

Masthead



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The new Lt. Col. George F. Marshall Memorial Park honors fallen WWII soldier

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RALEIGH -- By Sarah Barr

The sounds of a rifle salute rang through the air on Memorial Day near Crabtree Valley during the dedication of a new six-acre park that honors a soldier killed in action during WWII.

The Lt. Col. George F. Marshall Memorial Park honors the father of city real estate businessman Rick Marshall, who was just 2 years old when his father died during the Battle of Oran in 1942.

The North Carolina Army National Guard Honor Guard turned out to offer full military honors for the late Lt. Col. Marshall, a recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross.

Marshall donated the land for the park and said he was gratified to be able to honor his father's memory. But he said he hopes the park will honor the "heroism, sacrifice and accomplishment" of his father's entire generation, both those who fought in the war and those who supported the war effort from home.

"In the larger sense, this park commemorates the entire World War II generation," he said.

The linear park runs along one-third of a mile of the House Creek Greenway near the Blue Ridge Road entrance. In total, Marshall has donated 12 acres for the greenway and park.

The park features a steel pergola, granite benches, and a granite monument that details Lt. Col. Marshall's service. Marshall, who graduated from West Point in 1935, was killed along with nearly 200 members of his battalion aboard the HMS Walney. The ship was bombed and sank off the coast of North Africa.

The park also includes 12,000 square feet of beds filled with native trees and plants.

The park is located near what will be the Marshall Park Apartments, a five-story, 360-unit building scheduled to open in 2014. Marshall sold that land to the company in charge of the project.

After Marshall donated the first parcel of land to the city in 2004, the idea for the park took root. He said the charm of the land convinced him that he couldn't let the chance slip by.

"I'm just very, very thankful that I had the opportunity," he said.

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