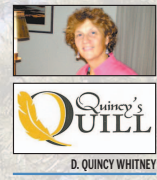


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Tower of Gratitude – for the women!

"Gratitude is when memory is stored in the heart and not in the mind." – Lionel Hampton

All Americans owe their freedom, their lives and this Thanksgiving Day to the few – the very few. Through the centuries, the few have carried the safety, livelihood and the American way of life on their backs – literally – as servants in the military.

The ultimate sacrifice is all about the power of the individual to make a difference, one step at a time, one encounter at a time, not only for the soldier but for the "Gold Star" family left behind. Some family members never escape the horror, loss and grief while others find a way to transform it, to move beyond it, to make a legacy out of loss.

Such was the case in Rindge, New Hampshire, on the spot we now know at the Cathedral of the Pines, an outdoor chapel that overlooks Mount Monadnock – where two monuments pay tribute to American war dead, but one is much better known than the other.

On Feb. 22, 1944, when Douglas and Sybil Sloane learned that their son Sanderson, a B-17 bomber pilot, had been shot down over Germany and was missing in action, they found a way to transform their grief. In August of that year, the Sloanes conducted an outdoor service on the knoll under the pines at the family farm in rural Rindge, New Hampshire, on the spot where Sanderson had chosen to build a home. To their surprise, a cavalcade of cars came from all around to pay tribute. The kindness of friends, family and the community inspired the Sloanes to build an outdoor chapel on the grounds – a fieldstone altar looking out over Mount Monadnock which became known as the Altar of the Nation.

Sloane, a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, put the word out to other SAR societies across the country to send rocks and medals to be imbedded in the Altar. The fieldstones represented the stockpiles of rocks farmers gathered to clear the land for farming. Sloane explained: "These rocks ... symbolize a determination for

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