

Lest We Forget: The San Diego Veterans War Memorial Building

Alexander D. Bevil

“No one is ever gone as long as someone still has memories of them.”

—Charles Edward Worthington (1916-1996), U. S. Army, P.O.W., Burma, 1942-1945¹

On the morning of June 24, 2000, a small group gathered on the brick terrace in front of the San Diego Veterans War Memorial Building. Among the group of elderly veterans, public officials, and other attendees were local community activists who were quietly celebrating a victory. They had successfully prevented the City of San Diego from demolishing the building to provide additional



Veterans War Memorial Building, Balboa Park, 2014. Editors' Collection.

Alexander Bevil, a long-time California State Parks historian, volunteers his time to local historical organizations seeking to prevent or delay the demolition of historic landmarks. His September 2000 nomination of the San Diego Veterans War Memorial Building to the National Register of Historic Places prevented its transformation into a parking lot.

parking for the nearby San Diego Zoo.² A key part of their campaign was to have the building listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a unique local example of a Living Memorial. One of hundreds of such buildings built across the nation during and immediately after World War II, it was dedicated to those San Diego servicemen and women who fought and died during the war. As a Living Memorial, it was not meant to be a static monument but a functional utilitarian building where veteran and other civic groups could meet, relax, and socialize so that “patriotism might be renewed and gratitude nourished.”³

San Diego’s Veterans War Memorial Building’s origins begin late in 1942, during the height of the United States’ involvement in World War II. A local committee at that time lobbied the San Diego City Council to construct and dedicate a memorial to the city’s war dead, as well as to its returning veterans. Instead of a static memorial, the committee insisted that it be a utilitarian multi-use public facility. The committee also recommended that the proposed building be erected on Lane Field, a city-owned ballpark adjacent to a railroad freight yard at Pacific Highway and Broadway. Extending two blocks north from Broadway to B Street, the building would be an integral part of the planned development of San Diego’s downtown harbor district. The city commissioned local architects John S. Siebert and Samuel W. Hamill to design the new memorial building.⁴



Samuel Wood Hamill (1903-1989).
©SDHC #OP:17133-1167.

Both Siebert and Hamill had already contributed to San Diego’s built environment. German-born John Selmar Siebert had immigrated to the United States in 1873. An 1886 architectural and civil engineering graduate of Pennsylvania’s Lehigh University, Siebert relocated to San Diego in 1909, where he became a founding member of the San Diego Architectural Association. Siebert’s design of the monumental radio towers for the US Navy’s Chollas Heights Radio Station led to his appointment as a construction inspector for the Navy’s San Diego and San Francisco Public Works programs during World War I. From 1919 to 1923, he contributed to the design and construction of the San Diego Naval Destroyer Base, Fuel Depot, Air Station, and Marine Base. Siebert concurrently worked on projects for the City of San Diego, devoting much of his time improving San Diego’s uniform building code.⁵ It was probably due to his years of experience with military and local government projects that the City chose Siebert as the

proposed San Diego Veterans War Memorial Building project's senior architect.⁶

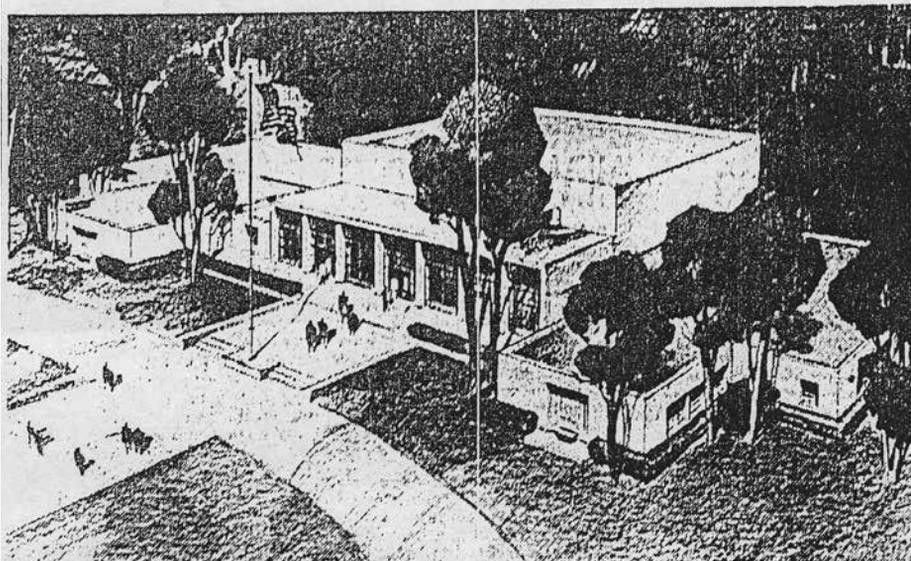
Siebert's junior partner, Samuel Wood Hamill, had come to San Diego from his native Globe, Arizona, in 1908. After graduating with honors from UC Berkeley's School of Architecture in 1927, Hamill immediately went to work for the architectural firm of Richard Requa and Herbert L. Jackson. Under Requa and Jackson's direction, he and fellow staff architect Lilian Rice designed Rancho Santa Fe's central business district and several impressive homes in the Mediterranean Revival, or, in what Requa termed, the "Southern California" style.⁷

