



Char Jackson, Public Information Officer

Cjackson@cityofcaldwell.org

Phone: (208) 455-4524

CITY OF CALDWELL PRESS RELEASE

DATE: November 9, 2023

On November 13 at noon, at the Idaho Veterans Garden (305 W. Belmont St, Caldwell) Mayor Wagoner will be presenting the Idaho Veterans Garden with a check for over \$20,000.00. The money was raised from generous local sponsors (Republic Services, Albertons, Thomas Development, Idaho Power, Fresca Mexican Foods, ICCU, Hamilton, Michaelson, and Hilty, LLP., Caldwell Housing Authority, and Price Pump), vendor fees from the July 4th festivities at Memorial Park, and revenue from the July 4th fun run.

The money is specifically earmarked for a statue memorializing Carrie French at The Idaho Women Veterans Memorial, located at the Idaho Veterans Garden. French was the first Idaho woman to give her life in combat. Carrie French of Caldwell was the embodiment of camaraderie in the Idaho 116th Brigade Combat Team. Some of those closest to Carrie described her as fiercely loyal. This Caldwell resident was known for caring deeply and giving her all. On June 5, 2005, Carrie was killed by a roadside bomb outside of Kirkuk, Iraq while volunteering for a supply mission convoy.

Event Agenda:

- City of Caldwell Mayor Jarom Wagoner speaks
- Danny Pugmire, Idaho Veterans Garden Founder, speaks
- Mitzi Cheldelin, Idaho Division of Veterans Services, speaks
- Ben Victor, Artist, speaks
- Mayor Wagoner presents check

You can support the memorial here: [Idaho Women Veterans Memorial | ID Veterans Garden \(idahoveteransgarden.com\)](https://idahoveteransgarden.com)

On November 17, from 5 – 6 p.m., the Polar Bear Plunge Dunk Tank event will be held to raise funds for the memorial. The community can pay to dunk Mayor Wagoner or Caldwell Chief of Police Rex Ingram. The dunk tank will be located in front of the Caldwell Luxe Reel Theatre (913 Arthur St.).

About the Garden: The garden is a 501c3, created to be a place of peace and growth for our local veteran community. While scars may remain, minds and hearts can heal surrounded by generations of veterans and their families who share in the same appreciation of camaraderie and service.

About Ben Victor: He is a world-renowned artist located in Idaho. While working on the statue for the Idaho Veterans Cemetery, it became clear Benjamin had a deep appreciation for every piece he creates.

P.O. Box 1179 | Caldwell, Idaho 83606
411 Blaine Street | Caldwell, Idaho 83605
www.cityofcaldwell.org

The story of Carrie's friendship resonated with him, and he has since been working with those close to Carrie to tell her story for years to come. At age 26, he became the youngest artist ever to have a sculpture in our Nation's foremost collection, the National Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol. In 2019, he became the only living artist to have three works in Statuary Hall.



Artist Conceptual Rendering of Statue