



# A SELF-GUIDED TOUR OF ROCKFORD AREA VETERAN MEMORIAL SITES

COURTESY OF THE  
WORKFORCE CONNECTION  
VETERAN  
EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES  
**815-395-6628**

The Rockford area has a number of significant memorials honoring our citizens with military service. Several museums display military artifacts and exhibits of local military camp history. Peace, the fervent hope of veterans of past wars, is the subject of another local site on this tour.

This self-guided tour can be driven very easily. Those sites represented on the Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau downloadable map are noted with their map number. Other sites are located with a street address. Museum sites should be contacted for current operating hours.

Historical and artist information is from the Public Art Directory.



## Veterans Memorial Hall 211 N. Main St.

Located downtown Rockford, just  
south of Jefferson St. between  
Wyman and Main Streets  
815-969-1999

Dedicated in 1903 in ceremonies that included a dedication speech by President Theodore Roosevelt, Memorial Hall is a tribute to Rockford citizens who have served in the Armed Forces. Large wall plaques list names of fallen veterans, and display cases contain Armed Services artifacts including memories of the Civil War, the World Wars, and Camp Grant. Murals of battle scenes are on some walls. Memorial Hall is the first war memorial building in the United States. Original architects were Charles Bradley and Frank Carpenter. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

Free parking in the lot on the south side at Mulberry and Wyman. Elevator available on the lower level on Wyman Street side on south end of building.

**Directions:** From I-90 and U.S. Business 20 ( East State Street ): West 6.5 miles on Business 20 to N. Wyman ( first street past Rock River ). Turn right on Wyman to Mulberry and park in lots at intersection. Memorial Hall is between Wyman and Main Streets.

The Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau office is located two blocks south at Main and West State St. on the northwest corner.

## Victory

Located at the corner of Mulberry and N. Main Streets, near Memorial Hall, downtown Rockford



The sculpture has six figures depicting men and women and diverse ethnic groups from all branches of the Armed Services. They represent veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf. The figures are placed in an inclined base and framed by an abstract “V”. The local artist, Gene Horvath (1927—1995), has many works in public spaces throughout Rockford. The statue, 14’ by 10’ made of aluminum and bronze, was dedicated on May 30, 1994.

“These figures just came off the line, in fighting uniforms-not dress parades. They are tired, but aware of the job they have done. They are responding to the acknowledgment of the crowd in a liberated city,” Horvath said.

No element of the sculpture was cast. Thousands of individual pieces were cut, hammered and welded together for this bronze and aluminum sculpture. It took over three years to complete and represents a donation of over \$150,000 worth of the sculptor’s time.

## Civil War Memorial

Located at North Main and Auburn Streets  
on the Northeast corner in Soldier Park



The statue of a Civil War infantryman rests atop a stone Corinthian column, saved when the old public library was razed. Statue and column are seated on a three-tiered base, engraved "A Timeless Tribute to Every Soldier." The site contains the remains of an unnamed Civil War soldier, buried at its base.

The Soldier sculpture, by an unknown artist, originally stood in the foyer of the old Winnebago County Courthouse and was a gift from the G.A.R. Auxiliary in 1877. In 1967, the infantryman was moved to the Winnebago highway garage on Springfield Avenue, and, in 1970, was moved to the foyer of the present courthouse. In 1975, the statue was enclosed in safety glass, due to vandalism, and a bronze plaque was set at the base inscribed, "Well Done-Good and Faithful Servant."

Funding for relocation in 1984 came from a Community Development block grant, from the City of Rockford's War Memorial Fund, and private donations. The Main & Auburn Business Association spearheaded the effort. It was dedicated at the present site on May 25, 1984.

The statue is 5' tall and made of cast zinc. Its total height is approximately 19 feet.

The 1/8 acre site is owned by Greenwood Cemetery and leased to the Rockford Park District.

## Field of Honor

Located at 100 Heart Blvd., Loves Park  
South of Riverside Blvd., 1 1/4 miles west of Forest Hills Rd.  
Near the Loves Park City Hall



Located in the Arthur W. Anderson Peace Park, near the Loves Park City Hall, it was conceived by Mr. Anderson as a memorial to honor veterans who served in the five wars of the 20th century. Five vertical columns and eight resin-composite life-sized statues are set before a series of 40 American flags. A small column honors civilian contributions to the war efforts.

Christopher Bennett of Keosauqua, IA, is the artist. Designed by Gene Horvath with landscape design by John R. Cook & Associates. Maintained by the Rockford Park District.

Dedicated November 10, 1995.

A Korean War Veteran Memorial is being planned for a site just adjacent to the Field of Honor.

Vietnam Veterans  
Honor Society  
★ ★ ★  
**LZ Peace  
Memorial**

Located on the grounds of Midway Village & Museum Center, 6799  
Guilford Rd., Rockford (# 24 on map)



The LZ Peace Memorial features a Huey helicopter that meant so much to Vietnam veterans.