During the early 1930s, Hamill became a junior partner at Requa and Jackson, where he served as the lead architect in preparing a master plan for the San Diego County fairgrounds at Del Mar, and for remodeling the House of Hospitality for the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition in Balboa Park. Hamill was also responsible for designing the Exposition's Casa de Tempo, a two-story Monterey Revival style model home that would be raffled away during the Exposition. In 1936, in a surprise move, the federal Works Project Administration (WPA) chose the then 32-year-old Hamill as the chief supervisory architect of the new Civic/County Administration Center Project over the more experienced and noteworthy design committee member architects, Requa, Templeton Johnson, and Louis Gill. Dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1938, the building's design exhibits elements of a "stripped-down" Beaux-Art Classicism with hints of Spanish/Mediterranean Revival style details.⁸ In 1940, Hamill, who was no



San Diego City and County Administration Building, 1940. ©SDHC #83:14541-218.

Architects' Sketch of New War Memorial Building



Sketch of Veterans War Memorial Building which was submitted to Mayor Harley E. Knox yesterday by John S. Siebert and Sam W. Hamill, architects. Preliminary plans for the building, to be erected in Balboa Park as a meeting place for veterans' organizations, have been approved by a committee representing veterans' groups. The structure contains one large auditorium and smaller meeting rooms. It will be erected with \$300,000 profit from sale of Camp Callan and furnished with \$50,000 Buddy Bed funds.

Sketch of Veterans War Memorial Building in The San Diego Union, January 7, 1948. ©SDHC Research Archives.

longer affiliated with Requa and Jackson, formed a new partnership with John S. Siebert for the Veterans War Memorial Building's proposal.⁹

Siebert and Hamill's initial design of the Veterans Memorial Building was similar in scale, form, and materials to both the Civic/County Administration Center and Templeton Johnson's earlier 1937 WPA-funded design for downtown San Diego's U.S. Post Office.¹⁰ Like the former, the Veterans War Memorial Building would feature a 100-foot diameter central rotunda surrounded by various veterans' organizations' offices and meeting halls. On the building's south, or Broadway-facing exposure, would be a 2,500-seat theater, with a 100-foot-wide proscenium arch that "would rival that of the New York City's famed Radio City Music Hall." In addition, the building's great hall and theater could serve as a convention center with an auditorium large enough for automobile and industrial shows. The basement would house several kitchens, dining rooms and other facilities for the veterans groups or the general public's use.¹¹

While San Diego's proposed multi-use Veterans War Memorial Building was one of the earliest that any American city conceived of during World War II, the overall concept was based on an earlier nation-wide "Living Monument

Movement” that originated during the latter stages of World War I. At this time, various American veterans organizations called for their local municipalities to build living memorials to perpetuate the memory of local servicemen and women who had served or been killed during the Great War. The result was a revolution in the spirit of American architectural expression and land use planning.¹² Prior to 1920, an Egyptian style marble obelisk, or a monumental stature of a “bronze man on a bronze horse,” personified a town’s commemoration of its war dead.

