buena Vista County Freedom Rock®, City Park on Main St, Albert City, IA 50150

Painting is scheduled for 2019.

Calhoun County—Rockwell City

Rockwell City Freedom Rock®, 419 Main St, Rockwell City, IA 50579

Painted in 2014 | Number 19

A soldier who is carrying one of his wounded comrades to safety crosses in front of a huge "Thank You Veterans" that appears to be carved out of stone. In the background is the USS Iowa. The P47 aircraft flying overhead are in recognition of a local Veteran who flew many successful missions in a P47.

A ribbon that says, "The cost of freedom will never be forgotten", is clutched in an eagle's talons below Soldiers Crosses representing four different eras. Soldiers Cross is a practice started during or prior to the American Civil War, to show honor and respect at the battle site for a soldier who has been killed. It is made up of the soldier's rifle stuck into the ground or into the soldier's boots, with the helmet on top. Beneath an American flag is draped over the top with a carved out POW/MIA on the side.

Calhoun County



Honor Freedom

Carroll County—Manning

Manning Freedom Rock®, 517 East St, Manning, IA 51455

Painted in 2014 | Number 15

Since railroads were important in the development of the county, the rock features the Milwaukee railroad trestle, which was built in 1913-14 and is still used. During WWII, Manning was one of two places in Iowa where National Guardsmen were stationed at a railroad trestle, guarding against sabotage as troops and munitions passed over the tracks.

"Old Glory" is draped across the top and side of the rock, complemented by a majestic eagle and shield with the quote, "It is easy to take liberty for granted, when you have never had it taken from you." All branches of the military are shown to represent all those who protect our country.

To honor and thank all who serve on the home front, the rock includes nurses, fire fighters, emergency medical services, police, factory workers, and farmers. During World War II, a significant portion of the 12,000 - 15,000 cases of eggs that were processed daily at an egg-drying plant at Priebe's in Manning were sent to U.S. Army troops. The combine is a tribute to the farmers whose work goes around the clock.

Carroll County



Cass County—Lewis

Lewis Freedom Rock®, 408 E Main St, Lewis, IA 51544

Painted in 2014 | Number 25

Cass County is rich with interesting Civil War era history so that is the focus for its Freedom Rock® in Lewis. Although sparsely populated, Cass County raised an entire company after the Civil War broke out. There are photos of Company 1, 23rd Infantry riding their horses down what is now the White Pole Road.

Another interesting piece of history is that the only woman to officially be given rank in the Union Army during the Civil War got her start teaching school in Cass Township. Major Belle Macomber Reynolds, who traveled with her husband during the Civil War, attended to wounded and dying soldiers. She earned an officer's commission after the Battle of Shiloh. She later became a doctor, worked for the Red Cross and early in her career, was the first professionally trained teacher in Cass County.

The Reverend George B. Hitchcock's House was a vital stop on the Underground Railroad. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a site on the National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. Visitors can travel the path along the river and see the basement hideouts the runaway slaves used.

Cass County



Cherokee County—Cherokee

Cherokee Freedom Rock®, 520 W Main St, Cherokee, IA 51012

Painted in 2017 | Number 63

The Distinguished Service Cross is the second highest military award that can be given to a member of the United States Army and two Cherokee natives were recipients of the honor.

Father (Major General) Francis Sampson, was a Catholic priest from the Archdiocese for the Military Services and an Army officer during WWII. His real-life story of rescuing a young soldier served as the basis for the film, *Saving Private Ryan*, the same movie that was the initial inspiration for the very first Freedom Rock®.

First Lieutenant Royal Johnson served in the 313th Infantry Regiment in WWI. During a combat situation in France, he repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire, was wounded by an exploding shell and although severely wounded, refused space in an ambulance until two of his comrades were cared for. In addition to the Distinguished Service Cross, he received the Croix de Guerre with Gold Star from the Republic of France for his actions.

