

Civil War memorial gets new addition

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MANKATO — Dressed as Abraham Lincoln, author Bryce Stenzel recited the Gettysburg Address from memory Saturday at Lincoln Park, as he often does at ceremonies honoring military service members.

Others at the park can now read Lincoln's famously brief speech.

A Veterans Day ceremony at Lincoln Park featured a new addition to the "Boy in Blue" Civil War Veterans Memorial.

A small kiosk now displays a bronze plaque bearing the Gettysburg Address and a box. Inside the box is a book with the names of the 682 people from Blue Earth County who served in the Civil War.

"Veterans Day is generally thought of as more for the living soldiers, so people say. 'Well, then why remember these guys?'" Stenzel said. "Because without these guys there would be no nation to protect ... we as a nation owe a debt to our veterans and it's a small way to say, 'Thank you for your service.'"

The kiosk with the names was built by Arnie Lillo of Good Thunder to accompany the Civil War memorial, installed two years ago.

The Boy in Blue Memorial was crafted to be an exact replica one built in 1892 in Mankato but removed in 1935. The kiosk has been on the Boy

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Photos by Casey Ek

Civil War re-enactors look on Saturday as Bryce Stenzel, the chairman of the Boy in Blue Memorial Project Committee, delivers the Gettysburg Address in character as Abraham Lincoln at Lincoln Park in Mankato.

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in Blue committee's "wish list" to add to the park, Stenzel said.

"It's so wonderful that we have people that want to remember this, isn't it?" said Lois Halley, who is visiting Mankato from Tacoma, Washington. She was one of about two dozen at the ceremony and said many of her family members have served in the military.

After the reading of the Gettysburg Address and the unveiling of the kiosk, members of the New Ulm Battery dressed in Civil War era uniforms presented the colors and a salute.

"My husband served in the Vietnam War so it's



Arnie Lillo of Good Thunder stands near the kiosk he made, which bears an engraving of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Lillo unveiled the kiosk at Lincoln Park on Saturday.

always an honor to honor him on veterans day," said Genette Carleton. Two of her family members served in the Civil War. "I'm

on the Boy in Blue Committee. We are just thrilled to have our kiosk done."

For John Fritsche, a member of the New Ulm

Battery who served in the Army, honoring history on Veterans day is important.

He said he once realized the value of freedom when he was traveling with his wife to her childhood home in the Czech Republic in the 1980s.

As they were crossing into the country a man walked the aisles of the bus with his hand on the trigger of an assault weapon while every passenger presented their passports. The memory is stuck in his mind, he said.

"We have to look back at what happened in the past to prevent these things from happening in the future," Fritsche said.