

## *Cumming Forsyth County Veterans War Memorial*



Following the Persian Gulf War in 1991, the Mayor and Council of the City of Cumming commissioned artist Gregory Johnson to design the Cumming Forsyth County Veterans War Memorial. Guided by a five member committee and funded by donations from local individuals and businesses and the City of Cumming, the memorial was completed and dedicated in May 1992. The monument presents a pedestal for each war since the Civil War which bears the names of Forsyth Countians who fought and died in the conflict.

The central pedestal representing the Vietnam War features a southern ladder back chair, which is draped with a soldier's uniform. Inside the boots is an authentic dog tag of a Forsyth County native who served in Vietnam. The helmet is equipped with first aid supplies attached to the band. The pedestals for The Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korea and the Persian Gulf all contain bronzed artifacts representing that war era.



Each year ceremonies are conducted at the Memorial on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Many of our local citizens and veterans have participated in these occasions over the years, including groups from local schools, choral groups, veteran's organizations and churches. Through the years, specific groups of veterans have been honored and recognized for their service and sacrifice. Despite the many view points represented at the Memorial, it embraces a proud tradition of being a place for all to remember and to honor those who have sacrificed in service of their country.



In 1998, The City of Cumming was privileged to host the The Moving Wall. This is a half size replica of the Washington D.C. Vietnam Veterans Memorial that has been touring the country for more than 20 years. The wall contains the names of the 58,249 men and women who were killed or remain missing from the Vietnam War. The list on the wall begins with the year 1959 in which the first death occurred and ends next to the year 1975 when the final death is recorded. The wall remained assembled for one week at the Memorial, and in that time hundreds of flowers, letters and gifts were placed at the base of the wall in remembrance of those honored there.



In 1995, the City wanted to do more to recognize the men and women who had served and had returned home to live out the remainder of their lives as good citizens and family members as well those who had died during war time. With this idea, the Avenue of Flags was created. The Avenue currently consists of 130 flags representing 154 veterans. Each May new flags are added and the importance is more cherished with each addition.



In 2006, in preparation for the 15<sup>th</sup> Memorial Day ceremony to be held at the Memorial, changes were made to the Memorial to offset the wear and tear of time and the elements. The City of Cumming landscape crew removed the Leland Cypress trees originally planted behind the Memorial and with assistance from B.L. Mullinax Landscaping & Shubbery replanted the area surrounding the Memorial. Directly behind the Memorial there are three Liberty holly plants representing the significance of the Memorial, with additional plants in the surrounding areas. Lighting and electrical work was also updated by the City's electrician. The Memorial changes will be noticeable to those who are frequent visitors, but the reverence and spirit that defines the Cumming Forsyth County Veterans War Memorial remains as strong as ever.