Ben Laposky was a mathematician, artist and draftsman whose high Army test scores and mechanical aptitude led the way to Technical Sergeant. He received the Purple Heart due to being wounded during a Japanese bombing raid at Rendona Island in the Solomon Islands during WWII.

When he enlisted in the Navy, Harry McManus was granted permission to serve with one of his brothers aboard the USS Houston. The Houston was trapped by a fleet of Japanese warships and sank. Of the one thousand men on board, only 368 survived and were taken prisoners of war. The McManus brothers did not know each other's fate until after a month in captivity they learned that the other was alive. Harry spent nearly four years in prison until the Japanese surrender when the prisoners were liberated.

On the north side of the rock is an eagle merged with a Cherokee Chief in recognition to the county and town's name.

Cherokee County



Clay County—Everly

Everly Freedom Rock®, 502 North Ocheyedan St, Everly, IA 51338

Painted in 2015 | Number 26

The Clay County Freedom Rock® honors all who have served and the families who sacrifice so much while their loved ones are serving.

Major Merlyn Dethlefsen, was an Air Force Medal of Honor recipient for actions in the Vietnam War. While engaged in a fire suppression mission to take out enemy encampments, his F-105 was severely damaged and should have returned to base. Ignoring intense enemy firepower, Dethlefsen flew repeated close range strikes through a hail of anti-aircraft fire and MIG counterattacks, eventually rendering the enemy's defense ineffective and saving the mission.

Howard Roberts of Everly served aboard the USS Asheville, a small gun boat in the Pacific shortly after Pearl Harbor. After falling behind the rest of the fleet due to engine trouble, the Asheville was engaged and sunk by Japanese destroyers. One officer was captured and died in prison camp. If he hadn't told his story no one would have known the fate of the Asheville which was one of the few American surface ships lost with no known survivors at the end of the war.

Clay County



Crawford County—Manilla

Manilla Freedom Rock®, 399 5th St, Manilla, IA 51454

Painted in 2015 | Number 36

Iowa National Guardsman Sgt. Casey Byers was killed in action in Iraq in 2005. Two days before Casey was to be eulogized, his brother and fellow Guardsman, Spec. Justin Paul Byers, was struck and killed on a local highway. Casey was the first Iowa Guardsman to be interred at Arlington National Cemetery and his brother's remains were placed next to his.

Staff Sgt. James A. Justice was killed in 2011 when the helicopter-borne Quick Reaction Force (Q.R.F.) of which he was a member came under small-arms fire in Afghanistan. The small force had been attempting to secure the crash site of a 2-person scout helicopter assigned to another Army unit.

Manilla native John Christensen was killed in action aboard the WWII Destroyer USS Sims. In the Battle of the Coral Sea, the Sims was attacked by from all directions by the Japanese. As she slid beneath the waves, there was a huge explosion that raised what was left of the ship almost 15 feet out of the water.

Manilla's rich railroad history is illustrated by a military train and a roundhouse. These circular or semicircular buildings were located surrounding or next to turntables, which provided access to repair or store steam locomotives.

Crawford County



Dickinson County—Lake Park

Lake Park Freedom Rock®, 903 South Market St, Lake Park, IA 51347

Painted in 2013 | Number 11

The Dickinson County Freedom Rock® is located at the Freedom Rock®/Veterans Memorial. The Memorial contains five other rocks honoring those in active service and Veterans with a special tribute to their families.

Honored on the Freedom Rock® are Rachel Wunder, a surgical nurse from Lake Park who served in World War II; Milton Simpson of Terril, who was killed in action in Germany in 1944; Ed Gath, a soldier from tiny Montgomery, Iowa, who was killed in action in North Korea in 1951; Wilber “Bill” Ahart, a Spirit Lake, Iowa resident who survived the Bataan Death March in World War II; and Lawrence Lambert of Milford, who survived for 27 months as a prisoner of war in Germany during World War II.