After the carnage of World War I, Americans began to recognize that bravery and sacrifice were not matters of rank. The editors of *American City* promoted the idea that a true modern war memorial should not be a “monument to the conquering war hero, but to the anonymous soldiers, living and dead.” For the quarter of a century following the war, many American communities chose to erect useful multi-functional buildings that commemorated the collective spirit of those who fought while, at the same time, effectively serving the community’s needs. Local municipalities across the nation erected buildings, auditoriums, libraries, schools, playgrounds, parks, and other types of service structures dedicated to their veterans. Other communities suggested that they commemorate their veterans by planting trees, constructing highways or parkways, or, like San Diego, building convention centers in their honor.¹³

Goldsboro, North Carolina, was one of the first American municipalities to build a “living” war memorial building. Dedicated on June 26, 1925, it provided office and meeting space for various community and charitable organizations, as well as for organized recreational activities. Soon other cities and towns followed Goldsboro’s lead. El Paso, Texas, Springfield, Illinois, and Honolulu, Hawaii built memorial pools and parks. Van Wert, Ohio, transformed an abandoned cemetery into a community park. Savannah, Georgia, and Minneapolis, Minnesota, constructed memorial drives. Circleville, Ohio, and Richmond, Virginia, built memorial carillon towers. The northern California community of Woodminster, overlooking San Francisco Bay, constructed a 3,000-seat outdoor theater that featured an illuminated cascading fountain. In southern California, Santa Monica constructed an outdoor theater flanked by newly planted native cypress trees and shrubs on the grounds of a high school. As the movement progressed, civic leaders and veterans groups decided that buildings of great community value were best suited as living memorials. As a result, two types of memorials began to dominate the urban landscape: large auditoriums or small community centers.¹⁴

In San Diego, remembrance was limited to a privately donated bronze memorial plaque. Mounted in Balboa Park’s American Legion Building on November 15, 1926, it listed San Diego’s war dead.¹⁵

With the United States’ entry into World War II in 1941, Americans were

once again faced with commemorating the sacrifices made by a new generation of servicemen and women. Communities discussing the idea of designing and building fitting memorials to the patriotism, duty, and personal sacrifice of its local sons and daughters. This gave added impetus to the American Living Memorial Movement. In addition to commemorating their heroism, the new memorials would serve a community's needs "while promoting democracy at the local level."¹⁶

By its very nature, a utilitarian multi-use war memorial building should be able to develop "an alert, satisfied, loyal, and expressive population," according to an article written in the October 1944 issue of *American City*. A municipal war memorial as a community center is "a must...because such a center, well administered, is the best facility yet devised for promoting unity and individual growth among all the people."¹⁷

The promotion of a "living" war memorial during World War II soon spread to the United States' allies. In 1944, Britain's Minister of Town and Country Planning, the Rt. Hon. W. S. Morrison, wrote:

We know that after the war we must build and rebuild not only for ourselves but for generations that will come after us. We shall, I think, build too with the sense that we are thus creating worthy memorials to the heroes and heroines of this war.¹⁸

