



**PROPOSAL TO INSTALL AND DEDICATE AN ARMED FORCES MONUMENT AT CANOPY PARK**

**BY THE MIAMI BEACH GARDEN CLUB  
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501 (C3), ESTABLISHED 1927  
2000 CONVENTION CTR DRIVE  
MIAMI BEACH, FL 33139**



**IN COLLABORATION WITH AND SUPPORTED BY MIAMI BEACH POST 3559 OF VFW  
ALEX KRUGER-DOBROTA, SENIOR VICE COMMANDER USMC  
501 (C3) ESTABLISHED 1949  
650 WEST AVE #5  
MIAMI BEACH, FL 33139**

**To: City of Miami Beach Commissioner Alex Fernandez**  
**From: The Members of the Miami Beach Garden Club and the**  
**Veterans of the Miami Beach Post 3559 of VFW**  
**Submitted Monday, November 25, 2024**  
**Target Date of Installation May 26, 2025**

**Proposal:**

The Miami Beach Garden Club (MBGC) would like to install an Armed Services memorial in the southeast end of Canopy Park to honor our Armed Services Members. Canopy Park is an appropriate location for this honor as it is across the street from the VFW Post home.

**Scope of the Memorial:**

MBGC would like the memorial to include;

1. The first Blue Star Memorial marker in Florida. This marker was originally placed at the terminus of US Highway 1, a State designated Memorial Highway (May 12, 1947). This Historical Blue Star Marker has been decommissioned as a Memorial Marker as it is irreparable, but deserves a place of historical recognition.
2. A Gold Star Memorial marker to honor those who have fallen while defending our country and freedoms.
3. An insignia plaque for each of the 6 branches of the armed services.
4. A granite stone monument with the engraved history of the Blue/Gold Stars program

**The National Garden Clubs Blue Star Marker Program:**

The Blue Star Memorial Marker Program has been in existence under the auspices of the National Garden Clubs for more than 79 years. The Blue Star Marker Program honors all men and women that serve in the United States Armed Services. This program began with the planting of 8,000 Dogwood trees by the New Jersey Council of Garden Clubs in 1944, as a living memorial to veterans of World War II. In 1945, the National Council of State Garden Clubs (now NGC, Inc.) adopted this program and began a Blue Star Highway system that covers thousands of miles across the Continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii. The Blue Star and Gold Star were adopted because they had become icons in World War II and were seen on flags and banners in homes, churches and businesses, for sons and daughters away at war and for those who had lost their lives. The Blue Star represents hope and pride. The Gold star represents sacrifice. For more information go to

<https://gardenclub.org/blue-and-gold-star-memorials>

National Garden Clubs, Inc. is committed to placing Blue Star & Gold Star Markers in honor of our nation's Armed Forces and the Miami Beach Garden Club is proud to be a part of this national patriotic program.

**The Miami Beach Garden Club's HISTORICAL Blue Star Marker:**

The inscription on the marker that MBGC proposes to install, pays tribute to veterans of World War II thus confirming that the marker was originally acquired prior to 1951. After 1951, the inscription on the Blue Star Memorial Markers paid tribute to all veterans, having removed the WWII reference. In addition, the marker's inscription includes the "State Road Department of Florida". All highway markers manufactured after 1969 read "Florida Department of Transportation". Historical research has proven that the marker placed in Miami Beach in 1980 by the Miami Beach Garden Club, was obtained from another Florida garden club.

In Florida there were only five markers dedicated with the pre-1951 inscription. Three of those original markers are still in place. A fourth one was replaced prior to 1969. The fifth marker, originally dedicated in Key West on May 30, 1949 at the terminus of US 1, was replaced about the same time the Miami Beach marker was dedicated in 1980. The original Key West marker was identical in its wording to the one placed in Miami Beach. The Key West Garden Club offered the marker they replaced to the Miami Beach Garden Club which had the marker repaired and repainted, for the dedication in Miami Beach. The marker served as a memorial marker at the terminus of the Julia Tuttle Causeway on Alton Road until 2019 when the Club petitioned the State of Florida to grant State Road 907 (Alton Road) Memorial Highway Status and dedicated a Memorial Marker listing as sponsors the City of Miami Beach and the Miami Beach Garden Club.

### **Conclusion:**

The historical marker, which Miami Beach Garden Club wants to install in Canopy Park, is the first Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker ever dedicated in Florida on Florida's first designated Blue Star Memorial Highway (US 1). As such, it is an important piece of Florida's history that should be restored and displayed in a prominent location.

Taking into consideration the rich history of Miami Beach and the Armed Forces, especially during World War II, and with the full support of the Miami Beach VFW Post 3559, the southeast end of Canopy Park has been identified as a desirable location to place this Armed Services Memorial to honor those who serve, have served and those that have given their life for our freedom.