“Often Heroes are the most ordinary of men” is inscribed above a current soldier and Veteran honoring each other with a salute. The Freedom Rock® is complemented by five other rocks that are painted to represent each branch of the military.

Dickinson County



Emmet County—Armstrong

Armstrong Freedom Rock®, 501 3rd Ave,
Armstrong, IA 50514

Painted in 2016 | Number 44

A Normandy gravestone inscribed with a quote from General Dwight D. Eisenhower, “America is best described by one word...freedom.” pays tribute to two Emmet County veterans: Medal of Honor recipient John Thorson and Steven P. Blass.

Emmet County’s agriculture, factories and windmills serve as a backdrop for the spirit represented by its dedicated EMS, Fire and Police service personnel. The rock has the American Flag draped over it, along with Iowa’s state flower, the wild rose, and its state bird, the American Goldfinch.

Emmet County



“America is best described by one word...freedom.”

—General Dwight D. Eisenhower



Fremont County—Hamburg

Hamburg Freedom Rock®, 1351 Washington St, Hamburg, IA 51640

Painted in 2016 | Number 48

Major General John Fremont was a military officer, explorer, and politician for whom the county was named. He is credited for recognizing the ability of Ulysses S. Grant and promoting him to commander at a strategic base and was the first candidate of the anti-slavery Republican Party to run for President.

PO3 Harold V. Briley was among those killed in action when the USS Indianapolis was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine after having delivered parts for the first atomic bomb. Of the 1,196 crewmen aboard ship, only 317 survived making it the greatest single loss of life at sea in the history of the U.S. Navy.

SSgt. Charles J. Hein from Sidney was accidentally injured by a white phosphorous grenade that detonated and blew up in his hands. He was airlifted to the hospital in Pleiku and died two days later on May 8, his birthday.

Air Force Colonel Karl E. Dankof served the Air Force Logistics Command and Technical Applications Center which utilized the U-2 spy plane to monitor the missile sites and nuclear tests of the former Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War.

Guthrie County—Guthrie Center

Guthrie Center Freedom Rock®, West State St, Guthrie Center, IA 50115

Painted in 2014 | Number 18

Five medals representing the valor of Guthrie County veterans on the battlefield from World War II to present are prominently displayed on the Freedom Rock®. They are the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, and the Air Medal.

The M-29 armored troop carrier illustrated below the Silver Star and the Bronze Star medals depicts Guthrie Center veteran Bob Morgan and crew as they drove to rescue five soldiers from a burning tank in Korea. The dragons' teeth to the right represent those soldiers who battled through Germany's Siegfried Line, including Bob Shelley, Veryl Paullin, John Donahey, and numerous others.

The European cemetery represents Guthrie County soldiers killed on foreign soil, including Loran Garnes, Kenneth Nickel, Gerald Grett, Daryl Reeves, James Herrick, and dozens of others. In the background, the attack on the USS Hoel honors those sailors, including Guthrie Center's Marion Wilson, who died at sea protecting our nation.

Fremont County



Guthrie County



Aircraft adorned by the Air Medal and Purple Heart, honors county airmen from World War II to present who went in harm's way over enemy territory fighting for our nation. The Distinguished Flying Cross was earned by Menlo's Earl Kading as a gunner on a B-29 Superfortress on August 6, 1945, the day of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

Harrison County—Missouri Valley

Harrison County Freedom Rock®, Harrison County Historical Village,
2931 Monroe Ave, Missouri Valley, IA 51555

To be painted in 2018.

Humboldt County—Livermore

Livermore Freedom Rock®, 400 4th Ave.,
Livermore IA 50558

Painted in 2015 | Number 33

In recognition of armed forces medical personnel over the years is an image of a wounded soldier being treated in the field.

Area Vietnam Veteran, Lance Corporal Jerry Hatcher, was wounded in action twice, treated in the field and returned to duty. Hit a third time with grenade shrapnel while on a routine overnight patrol, he gave his life in service to our country, earning three purple hearts and various other commendations.

