

# Stuart Girl Scout works to improve, promote WWI Memorial in Jensen Beach

- By [Kim Hughes](#)
- Posted October 10, 2011 at 4:12 p.m.

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Mckenzie Merritt, 16, of Stuart, plants flowers at the World War I Memorial at the All Saints Cemetery in Jensen Beach. Mckenzie said she was inspired to spruce up the memorial by a teacher and said she wanted those passing by to realize it was there. "This is so their dedication and service is not forgotten," said John Merritt, Mckenzie's father.

JENSEN BEACH — Many people don't even know the World War I Memorial at All Saints Cemetery in Jensen Beach exists. Sixteen-year-old Mckenzie Merritt wants to change that.

Merritt is working toward earning a Gold Award, the highest achievement within the Girl Scouts of the USA. To reach that goal, Mckenzie must complete a project designed to develop her leadership skills and create a lasting impact on the lives of others.

Mckenzie chose to make improvements to the World War I Memorial at All Saints Cemetery in Jensen Beach and plan a Veteran's Day ceremony to rededicate the memorial.

Mckenzie, who is a dual enrollment student at the [Clark Advanced Learning Center](#) and [Indian River State College](#), said a former teacher initially told her about the memorial. After checking it out, she saw the area where it was located was very nondescript.

"You could drive right by it and not even notice it," she said.

Jo Neeson, cemetery administrator, said after Mckenzie contacted her to discuss the project, they put together a presentation to submit to the church's volunteer board of directors.

"They unanimously and gratefully approved it," Neeson said.

Mckenzie's plan to enhance the memorial includes planting red, white and blue flowers, painting the base of the flagpole and installing a bench for visitors "to sit and reflect on what veterans had done for us."

She's invited some fellow Girl Scouts and friends to help her complete those tasks.

She has received commitments of donations for plants from Home Depot. She is still trying to secure a donated bench for that area, but said, "if we have to, we'll buy it."

After the physical work is done, Mckenzie will focus on plans for the Nov. 11 ceremony.

She has confirmed the attendance of a chaplain, the honor guard from Hobe Sound VFW Post 10132 and an individual to sing the national anthem. Cards and fliers have been created to invite veterans and their families to the event.

Diane Merritt, Mckenzie's mother, said she is proud of her daughter for her commitment to the project.

"I knew it was going to be a big project," she said. "I was applauding her for her big ambitions."

Although Mckenzie has experienced a few minor glitches along the way, Diane Merritt said, "I keep saying it will all come together."