

Pave the Way Foundation Project Enhances Ammunition Hill Site

In the world of nature, a tiny bud eventually matures and becomes a beautiful flower. So too, in the world of art, where an idea to “create something” matures into a beautiful and significant piece of art whether a painting or a sculpture.

Not too long ago the induction center for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) was moved to Ammunition Hill, the site of perhaps the most significant battle during the Six Day War in 1967. This Battle and the ultimate sacrifice paid by nearly two hundred IDF soldiers had been memorialized by the construction of the Ammunition Hill Museum. The museum tells the story of the IDF, from the creation of the State of Israel until the present time. It was believed by the military and civil authorities to be a fitting spot for new recruits to be greeted and welcomed to the IDF, inspiring them to follow the path marked out for them by so many brave young men and women over more than six decades.

The idea to “create something” to welcome the recruits was presented to the well-known Israeli artist and sculptor, Sam Philipe. Giving the project its due thought, Mr. Philipe fashioned “The Rock of the Recruits”, a sculpture of appropriate design for this purpose. There are three significant elements. The first is the rocks from which the sculpture was created, Jerusalem stone, the same very strong stone that was used in the construction of the Temple. In Mr. Philipe’s own words, “(t)o me these solid rocks symbolize the young men and women soldiers being inducted into the IDF, who in turn represent the strong and resilient human building material that makes up our country, the State of Israel.”

The second element of this sculpture consists of two bronze bas-relief plaques, one on each of the two rocks. These were hand-fashioned by Mr. Philipe, and evoke the history of the City of Jerusalem, from ancient to modern times. Thus there are both the Wailing Wall and the Knesset building, the Tower of David and the Montefiore Windmill. Bringing together the ancient and the modern features of Jerusalem will remind the recruits of the essential unity of the city.

A dove is also depicted on the sculpture, and is the third element of this magnificent piece of art. IDF soldiers serve to bring peace to this troubled portion of the world. This peace is symbolized by the dove, and like the other elements of this sculpture, is a reminder to all who view it of the true purpose of the IDF.

As the concept for this sculpture evolved in the artist’s mind, the “bud” maturing into a “flower”, Mr. Philipe reached out to his friend, Mr. Richard Kandel, a member of the Pave the Way Foundation Board of Directors. The Pave the Way Foundation had previously supported projects to help the young men and women of the IDF, who so often are away from home for the first time in their lives. Mr. Kandel brought the idea of helping Mr. Philipe to the other Directors of the Pave the Way Foundation, where it was received with enthusiasm by Gary Krupp, the President of the Foundation, and the other Board members.

After adopting “The Rock of the Recruits” as a Pave the Way Foundation project, the Directors raised the funds necessary to bring the “bud” to full maturity. With the support of Mr. Kandel and Florence and Michael Edelstein, Mr. Philipe was able to complete this sculpture. There now stands at a site near the entrance to the Ammunition Hill Museum a fitting and beautiful reminder, not only to the IDF recruits but to all who visit there, of the sacrifices made by earlier

generations of IDF soldiers, of their valiant efforts to reunite all of Jerusalem, and to move the region ever closer to the goal of peace.

Mr. Krupp, Mr. Kandel and all those associated with the Pave the Way Foundation are justifiably proud to have adopted this project and brought it to its completion. This is consistent with the Foundation's mission of bringing people together in the true spirit of just and lasting peace.