A soldier handing candy and c-rations to Vietnamese children while on patrol is dedicated to the memory of several area veterans. A quote by author Sidney Sheldon reads "My heroes are those who risk their lives every day to protect our world and make it a better place."

Humboldt County



Ida County—Holstein

Holstein Freedom Rock®, 1500 S. Kiel St.,
Holstein, IA 51025

Painted in 2017 | Number 62

An American Legion member salutes in tribute to the many Ida County Veterans that were killed in action in WWI, WWII and Vietnam. In recognition of the many men from Ida County who were lost in B-24 bombers during World War I, an American Bald Eagle is pictured with that aircraft along side an excerpt from the poem, “In Flanders Fields”. The east side of the rock features “Kilroy was here”, a phrase and drawing that servicemen doodled on walls of their duty stations or encampments during the WWII era.

Ida County



Kossuth County—Whittemore

Whittemore Freedom Rock®, 601 Broad St., Whittemore, IA 50598

Painted in 2015 | Number 29

The north face of the rock is the famous scene of the flag being lifted into place at Iwo Jima. “Never was so much owed by so many to so few”, is a quote from Winston Churchill. The south face of the rock is in honor of the Gold Star Mothers of fallen soldiers. Above the funeral scene is a Bamboo Bomber. A man in Whittemore has restored one of these planes and does flyovers.

Kossuth County



Lyon County—George

George Freedom Rock®, 100 E Dakota Ave,
George, IA 51237

Painted in 2013 | Number 9

A nighttime scene from the World War I era shows a soldier named Jack Sauter who was from George and killed in the war. Soldiers from all five branches of the armed services marching in a 4th of July parade reflects the pride the town of George takes in its Independence Day celebrations. The Lyon County Freedom Rock® is located in Locker Park, which is dedicated to Bob Locker of George, a famous major league baseball player back in the 60's and 70's. This park includes a nice walking path with a beautiful view around a pond.

Lyon County



Mills County—Emerson

Emerson Freedom Rock®, 599 Morton Ave, Emerson, IA 51533

Painted in 2015 | Number 32

The Mills County Freedom Rock® tells the story of the small town of 438 people that lost two young men in the Afghan war, U.S. Army Sgt. James L. Skalberg and Army Specialist James C. Kearney III, and they are the centerpiece of this tribute.

Other images on the rock illustrate military service dating back to the Civil War as well as the American flag.

Mills County



Monona County —Onawa

Onawa Freedom Rock®, 401 12th St, Onawa, IA 51040

Painted in 2016 | Number 51

A WWII bomber, Vietnam-era Hueys flying overhead and ships create the backdrop to a flag-draped coffin and a soldiers cross, symbolizing those who gave their life in service to this country.

The south side of the rock is in honor of Army Corporal Llythaniele Fender who was killed by an IED in 2007 in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was a graduate of West Monona High School.

Archie Steen who flew Royal Air Force gliders during Normandy in WWII. He was a familiar site in Onawa, replete with uniform and visited the Veteran's Museum frequently.

Monona County



Montgomery County—Red Oak

Montgomery County Freedom Rock®, Fountain Square Park, 300-398 Reed St, Red Oak, IA 51566

Completion date to be determined.

In Flanders fields the poppies blow...



Inspired by the wartime poem “In Flanders Fields” written by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, M.D. while serving on the front lines in WWI, the red poppy came to symbolize the blood shed during battle. In 1920 the poppy became the official flower of The American Legion family to commemorate military personnel who have died in war. In 1924, the distribution of poppies became a national program of The American Legion.

O'Brien County—Sanborn

Sanborn Freedom Rock®, 698 Main St, Sanborn, IA 51248

Painted in 2016 | Number 52

This memorial features three separate paintings that pay homage to local veterans and others who sacrificed for America's freedom.

