

BOOTS ON THE GROUND FOR HEROES MEMORIAL

2025

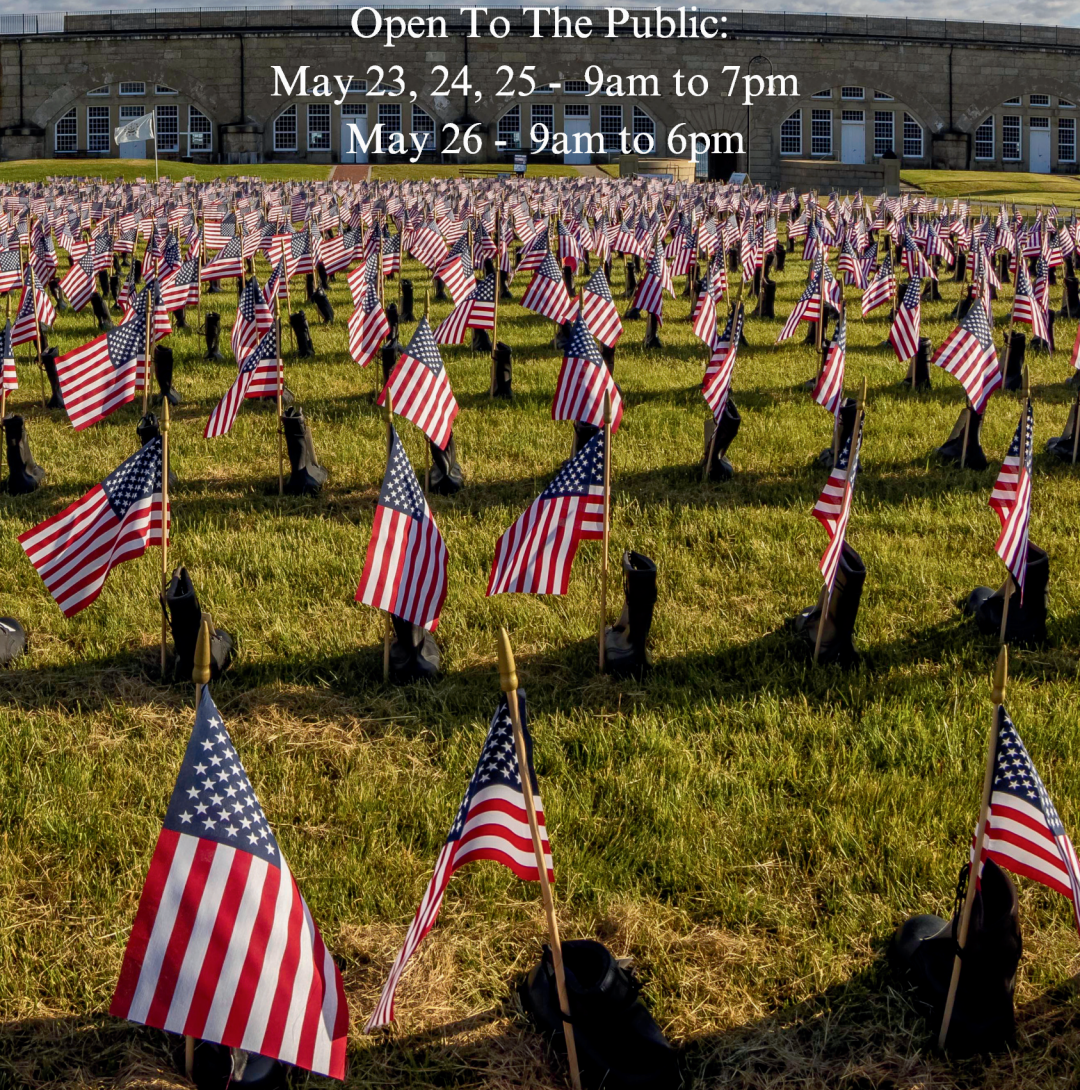
Newport, RI

HONORING THOSE WHO MADE THE
ULTIMATE SACRIFICE POST 9/11

Open To The Public:

May 23, 24, 25 - 9am to 7pm

May 26 - 9am to 6pm



Boots on the Ground for Heroes Memorial



In 2016, Operation Stand Down RI launched the Boots on the Ground for Heroes Memorial. Each boot represents the life of a U.S. Service Member Killed in Action, post 9-11, during the Global War on Terror.

The placard attached to each boot displays the name and photo of the fallen along with biographical information, military branch, rank and circumstances of death. The Memorial is updated yearly to incorporate additional U.S. service members killed in the ongoing Global War on Terror.

The boots, adorned by the name placards, are alphabetized and organized by State and U.S. Territories. This allows those with a personal connection to locate a specific fallen hero's boot. Many times, family, friends and comrades of the fallen can be seen solemnly viewing a particular boot and leaving a memento. Since its inception, tens of thousands of visitors from all over the U.S. have visited during the annual display over Memorial Day Weekend.

For the first three years the Memorial was displayed at Roger Williams Park in Providence. In 2019, the Memorial found a new home at Fort Adams in Newport. Sponsorships and individual donations support the upkeep and display of the Memorial and the year-round mission of Operation Stand Down Rhode Island to assist local veterans.

The Invisible Scars of War Monument

The Invisible Scars of War Monument is placed alongside the Soldier's Cross. It serves as a physical remembrance of Service Members who took their own lives. These men and women bore the invisible scars of war and ultimately succumbed to them. It is our hope that this simple but important monument serves not just as a reminder of their sacrifice, but also brings awareness to the emotional trauma many of our Service Members and Veterans battle each day.

