

‘We Are Honored to Render the Proper Respect to All American Flags’

A VFW Post in Florida upgraded its flag retirement site and ceremony before an unveiling on Labor Day

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Being heralded for years as the primary place for the retirement of U.S. flags in the county, members of VFW Post 2391 in St. Augustine, Florida, wanted to upgrade its site and ceremony.

Under the direction of Post 2391 Quartermaster Bob Bewsee, who oversees the Post’s Honor Guard and more than 1,000 flag-retirement events a month, design plans for a new beautification project began in June 2023 to revamp the old flag retirement site at the Post.

“A pentagon was chosen for the shape, with each of the five corners representing one of the five service branches,” Bewsee said. “We received a significant contribution from the local Lowe’s, and the project was completed by Sept. 4.”

The majority of the work was undertaken by Post 2391 Life member Rick McAllister and fellow Honor Guardsman Dan Weir, who spent most of August working on the site.

The pair laid gravel and decorative garden paver bricks, erected a flagpole, added fire extinguisher mounts and two concrete benches for public observation.

“Weir also designed and constructed four smokeless burn barrels and donated a mounted eagle for the center,” McAllister said. “Then other Post and Honor Guard members jumped onboard to help with the finishing touches.”

The new retirement site was unveiled on Labor Day last year during a ceremony led by Post 2391 Commander Daniel McDonough, who dedicated the project to the U.S. flag itself for all it means to veterans and Americans alike.

“We are honored to render the proper respect to all American flags in our community once they have reached their retirement condition,” McDonough said in his opening remarks.

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“The flag has served us with honor since the inception of our country and, as we do with fallen veterans, we are proud to offer respect and dignity at the end of their duty.”

Post Chaplain Paul Szarnicki proceeded McDonough by offering a prayer covering the historical significance and reverence of the flag. The Honor Guard then conducted the retirement ceremony for those gathered.

“It was a nice ceremony with about 40 members and guests,” McAllister said. “And it was immediately followed by the start of our annual Labor Day celebration and cookout. Well over 100 people attended this event, and we made a point to direct our guests to see our new flag retirement site.”

This article is featured in the 2024 March issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Ismael Rodriguez Jr.](#), senior writer for VFW magazine.