### **Attachments: 5**

Estimated Cost (1), Picture of Historical Marker (2), Picture of Dedication of Historical Marker in Key West (3), Picture of a Gold Star Marker (4), AutoCad rendition of Monument site at Canopy Park (5)

Attachment 1

Blue and Gold Star Morument ESTIMATED Costs			
Chairman: Leticia Gunn 786-445-5125			
May 26, 2025			
ITEM	ESTIMATEDCOST	ACTUAL	SOURCE
Restoration of Historical Marker	\$850.00	<b>\$850.00</b>	NGC Approved Restorer
Replacement 7' Post	\$375.00	<b>\$375.00</b>	Sewa Studios
Gold Star Plaque and 7' Post	\$2,350.00	<b>\$2,350.00</b>	Sewa Studios
Plaque with Armed Forces Insignia	\$1,500.00		Exploratory Research
Engraved Monument Stone	\$11,500.00		Exploratory Research
Installation			City of Miami Beach to Provide
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$16,575.00</b>	<b>\$3,225.00</b>	

## Attachment 2



The Historical Marker was originally dedicated in Key West in 1949 then gifted to the Miami Beach Garden Club. MBGC refurbished and dedicated the Marker at the terminus of the Julia Tuttle Causeway on State Road 907 (Alton Road) in May of 1980 where it served as a Memorial Marker for 49 years. In 2019 it was replaced with a new Blue Star Memorial Marker at the same location and the first Florida marker was decommissioned as a Memorial Marker and MBGC now seeks to designate it as a Historical marker. Plaque to be mounted on a 7 ft post. Plaque size is 41" high by 45" wide.

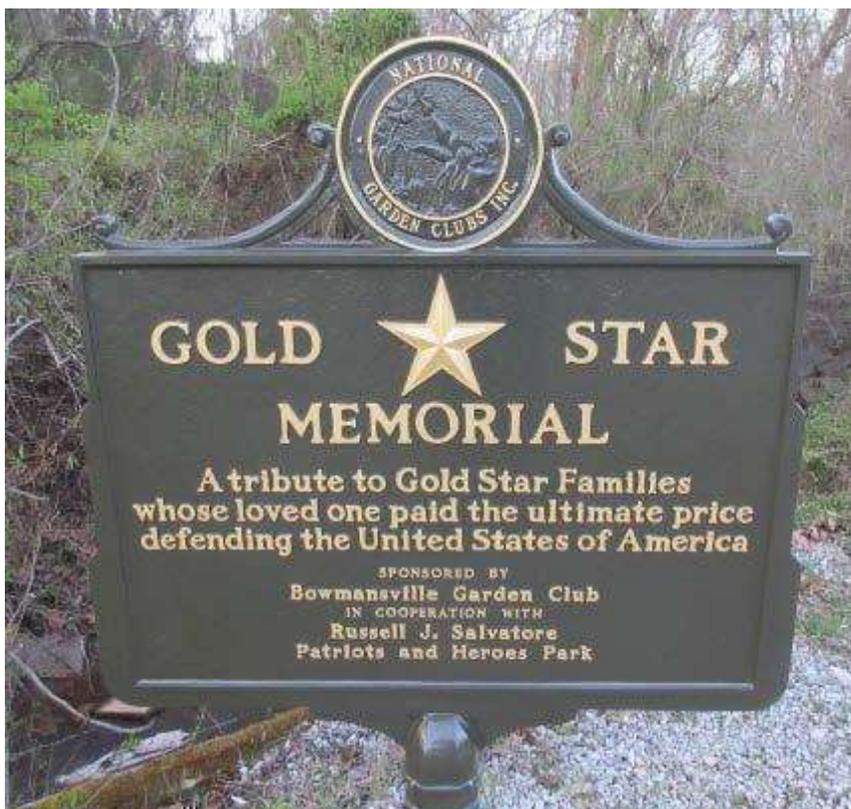
NOTE: Attachment 3 is a picture of the same plaque pictured on attachment 2. Different year, different location.

Attachment 3



Picture of the Key West Garden Club Board Members and Florida Federation of Garden Clubs President at the dedication of the first Florida Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker at the terminus of US Highway 1 at Bay View Park in Key West. Dedicated on Memorial Day, May 30th of 1949. The plaque served as a Memorial Marker for 31 years at this location before it was gifted to the Miami Beach Garden Club.

Attachment 4



Sample picture of a Gold Star Memorial Marker plaque. The Gold Star Memorial Marker to be installed at Canopy Park will proudly display sponsorship names of all organizations involved. Plaque to be mounted on a 7 ft post. Plaque size is 41" high by 45" wide.

Attachment 5



Autocad rendition of proposed Historical Blue Star, Gold Star and sample monument (not pictured is the insignia plaque with the Armed Forces Seals).