

## Boy Scout Honors Whitesboro's Hero Charles Baum

"Life is good. I do not harbor any animosity for the things that happened to me. Would I do it all again? Yes, I sure would. We're the luckiest people on earth. You've got to go through something to appreciate it." ~~ Charlie Baum

These words seem surprising coming from the man that enlisted voluntarily in the Army Air Corps, endured the 100 mile Bataan Death March, survived forty-two months as a prisoner of war, and weighed eighty-six pounds when he was freed. Whitesboro native Charles Baum, World War II veteran, was the epitome of honor, courage, valor, and fortitude. Lest the sacrifice of this hero be forgotten, a local Boy Scout is on a mission to create a lasting memorial to Mr. Baum.

Whitesboro Sophomore John Hall is a member of Boy Scout Troop 38 and an Eagle Scout Candidate. For his Eagle Scout project, Hall has designed and will install a memorial bench in Trollinger Park in memory of Charles Baum and install additional landscaping in the surrounding area. The bench will be located adjacent to the water fountain on East Main Street. When asked why he chose this particular project, Hall had this to say: "I felt that Mr. Baum needed to be honored in a lasting way, to keep his sacrifice from being forgotten by future generations. I also want to honor Mrs. Baum and his family, and I am grateful to them for their assistance in this project."

Hall began work on his endeavor during the summer. He has completed the design phase, and the plan has been approved by both the Boy Scout's Eagle Scout Service Project Committee and the Whitesboro City Council. Whitesboro Mayor W. D. Welch said, "I think the folks of Whitesboro will be delighted when they hear about this, and I believe that many of them will want to be involved with you! Mr. Baum was a hometown hero that we want to always remember and honor. The City of Whitesboro fully supports your project."

After approving the project, the City Council empowered Hall to begin fundraising and collecting donations toward the project's expense. The estimated cost of the project is just under \$2,000 for a granite bench (with custom emblems related to Baum's service and life) and landscaping. The installation will be completed by Hall and fellow Boy Scouts.

Donations for the Charles Baum Memorial may be made at the Whitesboro Community Center, located at 400 Wilson Street, or by mail to Whitesboro Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) at PO Box 340, Whitesboro, Texas 76273. Please make checks payable to the Whitesboro PARD and note "Baum Memorial" on the check. Any excess funds raised (over the \$2,000) will be used solely for improvements to Trollinger Park.

John Hall is the son of Kelly Hall of Whitesboro. His scout master is Nate Ward. Anyone desiring to get additional information about this project may contact Mr. Hall through the PARD at 903.564.5964. Receipts for donations will be available.

To read the complete story of Mr. Baum's incredible journey by Jaquita Lewter, visit [www.whitesborotexas.com](http://www.whitesborotexas.com).