North Myrtle Beach, SC – July 24, 2017 – Last week, we reported that the city of North Myrtle Beach was presented with new flags to fly at Veterans Plaza at the North Myrtle Beach Park & Sports Complex. There is a story behind the presentation that we did not know until today.

Art Willms, who made the presentation to City Council at the July 17 City Council meeting, was not acting on behalf of the American Legion as we reported but on behalf of North Myrtle Beach resident William Ballentine, who passed away on January 14, 2017 at the age of 93 with no next of kin.

Ballentine was a WWII U.S. Army veteran, served in the 82nd Airborne Division, and was a participant in the Battle of the Bulge, among other WWII endeavors.

For 19 years, Willms was Ballentine’s neighbor and friend in North Myrtle Beach. In 2014, Willms, recognizing that his friend did not have much longer to live, offered to accompany him on an Honor Flight to Washington, DC so that Ballentine could visit the WWII monument and have the opportunity to participate in Honor Flight activities.

Sometime later, Willms was driving Ballentine around North Myrtle Beach in his car when he asked him if he had seen the Veterans Plaza, to which Ballentine replied that he had not. Willms drove him out to the park and Ballentine was so impressed with the Veterans Plaza that he asked Willms to use some of the little money that would be left in his estate after he died to purchase new flags for the plaza and present them to the City. Willms promised that he would do so and, following Ballentine’s death and the settlement of his estate, Willms worked with City Councilman Bob Cavanaugh to accomplish the presentation.
Willms, Ballantine and Councilman Cavanaugh have a history of involvement in the American Legion but this time it was William Ballantine who provided flags to the City. So, whenever you visit the North Myrtle Beach Veterans Plaza, pause for a moment and give a whisper of thanks to William, and to his true friend, Art.

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