Daniel Pippinger, was a Sanborn Civil War veteran who entered the Union Army at age 21. He eventually earned the rank of first lieutenant and died at the age of 97 in 1937.

In recognition of Sanborn's railroad heritage, another portion of the mural features a soldier and a woman at a train depot prior to his departure for war.

Finally, the mural honors victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks with depictions of the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, United Flight 93 and a U.S. soldier.

O'Brien County



Osceola County—Ashton

Ashton Freedom Rock®, Ashton Wayside Park, Ashton, IA 51232

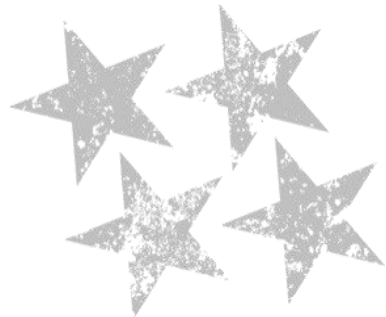
Painted in 2018 | Number 70

During World War I, George Veenker entered flight school in Texas to be part of the new "air service" branch of the U.S. military. He became a pilot, but the war ended before he saw action. Veenker was head football coach at Iowa State College (now Iowa State University) among other coaching positions.

Emma Schweer earned a pilot's license and trained men to be pilots in World War II. She served as tax collector of Crete Township, Will County, Illinois, and, at the time of her death, was believed to be the oldest elected official in the United States.

SSGt Leland D. Zahn lost his life serving our country in Vietnam as a Marine Artillery Scout Observer. He was critically wounded when he valiantly diverted enemy fire to himself during a fierce battle on a combat operation in Thua Thien Province. He was awarded the Silver and Bronze Stars, the second and third highest military decorations for valor, and a Purple Heart.

Osceola County



Page County—Clarinda

Clarinda Freedom Rock®, 1600 S 16th St, Clarinda, IA 51632

Painted in 2014 | Number 20

Page County Freedom Rock® history: On the top portion of the Rock®'s front side is a depiction citing Page County as a “Banner County of Iowa” during the Civil War.

An image in the center honors prisoners of war and individuals missing in action. On the bottom portion are images representing John and Lawrence Cooper, brothers who served in France during the World War I and were killed in combat only weeks apart.

On the other side of the Rock® are images of Glenn Miller and Vernon Baker, Clarinda residents who became noteworthy for their service in World War II.

Page County



Palo Alto County—Ruthven

Palo Alto County Freedom Rock®, Freedom Park on Gowry Street, Ruthven, IA 51358

To be painted in 2018.

Plymouth County—Kingsley

Kingsley Freedom Rock®, 207 E 1st St, Kingsley, IA 51028

Painted in 2017 | Number 60

Representing all those from Plymouth County who lost their lives serving our country are Private Isaac Gripp, who served in the Civil War, and Cpl Chad Groepper, who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Brothers Jim and Jack Nicholson who grew up on a farm near Struble were both military academy graduates and career Army men. Jim was a paratrooper and Ranger-qualified Army officer who fought in the Vietnam War, where he earned the Bronze Star, Combat Infantryman Badge, and the Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster. He retired as Colonel after thirty years of service and later served as the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs from 2005-2007.

Jack was an airborne ranger combat infantryman who served in Vietnam and many other overseas assignments including duty in Germany, Korea, Lebanon and Switzerland. He received a Silver Star for action in Vietnam. He is a retired Brigadier General and served as the keynote speaker for the dedication of this Freedom Rock®.

The Army patches represent the ones worn by those serving with the National Guard Army in LeMars. The patches are Red Bull, Rainbow Division, 47th Viking, U.S. Army Vietnam, 5th Army, and Iowa National Guard.