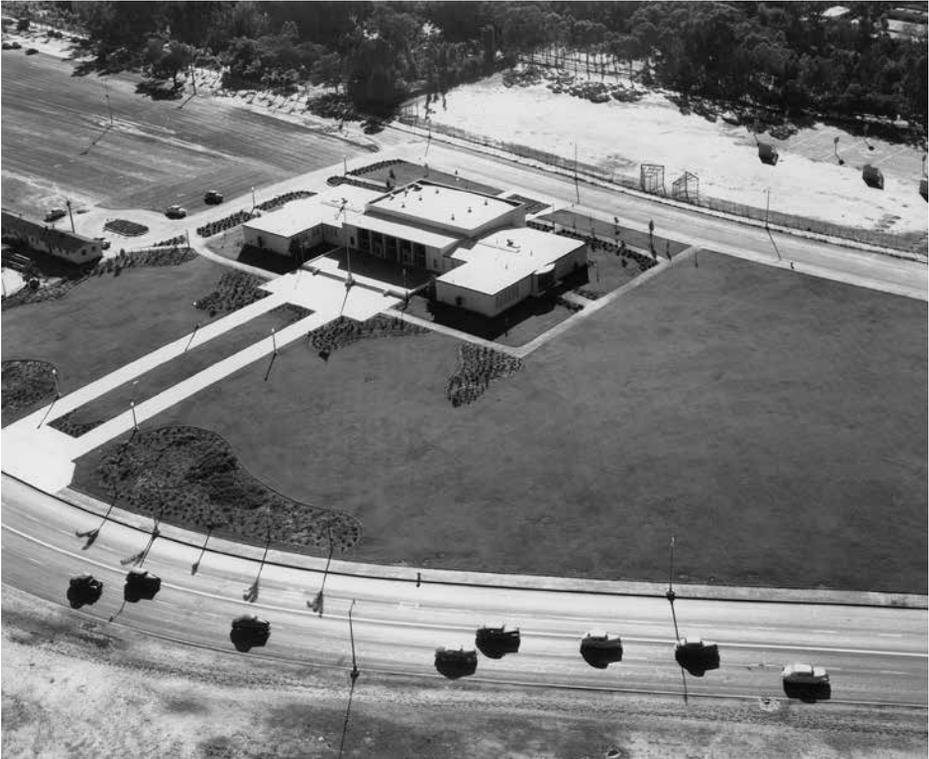
Likewise, the Dominion of Canada chose to make war memorials both useful and aesthetically pleasing, while contributing to the health and culture of the nation. Norman S. Dowd, executive secretary of the Canadian Congress of Labor, expressed these views by saying, "It is unquestionably the view of the workers of Canada...that war memorials should take the form of community halls, libraries, recreation and other community centers, rather than sculptured stone or bronze."¹⁹

Back in the United States, in 1944, the *New York Herald Tribune* published a letter stating that such monuments as London's Trafalgar Square, Paris' Arc de Triomphe, or New York City's Columbus Circle "are monuments to the dead." The article continued:



The San Diego Union, August 23, 1945.
©SDHC Research Archives.

The San Diego Veterans War Memorial Building



Aerial View of the Veterans War Memorial Building, Balboa Park, 1951. ©SDHC #92:18835-2412.

We are fighting for our lives, for peace and decency. These are not mock phrases, but simple matter-of-fact phrases which will inspire every architect, engineer, city planner, every citizen with a will to create a memorial worthy of those who died that others may live!²⁰

By 1945, nearly every town in America was thinking of building some form of war memorial. Some people, however, questioned the advisability of erecting a veterans' memorial while the nation was still at war. "Shouldn't a community," they asked, "wait until its fighting sons and daughters are all home again before they build a memorial in their honor?" In response, the *Service Men's Weekly News Letter* conducted a survey of local servicemen and women and asked their thoughts on what constitutes a proper memorial and when should it be built. Of the 3,500 respondents, they stated unanimously, "No more stone cannons. No more stone statues. No more granite pillars. And no more parks with flowers." The majority wanted their hometown to "build a community center, a real one... which will answer all the needs of our town." On the issue of when it should be built, they stated,

Start it now! Don't wait until the war is over. The men at the front are fighting [and dying] for just such things as a community, which takes hold and works together to provide something useful and worthwhile for those who come back...And build it to last, build it for the future and build it for our sons and daughters, for their better health, for their better sportsmanship, for their better community living.

The people back home saw this as "a directive from the front lines."²¹

In an attempt to assist local communities in planning their war memorials, the National Recreation Association (NRA) published a pamphlet, "Community Recreation Buildings as War Memorials," which recommended the following:

Beauty, through simplicity in design and utility through functional efficiency are two chief objectives in planning a memorial community building. The site should be as near as possible to the center of the city or neighborhood the building is to serve. It should be sufficiently large to provide an adequate and appropriate setting for the building.²²

It continued:

1. A memorial building should possess dignity, simplicity, and good taste, which helps to establish or maintain a high architectural standard for the community.
2. The building's interior should be planned to provide an attractive, hospitable center where the people can enjoy the activities made possible by the building.
3. Through the use of sound planning practices, careful consideration should also be given to the size, shape, and arrangement of the individual rooms, because, these factors affect the efficiency of the building and the economy of its operation, maintenance and use.
4. A properly planned corridor and lobby space would direct pedestrian movement into and throughout the building. A large lobby, in turn, would facilitate ingress into the auditorium.
5. Large access doors would allow large numbers of people into the lobby from outside the building.
6. Conversely, narrow corridors leading from separate entrances, could lead to hobby or craft rooms. Designed to accommodate small groups, they could be placed farther from the entrance.