“If it wasn’t for that helicopter, none of us would be here,” said Joe Falzone, a Vietnam vet. “There were no roads in Vietnam. The helicopter meant everything—ammunition, food, supplies, mail from home, med-evacs. If you got in trouble, you called for a helicopter. You’d take one look around and you knew you weren’t walking out of there. A helicopter was your only hope.”

Designed by Rockford Vietnam veteran Nick Parnello. The site includes a black granite wall engraved with the 72 names of Winnebago County residents who died in Vietnam or later due to war injuries. The LZ Peace Memorial was dedicated May 31, 2005. The cost of about \$180,000 was covered mostly by donations of money and labor.

The Midway Village Museum has displays of Camp Grant, a local WW I and II training facility that house as many as 68,000 men ( See also the Camp Grant Museum page).

Source: *Rockford Register Star* article May 30, 2005.

## Keeling-Puri Peace Plaza

Located on Perryville Rd. just south of Riverside Blvd.

(#28 on map), parking lot entrance off McFarland Rd., just east of McDonalds on Riverside Blvd.



Though not a veteran memorial, this site is included in the tour because the fervent wish of most war veterans is for a lasting peace. The *Harmony Atlas* depicts the world inside a pair of two-dimensional planar circles. Originally conceived as a globe by project benefactor Jim Keeling, who borrowed the concept from a peace-theme display at a Colorado church.

A court of flags depicts the major native countries of Rockford's many thousands of first-generation immigrants. Other related features include peace poles and a timeline of immigration in Rockford. The planar circles are stainless steel and aluminum with copper coatings and are 27 by 42 feet and weigh 7,000 pounds.

Lee T. Sido, a Northern Illinois University Professor and head of its sculpting department, is the artist. The flat design, which does not hide any land masses from full view as a globe would, works better for viewing and for the general theme of the plaza, Sido said. "Viewing it now, a person can take in the entire world from one point of view. The idea of peace, that's really what it's about-that there is no difference between any of the geographic regions."

Installation date September 2001.

Benefactors: James Keeling and Sunil Puri

# Camp Grant Museum

Located at 1004 Samuelson Rd. in Rockford

11th St (IL 251) two stop lights south of US 20 Bypass, then right 3/4 of a mile on Samuelson Rd. Inside the Command Post Restaurant.



A few of the many displays in several rooms of the original Camp Grant building. Photos, post cards, maps, official documents, military uniforms and gear and popular sheet music of the time on exhibit.

The Command Post Restaurant houses the Camp Grant Museum in an original Camp building that once served as a fire station and later as the induction and muster out center. Camp Grant came into being in the early months of World War I. Construction began June 30, 1917 and in just two months time, 1,100 buildings were completed. The Camp was named in honor of U.S. Grant on July 15, 1917. By 1918 the Camp housed 50,000 officers and enlisted men and covered 5,460 acres of land. An active Army site until 1924, it was then turned over to the Illinois National Guard. In 1933 the Civilian Conservation Corps stationed about 1,100 men at the Camp who were put out of work by the Great Depression. In 1940 the Camp reverted back to regular Army use for World War II as an induction center, training center, prisoner of war camp and a medical training unit.

Much of the Camp land is now the Chicago Rockford International Airport.

Call for hours of operation (815) 395-0679. The Museum is free, donations accepted. Special or group tours by appointment. E-mail: [Ygdm952@aol.com](mailto:Ygdm952@aol.com)



The Veteran Employment Representatives hope you find this tour interesting and a memorable experience. **The Illinois Department of Employment Security, a Workforce Connection** partner, provides priority of employment services to veterans of the military. Services include referral to job openings, job search workshops, referral to training programs and apprenticeships, assistance with resume writing, provision of labor market information, and civil service employment information. Advice on veteran re-employment rights and Federal contractor veteran affirmative action programs is also available. Referral to other community resources as needed.

Services are without cost to eligible veterans.

A DD 214 may be required for some programs.

For further information, contact the Veteran Employment Representatives in the Rockford office:

Jack Snyder ..... 815-395-6628

E-mail Jack.Snyder@illinois.gov

Dana Brinkmeier..... 815-395-6630 ( Disabled Vet Outreach Specialist)

E-mail Dana.Brinkmeier@illinois.gov

Illinois Dept. of Employment Security web site [www.ides.state.il.us](http://www.ides.state.il.us)

A Veterans Services Directory for Rockford is available at [www.booneandwinnebago.wib.org](http://www.booneandwinnebago.wib.org) click on "Services"

To match to a job on Illinois Skills Match  
[www.illinois.skillsmatch.com](http://www.illinois.skillsmatch.com)

Unemployment rate, workforce statistics, wage surveys  
[www.ilworkinfo.com](http://www.ilworkinfo.com)

All photos by Richard Hrynkow