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New Grimes memorial ready for Veterans Day

Man put installation
on private land to
avoid controversy

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A new veterans' memorial in Grimes features a painted memorial rock and artistic metal cutouts, including one of a soldier kneeling before a cross.

This summer a similar cutout created controversy when it was installed on city property in Knoxville.

The Washington, D.C.-based Americans United for the Separation of Church and State sent a letter in August asking the city to remove the silhouette from public property because of the religious symbol.

Many residents rallied to keep the cross, but the Knoxville City Council voted to remove the memorial this month. One day later two of those council members were voted out of office.

Rick Hutcheson doesn't expect similar controversy in Grimes. The memorial's creator built it on private land he owns just a block west of his house and business.

"After what happened in Knoxville ... I thought it would be easier if I just put it on my own property," Hutcheson said.

He estimates he spent about

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A new veterans memorial at 100 N.E. Second St. in Grimes was designed and constructed by Rick Hutcheson on his property "on behalf of the American Legion and all veterans." A ribbon-cutting will be held at 5 p.m. Friday.

MEMORIAL

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\$15,000 of his own money on the project, and to create a park-like setting with benches and improved landscaping.

"I took it upon myself to make it, but I wanted more than just a (memorial) rock," he said.

Hutcheson designed the metal silhouette cutouts himself. The craftsman is the owner of Rick's Scrollsaw. He sells patterns for scrollsaws and he owns more than 150 antique saws.

He found a boulder three miles west of Grimes, which was moved to the site. Alan Newman of Woodward painted the rock with military images.

"The day we were putting up (the memorial) a guy in uniform happened to drive by," Hutcheson said. "He got out of his truck and just started to help us. ... I hope we see more vets come and enjoy the space."

Hutcheson's memorial is part of a community effort to make the city an inviting place for military veterans.

Grimes has joined the Home Base Iowa initiative to offer incentives to veterans living in the city.

GRIMES VETERANS MEMORIAL

WHAT: Grimes resident and Vietnam veteran Rick Hutcheson created the memorial on private land. It includes a memorial rock and silhouette cutouts of the flag planting at Iwo Jima and a soldier kneeling before a cross.

WHERE: 100 N.E. Second St., Grimes

DEDICATION: The Grimes Chamber of Commerce will take part in a memorial dedication at 5 p.m. Friday.

SUPPORT: Materials and labor were donated by Metal Fabrication in Earlham and Sprayer Specialties of Grimes.

"Even I as an older veteran get things like free garbage pickup and ambulance service," Hutcheson said. He served in Vietnam in 1970 and was discharged as a disabled veteran.

Hutcheson and his mother are both involved with the Grimes American Legion Post.

"We are very proud as an organization and a community to have that new memorial in Grimes," Brian Bueth, executive director of the Grimes Chamber of Commerce, said. "It's even more special because it was put together by a vet himself who is from Grimes."



Rick Hutcheson designed this steel cutout of a soldier with a cross for the Grimes veterans memorial. Following a controversy in Knoxville over a similar design on city property, Hutcheson decided to put the memorial on his own land.



A memorial rock painted by Alan Newman of Woodward sits in the center of the new Grimes veterans memorial.