

For Immediate Release

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AC Mayor Marty Small Announces \$430K for Completion of Bernie Friedenberg WWII Memorial

See bottom for photos and link to video

ATLANTIC CITY, NJ (November 10, 2022) – Atlantic City Mayor Marty Small, Sr. announced today that the city will contribute \$430,000 towards completion a World War II monument planned for O’Donnell Memorial Park. The Mayor had previously indicated that the city would fund \$300,000 of the estimated \$950,000 cost for the monument, but surprised everyone in attendance by announcing the larger contribution.

The Bernie Friedenberg World War II Memorial will honor Atlantic City native and war hero Bernie Friedenberg and all other World War II veterans. The Friends of Bernie Friedenberg (FBF), a group of veterans’ advocates behind the movement to create the Memorial in Captain O’Donnell Park in Atlantic City, NJ, has already raised \$357,000 to cover the cost of the bronze statue depicting Friedenberg in combat action as a WWII medic. In addition, funds already raised will pay for all costs of transporting the statue from the foundry to the memorial site and minimal site-development costs.

“This is the City of Atlantic City’s commitment to all veterans and all who served,” said Mayor Small. “It is important we pay homage to the people who made this country the land of the free and home of the brave, and who continue to do so. I’m proud this statue will be right here in our great city to make sure those who made the ultimate sacrifice, like Bernie Friedenberg, will always be remembered and acknowledged. Covering the remaining funds for this memorial is simply the right thing to do.”

The funding announcement by Mayor Small ensures the Bernie Friedenberg WWII Memorial can now be completed with hardscaping, illumination, flagpoles, paving, and other materials.

“Getting this assurance from Mayor Marty Small, Sr. that the funding for the Memorial has been announced in time for Veterans Day is a symbolic and emotional win, as it gives us enough time to ensure the memorial can be unveiled and dedicated on D-Day, June 6, 2023,” said Bob Turkavage, who is chairman of the Friends of Bernie Friedenberg, a group of highly accomplished military veterans, businessmen, and public servants. “We also are very appreciative of the donors who have already contributed towards the Bernie Friedenberg World War II Memorial. Bernie would be pleased that this monument will remind visitors that freedom has a cost, and that World War II was fought by brave U.S. soldiers in the name of freedom.”

Bernard I. “Bernie” Friedenberg grew up in Atlantic City and attended area schools. He was a freshman at Temple University on December 7, 1941, when the U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbor was attacked, drawing the United States into World War II. The very next day,

Friedenberg attempted to enlist in the military services (Marines, Navy, and Army) but he was rejected by all three services due to poor vision. Undeterred, he persisted and Friedenber was eventually inducted into the Army as a non-combatant. He received training as a medic, attained the rank of Staff Sergeant, and was assigned to the Medical Detachment, 1st Battalion, 16th Regiment, 1st U.S. Infantry Division.

Friedenberg was deployed in many of the major battles of the War: Operation Torch in Algeria in November 1942; as a member of the “Fighting First” in the campaign for Sicily in 1943; Omaha Beach on D-Day 1944; through the fields and hedgerows of France into Germany in 1944, and the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944. In these and other battles, it was Friedenber’s job to remove or supervise the removal of wounded soldiers from the front lines to secure aid stations where he and others would render initial medical care to them.

Friedenberg received two Silver Stars for his heroism on Omaha Beach on D-Day and later in Germany. He was also awarded two Bronze Stars for valor, and two Purple Hearts for wounds sustained in combat.

Upon returning home after the war, Friedenber became a staunch advocate for veterans’ affairs, having served for many years as a member of the Atlantic County Veterans Advisory Board, and as Commander of a Jewish War Veterans Post. He regularly spoke at high schools and colleges in southern New Jersey on the perils of war and the true cost of freedom up until his death in 2018.

The site of the Bernie Friedenber World War II Memorial will be on the western side of Captain O’Donnell Park bordering Albany Avenue, and close to the existing World War I Memorial and Stockton University. The bronze sculpture that will be the centerpiece of the Bernie Friedenber World War II Memorial is being designed and created by Pennsylvania-based Fisher Sculpture, one of the foremost manufacturers of sports and military sculptures in the world. The 3,500-pound bronze statue depicts a six-foot likeness of Friedenber cradling a wounded soldier in his arms on Omaha Beach on D-Day in 1944.

Aside from Turkavage, the other members of the Friends of Bernie Friedenber committee are Marco Smigliani (Vice Chair), Retired Brigadier General Douglas Satterfield, James Eberwine, and Robert Frolow.

Visit berniefriedenbergworldwariimemorial.com for more information about the Bernie Friedenber World War II Memorial.

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About the Friends of Bernie Friedenber

The Friends of Bernie Friedenber (FBF) is an ad-hoc organization staffed by a group of highly accomplished military veterans, businessmen, and public servants. FBF was formed in May 2019, for the sole purpose of overseeing all aspects related to the manufacture and erection of the Bernie Friedenber World War II Memorial. All five members of FBF are volunteers; no member has received – nor will receive – any form of compensation arising out of their participation in this effort. Visit berniefriedenbergworldwariimemorial.com for more information.

Link to video from today's press conference:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/_ho5_KFYR0Xv5DZ5N-_ufSLiLxgtnTVnSxLuwUZEGLIRHd-VEq37_ulGFknHVBk.6UH41T7opO6gMHc0?startTime=1668096742000

Captions:



Atlantic City Mayor Marty Small Sr. surprised supporters of the Bernie Friedenberg World War II Memorial by announcing on Thursday that the city will contribute \$430,000 towards the cost of completing the monument in O'Donnell Park.



Robert Turkavage, Chairman of the veterans group Friends of Bernie Friedenberg, thanks the Mayor for the city's announced contribution to the WWII memorial.



Veterans advocate and Vice Chair of the Friends of Bernie Friedenberg (FOBF) Marco Smigliani (center) thanks AC Mayor Marty Small Sr. (right) for the city's contribution toward the Friedenberg World War II Memorial as FOBF Chair Robert Turkavage joins in expressing his gratitude.



(Left to right): James Eberwine, Randi Scheck, Robert Frolov (seated), and Robert Turkavage of the Friends of Bernie Friedenberg group join Atlantic City Mayor Marty Small, Sr., Business Administrator Anthony Swan, Marco Smigliani of the FOBF, and Atlantic County Commissioner Ernest Coursey.



A rendering of the Bernie Friedenberg WWII Memorial, which is now fully funded and set for an unveiling on D-Day, June 6, 2023.