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Moving memorial to remember servicemen

By: Bill Carey

Thousands of people are expected to pay a visit this holiday weekend to Auburn's Hoopes Park. YNN's Bill Carey says they'll be there to view a moving remembrance of those who served and those who died in service to their nation.

AUBURN, N.Y. -- It took days to place the flags. Hours more work to unfurl the banners. More than 2,000 in all.

Volunteers, organized by St. Joseph's School in Auburn, for the second year, creating a dramatic scene for the Memorial Day weekend.

It's called a "healing field." Each of the hundreds of flags tied to a particular name or group.

"You'll see people come into the field. And it will be groups of families. There'll be parents, grandparents, great-grandparents. And they'll spend time together and they'll explain their story. It's very emotional. You'll see a lot of people sobbing in the field," project coordinator Darlene Nila said.

This year's display is larger than in 2010, in part because of the Cuthbert brothers, who banded together to buy 458 special flags. Each remembers someone from Cayuga County who has died in the nation's many conflicts since World War I. The idea came to Doug Cuthbert last year.

"There was a couple that came by and her brother had died in Vietnam. And she wanted to get a flag and they were all sold out. And I got thinking about it, that, you know, that's kind of sad. You've got someone that died and there was no flag up for them," Cuthbert said.

This ceremony will come to an end on Monday. But organizers say these flags will fly again, to mark the 10th anniversary of the September 11th terror attacks. The impact then, as now, will be profound.

"The pride to be an American. The American flag and what it represents. And to represent too, for Memorial Day, what people have done for our freedom, and for people to realize too that freedom isn't free," said Cheryl Foster, "Healing Field" organizer.

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