



## Riverton Honor Roll

# The History of Our War Memorial

The Memorial building, standing in its tiny park that is just three one thousandths of an acre in size and located at 601 Main Street, was erected in 1945/6. Its purpose was to record the names of those from Riverton who had served in America's Armed Forces in time of war, and those who might in the future serve in defense of the United States, especially noting those who had died in defense of their country.

In 1919 a Riverton American Legion Post had been formed and named for James A. Bradley, who had died at Argonne in 1918, but after a few years the members allowed its Charter to lapse. In the early 1940s a group of about forty veterans sought to establish a new Riverton Post, but could not get a Legion Charter because there was another Post nearby. Their goal was to erect a permanent memorial giving the names of the veterans and to ensure care for it in perpetuity. They organized and incorporated as The Riverton Memorial Post, and set about getting their mission accomplished.

They purchased a small section of land by the railroad from J.T. Evans, had letterheads printed with the architect's drawing of the Memorial-to-be, and encouraged residents and friends to help support the project. The site acquired has an interesting history of its own. Close to the old Camden & Amboy railroad line, it was the site of Riverton's first railroad station.

In 1951 the Riverton Memorial Post deeded land and buildings thereon to the Borough of Riverton, with the stipulations that if at any time that piece of land cease to be used for the purpose stated all rights and titles revert to Howard Washington or his heirs. Mr. Washington was the last living member of the Post when, in 1967, he set up additional funds for the purpose of adding more names to the Riverton Honor Roll, and gave the Fire Company authority over it.

In subsequent years the shrubbery became overgrown, the building needed stabilization and repairs, and it no longer looked like a fitting Memorial to our service men and women. About 1998 a group of interested citizens initiated a restoration effort. Volunteers, including two Boy Scouts, Carl Eversmeyer and Josh Myers, who earned Eagle Scout badges in the process, cleared the site of overgrowth, made repairs to the foundation, laid bricks, and planted new shrubs and flowers. The Borough provided new access for watering—and even a small drinking fountain for dogs or other small creatures was installed. Better lighting added to its visibility. Watering, mowing, maintaining the Flags and poles used at such times as the traditional 4th of July Parade, lighting the large trees at Christmas, etc. is cooperative program.

Today the well-tended Riverton Honor Roll does as it was intended to do: recognizes and honors all of the residents of our town (at the time of their service) who have served in the Armed Forces at time of War, and note in particular those who have given their lives in answering that call.

**Betty B. Hahle** (*Riverton Historian*)