Plymouth County



Pocahontas County—Rolfe

Rolfe Freedom Rock®, 653-805, Rolfe, IA 50581

Painted in 2013 | Number 3

The Rock® is painted with Bubba's signature flag draping the top and sides, on the North side is a depiction of a soldier kneeling in remembrance with a purple heart in the background as well as helicopters, and the south side depicts a large Bald Eagle with the American flag in its talons as it flies.

Pocahontas County



Pottawattamie County—Oakland

Oakland Freedom Rock®, 308 US-6, Oakland, IA 51560

Painted in 2017 | Number 57

The Pottawattamie County Freedom Rock® stands as a tribute to the brave men and women from the county who have served and sacrificed to make and keep us free. The four veterans featured on the rock include:

Pottawattamie County



Major General Arnold W. Jacobsen, of Walnut, who served as commanding officer of the Marine Corps Supply Depots during World War II.

John S. McCain Jr., born in Council Bluffs, served in conflicts from the 1940s through the 1970s, including as the commander of the U.S. Pacific Command. He achieved the rank of admiral in the Navy. McCain was the father of Sen. John McCain III of Arizona.

Sgt. Brent Maher of Honey Creek, who was killed by an improvised explosive device while serving in Afghanistan with the Iowa Army National Guard.

General Frank F. Everest of Council Bluffs, who served as commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe and commander of the Tactical Air Command.

Ringgold County—Diagonal

Diagonal Freedom Rock®, W. 3rd St, Diagonal, IA 50845

Painted in 2013 | Number 4

The Ringgold County Freedom Rock® shows a young girl standing in front of a wall containing the names of Iowans that died in Vietnam, pointing to one who was a resident of Diagonal.

Ringgold County



Diagonal was a railway town so the Rock includes a picture of the Diagonal train depot and a train. A soldier stands on the train platform salutes a flag-draped coffin representing Soldier Ronald A. Yashak's return home after giving the ultimate sacrifice.

Sac County—Sac City

Sac City Freedom Rock®, 301 Main St, Sac City, IA 50583

Painted in 2013 | Number 12

Two Navajo wind talkers rescued Sac County soldier Harlan Woehl during WWII. Woehl was a radio operator and according to the story, the enemy saw the reflection on his radio dials and opened fire. Woehl was wounded and the wind talkers carried him to the nearest aid station that was miles away.

The plane flying above the soldiers is in honor of John J. Wassom and all pilots. Wassom flew 76 missions over Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland and Central Europe. Because the survival rate was so low, only 25%, a pilot was limited to 25 missions before being rotated out, however Jack volunteered for two additional sets plus one.

The flag which drapes over the Rock® is unique in that it has the ashes of two local veterans mixed in the paint. A woman Marine is featured in the foreground in honor of all the women who have served our country.

Two local soldiers who were Tunnel Rats in the Vietnam war are illustrated along with a medic who lost his life also in Vietnam. The silhouettes shown above represent the six Bachman brothers from Auburn who were all in the service at the same time.

Shelby County—Earling

Earling Freedom Rock®, 257 Railway St, Earling, IA 51530

Painted in 2013 | Number 6

Featured on the Earling Freedom Rock® is an image of Lt. Col. Paul Finken, one of Earling's native sons who was killed in action in Iraq in November 2006. Below, a banner lists servicemen from Shelby County who were killed in action, taken prisoner of war, or missing in action since World War II.

Out of respect for a Shelby County firefighter who was recently lost, another image depicts first responders fire, police and EMS.

Serving as the backdrop for a farmer harvesting his crops is St. Joseph Catholic Church, a prominent landmark in the Earling community. The flag includes an American Legion logo leaned up against it.

Sac County



Shelby County



Sioux County Freedom Rock® —Hawarden

Hawarden Freedom Rock®, 1301 Ave E, Hawarden IA 51032

Painted in 2013 | Number 7

The Sioux County Freedom Rock® tableau illustrates soldiers on the ground, with helicopters flying in the air and a battleship in the water behind them. A Prisoner of War clutches a streamer that reads “Not Forgotten”. The final façade is a mural of the American Legion seal.