If you are a Service Member or Veteran in Crisis or know someone who is, please connect with the Veterans Crisis Line to reach caring and qualified responders with the Department of Veterans Affairs.



OSDRI and the Boots on the Ground for Heroes Memorial extends a special thank you to Mark Brown who dedicated hundreds of hours designing and constructing the Invisible Scars of War Monument and the Battlefield Cross.

Coins Left on Boots

Leaving a coin on a boot is a way we can honor those who have laid down their lives in service of our nation. It lets the family of the deceased Soldiers know that somebody has stopped by and paid their respects.

Leaving a PENNY simply means you visited and paid your respects and thanked the veteran for their service.

Leaving a NICKEL means that you and the deceased trained at basic training together.

Leaving a DIME means you served with the deceased.

Leaving a QUARTER means that you were there when the deceased was killed.

No matter what the original intention of the coin-leaver may be, it seems clear that a coin left is a symbol of remembrance and respect.

If you see coins in the field please leave them where they lie.

Battlefield Cross

This “Soldier’s Cross” or “Battlefield Cross” has its origins dating to the Civil War. When Soldiers were hastily buried between battles, the rifle was stabbed into the ground to mark their final resting place. Anything which identified the fallen was placed on the rifle so others would know who eternally rested there. Today, service members on the battlefield often are unable to attend the funerals of their fallen brothers and sisters in arms, so the Battlefield Cross or Soldier’s Cross is placed in honor of those who have perished, as a way to pay their last respects.

The Rifle: The rifle, bayonet affixed, is the most important tool to a United States fighting man or woman. It is the core to their livelihood and key to their survival. It is thrust into the ground signifying that the one being remembered died in battle, fighting to the end. It also signifies that the battle is over when the rifle is left this way.

The Boots: The boots carry a service member through the fight for our freedom. They are the first and most important means of transportation. The boots are placed at the base of the rifle. They are worn and dirty reminding us of that final march to that last battle.

Dog Tags: Dog tags are worn by each service member. Imprinted into them is all of the most important identifying information regarding that individual. The dog tags are hung from the rifle, so that the name of the fallen will never be forgotten.

The Helmet: The helmet is an important piece of protection on the battlefield. Some believe that the hat or helmet of the individual represents what that person stood for; and so the helmet is placed on top of the rifle signifying that the battle is over and that a great sacrifice has been made. It will never be worn again.

The Soldier’s Cross or Battlefield Cross...stands in tribute and memory as we honor, we remember, and we never forget...

Fort Adams History



Fort Adams is the largest costal fortification in the United States. Fort Adams was built between 1824-1857 and was active through WWII. Designed to mount 468 cannons and house 2,400 troops, it commands the entrance to Newport Harbor and the Narragansett Bay.

Fort Adams provides a visual record of military history from the 1820's to the end of World War II. Originally intended to protect the entrance to Narragansett Bay, Fort Adams was successfully adapted to changing military technology and tactics and ultimately became the command center during World War II for a system of artillery emplacements, harbor barriers, and other costal defenses for a sector stretching from Long Island to Martha's Vineyard. That the Fort was never attacked can be directly attributed to the formidability of its design.

Fort Adams was designed to defend against both land and sea attack. Three tiers of cannon to protect the East Passage of Narragansett Bay and extensive earthworks provided protection from land assault. The walls were erected from granite shipped by schooner from Maine, and shale quarried on site, as well as brick believed to have been made from clay obtained within Rhode Island.

Today you can visit Fort Adams for a self-guided tour to see the 6.5 acre parade ground which includes the Officer's quarters and some of the original cannons. The guided tours visit the underground listening tunnels and the outer works of the Fort. Fort Adams State Park is free and open to the public year round with a 2.5 mile bay walk that encircles the park and the Eisenhower House.



Visit fortadams.org for more information

Rhode Island Fallen Heroes

SPC Michael Andrade, Army National Guard

CPT Matthew J. August, Army

SGT Gregory A. Belanger, Army Reserves

SGT Charles T. Caldwell, Army National Guard

SSG Joseph Camara, Army National Guard

CPT Christopher S. Cash, Army

LCpl Holly A. Charette, Marine Corps

PFC Kyle J. Coutu, Marine Corps

2LT Matthew S. Coutu, Army

MSG Richard L. Ferguson, Army

SGT Dennis J. Flanagan, Army

PS3 Ronald A. Gill, Jr., Coast Guard

SGT Moises Jazmin, Army

SSG Dale James Kelly Jr., Army National Guard

SFC Curtis Mancini, Army Reserve

SSG Timothy Raymond McGill, Army

1SG Peter A. McKenna Jr., Army

SGT Michael F. Paranzino, Army

SSG Christopher S. Potts, Army National Guard

SPC Dennis C. Poulin, Army

SGT Brian R. St. Germain, Marine Corps

LCpl Nickolas D. Schiavioni, Marine Corps

LCpl Matthew K. Serio, Marine Corps

CW5 Sharon T. Swartworth, Army

LCpl Abraham Tarwoe, Marine Corps

LTJG Francis L. Toner IV (4th), Navy

LCpl John J. Van Gyzen (guy-zen) IV (4th), Marine Corps

SGT Dennis P. Wiechel, Jr., Army National Guard

SGT Michael R. Weidemann, Army



*Thank you to all board members for their hard work
and dedication.*

Boots on the Ground Board Members:

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**Thanks to OSDRI staff
and volunteers who
dedicated countless hours
of support!**





BOOTS ON THE GROUND FOR HEROES

May 23 - 26
Fort Adams, Newport

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Attorney Mike Bottaro & Team

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