

FEDERAL FUNDING SECURED FOR WAR HEROES MEMORIAL

By Brad Kellar/Herald-Banner Staff
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Federal funding has been secured to complete a memorial to those Hunt County heroes who gave their lives in wartime.

Officials with the Audie Murphy/American Cotton Museum greeted U.S. Rep. Ralph Hall of Rockwall Monday afternoon, who presented a check for \$200,000. The money will not only be used to finish the construction of the Hunt County War Memorial at the museum, but will also help begin the groundwork for an even more ambitious project.

The "Audie Murphy Hall of American Heroes" will also be built on the museum grounds and when completed will become a permanent repository for memorabilia associated with the life of the most decorated United States soldier of World War II, as well as a monument to all those who fought to preserve democracy.

"This is what we started out to do," said Jack Finney, who along with Leo Hackney and James Taggart made up the Hunt County Sesquicentennial Committee which developed the concept the statue of Murphy at the museum.

Of the funding, \$150,000 will go toward the establishment of the Hunt County War Memorial, which is designed

to honor the nearly 300 men and women from Hunt County who died while in service to their country during the wars of the 20th Century.

Crews with Texas Natural Stone were busy Monday afternoon, installing pavers which will form the base of the memorial. Granite blocks containing the names of those listed on the memorial will come by this summer.

Whatever money remains from the funding will be used to begin work on the "Hall of Heroes", a 10,000-square-foot exhibition building to contain the museum's collection of Murphy memorabilia as America's most decorated hero in World War II. The move will also allow the museum to provide other exhibits in recognition of those who served in wartime.

"We need this exhibition area here and this is a good down payment on it," Hall said, noting that he would push for additional funding for the museum and the "Hall of Heroes" in the coming federal budget.

"In late March or in early April we need to have another application in there for it," Hall added. "We're still trying to get a little foot in this year."