Taylor County Freedom Rock®— Blockton

Blockton Freedom Rock®, 509 Division St, Blockton, IA 50836

Painted in 2014 | Number 21

Zachary Taylor served in the U.S. Army for four decades, commanding troops in the War of 1812, the Black Hawk War and the second of the Seminole Wars. He became known as a war hero through his service in the Mexican War, which broke out in 1846 after the U.S. annexation of Texas. He was elected president in 1848 as the choice of both parties and is the namesake of Taylor County. Flags in the background represent the flags that mark the cemetery in Blockton.

A hand grasping barbed wire is to illuminate the pain and struggle experienced by those held captive as Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action.

Standing at attention and saluting is a representative from each branch of the military in recognition all those who've worn the uniform. A statue representing our Civil War veterans is tucked away in a natural piece carved out of the rock.

Sioux County



Taylor County



Patriots Courage

Union County—Creston

Creston Freedom Rock®, 669 New York Ave., Creston, IA 50801

Painted in 2014 | Number 24

The Union County Freedom Rock® is located in artist Bubba Sorenson's birthplace. On one side of the rock is an eagle carrying the flag over a subtle POW/MIA accompanied by the words "Freedom Isn't Free".

The north side pays tribute to the Rainbow Division (42nd Infantry Division) many of whom left for World War I from the Creston Depot.

The east side features Pearl Harbor showing Dorie Miller shooting down Japanese fighter planes. The Jeep that is pictured was used in the Korean War and is still in operation in Union County.

From the Vietnam War, the Hueys and a duster tank represent all Vietnam Veterans but specifically some from Union County. The War on Terror is depicted by a stealth bomber and Humvee and pays tribute to Marine LCpl. CJ Miller who was killed in action in Iraq and is buried in Creston.

Union County



Woodbury County—Anthon

Anthon Freedom Rock®, 110 N 5th Ave, Anthon, IA 51004

Painted in 2017 | Number 61

Sgt. Charles Floyd was an explorer, non-commissioned officer in the U.S. Army and quartermaster in the Lewis and Clark Expedition. His daily record has been used extensively by historians and Floyd was the only member of the Corps of Discovery to die on the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Col. Bud Day, Sioux City native and the most decorated veteran in U.S. history, served in WWII, the Korean War, and Vietnam War including over five years as a POW in North Vietnam. As of 2016, Day was the only recipient of the Medal of Honor and the Air Force Cross.

In May 1944 a B-17 bomber on its final training run from the Sioux City Army Air Base crashed southwest of Anthon. All ten airmen on board perished and they are depicted on the rock as ten bald eagles. Rick Bohle of Kingsley and his dad found pieces of metal from the wreckage. They had it ground into metal dust which was mixed into the paint used for painting the bomber.

Law enforcement and first responders are represented as a tribute to those who put their lives on the line to protect others, especially in remembrance of the Flight 232 disaster in 1989.

Woodbury County





U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Veronica Salgado

US Military Awards listed in order of precedence.

The Medal of Honor

Highest military decoration, presented by the President in the name of Congress. Awarded for "gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty".



Army Navy Air Force

The Distinguished Service Cross (Army)



Army Navy Air Force

Second highest military decoration, awarded for "extraordinary heroism". The Army Distinguished Service Cross is equivalent to the Navy Cross and Air Force Cross.

The Silver Star Medal



Third-highest military combat decoration, awarded for "distinguished gallantry in action".

Distinguished Flying Cross



Awarded for heroism or extraordinary achievement in aerial flight.

Bronze Star



For heroic or meritorious achievement of service, not involving aerial flight in connection with operations against an opposing armed force.

The Purple Heart



Awarded for wounds or death as result of an act of any opposing armed force, as a result of an international terrorist attack or as a result of military operations while serving as part of a peacekeeping force.

The Air Medal



For meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight or for a single act of heroism against an armed enemy.



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