

NSU artist selected for airport sculpture

By Elissa Grossell
American News Writer

A more than 7-foot tall soldier will stand watch over Aberdeen's new airport.

On Monday, the Aberdeen City Commission approved \$100,000 to allow the creation of a bronze statue commemorating members of the Armed Forces.

The statue will go in front of the new multimillion-dollar terminal — the War Memorial Building — for the grand opening set for Veterans Day.

And a local college student will make it all happen.

The \$6.6 million, 15,000-square-foot terminal building is being built 200 yards southeast of the current terminal. The tentative completion date is July 5, and workers expect to meet that date.

The terminal grand opening committee has been working on a memorial to tie in with the Nov. 11 grand opening. Committee members thought a monument

Bronze soldier to watch over Aberdeen terminal

showing people who have served and who continue to serve the nation is appropriate since the terminal will be named the War Memorial Building.

They selected Northern State University art student Ben Victor to create the sculpture because they felt he can best accomplish what the committee wants, Mark Caven of Aberdeen Flying Service has said.

Victor will create a main statue of a generic soldier holding an American flag. He will stand on a raised concrete platform surrounded by granite benches and a granite plaque on a podium describing the artwork. The area will be lighted 24 hours a day, Caven has said. Two other soldiers — one male and one female — could be added later, depending on funding. Caven said the committee

also hopes to eventually solicit donations and look for grants.

Standing 7½ feet tall atop a 2-foot platform, the main soldier is "going to be an attention-getter," Victor, 21, said.

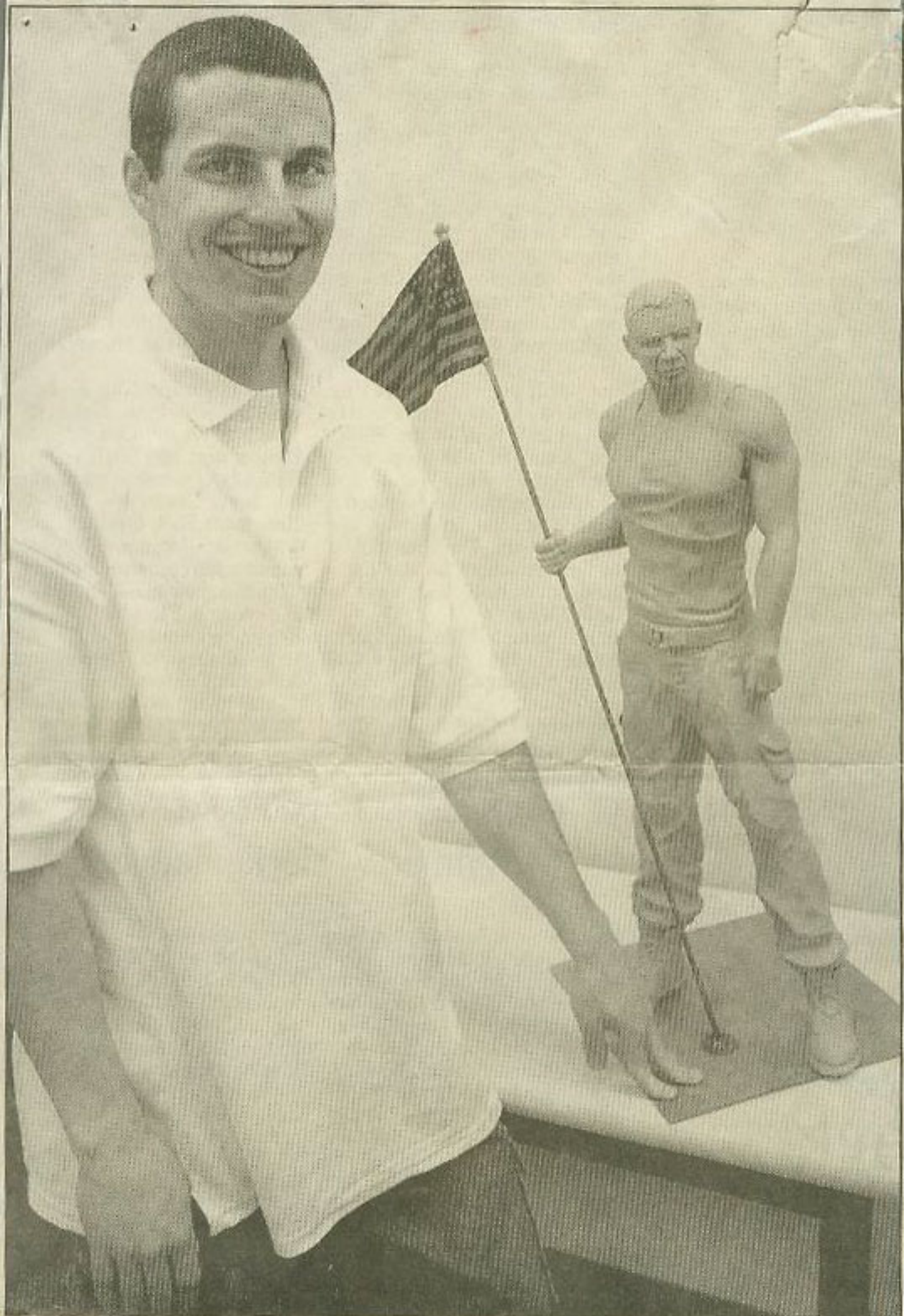
Caven said the memorial will be something of which the community can be proud, and it puts to rest any doubts that the terminal will be anything besides the War Memorial Building.

And the fact that the sculptor is an NSU student is a huge sales tool and brings everyone together, he said.

Victor hopes to start work on the statue by the end of the week. He has to be finished with the clay by July 1. The statue will have to be taken to the foundry to be bronzed by Nov. 1 to be back for the Nov. 11 ceremony.

Victor said he's very excited to be a part of the project.

"I think it's great for the community," he said, especially for veterans. "We need something like this."



American News Photo by Dawn Dietrich

Commissioned: Ben Victor, a Northern State University junior, was commissioned to sculpt the bronze statue for the new airport terminal. The artist is shown standing with a model of the statue Tuesday at City Hall in Aberdeen.