7. Interior doors should be arranged so that no one was required to pass through one room in order to reach another.
8. Coatrooms should be placed where people can check their wraps and move on to the activity room without retracing their steps.²³
9. A war memorial building that offered multiple use possibilities was “highly desirable and is generally essential,” according to the NRA, “Few building facilities especially in small communities, can be devoted to a single purpose.” Most rooms should be planned for a variety of uses, the most frequent being a combined gymnasium and auditorium. In addition to athletic events, the auditorium and smaller rooms could be used for such widely divergent activities as square dancing, choral rehearsals, lectures, bridge parties, hobby activities, as well as group, club, and committee meetings.²⁴

Other sound planning principles that the NRA expounded included the placement of the building manager’s office close to the main lobby, where he or she could have a chance to greet and get acquainted with visitors. Economy of use and maintenance were other concerns. Throughout the building, construction



Glenn A. Rick, City Planning Director, November 1944. ©SDHC UT: #7705.

materials and equipment “should be selected with a view to the nature of the activities to be carried out in the respective units.”²⁵

Finally, the NRA recommended that a proposed war memorial building’s designers and builders should consult with local leaders “since they are most aware of the community’s interests and needs.” It also recommended that they consult or hire “people experienced in the field of recreation and in the operation of recreation facilities” in order to “prevent many mistakes in planning.” Their expertise would be invaluable in indicating, according to the NRA, “how the location, size, and equipment of the various features affect the problems of operating and maintaining the building.”²⁶

Most of these concepts were already in place in Siebert and Hamill’s proposed design. Political pressure, however, would delay San Diego’s war memorial building for the next seven years. In April 1944, City Planning Director Glenn A. Rick opposed the Lane Field site, claiming it was an inappropriate location. First, according to Rick, it lacked adequate parking space, which restricted its use as a convention hall or auditorium. Second, because of its size, it would take up valuable tideland, inhibiting the harbor area’s future development. Third, due to budgetary constraints, he felt that it would be best to downsize the proposed war memorial building from a large auditorium/convention center to a smaller community center.²⁷

As a result, the San Diego City Council considered nine alternative locations. Five of the proposed sites were in Balboa Park. Located midway between downtown San Diego and nearby suburban communities, the park already possessed a number of architecturally significant buildings adapted for public use. Many dated from two expositions held in 1915 and 1935. The 1915 Exposition buildings were designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, while the majority of the 1935-built buildings were in the more modern Art Deco and Art Moderne styles.²⁸ During World War II, the US government had taken over the park buildings for temporary use as adjunct naval

City Planning Group Holds Up Park Memorial

The City Planning Commission yesterday postponed action for two weeks on a plan to permit construction of a Veterans Memorial Building in the old Indian Village area of Balboa Park.

Postponement will permit the commission to discuss the location with Earl O. Mills, of St. Louis, special planning consultant employed by the City to advise on locations of public buildings and to bring the City’s master plan up to date.

Specifically, the proposal before the Planning Commission was a revision in the City’s major park plan. The revision also contemplated some changes in the ultimate plan for development of the Morley Field area of Balboa Park, which commission members said they wanted to go over thoroughly before taking action.

The San Diego Union, June 10, 1948.

©SDHC Research Archives.



Front entrance view of Veterans War Memorial Building, 2014. Balboa Park. Editors' Collection.

hospital facilities. By 1944, however, city planners were optimistic that the park would soon return to public use. They reasoned that the addition of a veterans war memorial building in the park would be an added attraction.²⁹

The former Pueblo Village complex along Park Boulevard was proposed as a site for the memorial. Located north of the entrance to the San Diego Zoo, west of Park Boulevard and just south of Theodore Roosevelt Memorial High School, the Santa Fe Railway had built it during the 1915 Exposition to resemble a multi-level Southwestern Native American Pueblo. On July 18, 1946, the City Council ordered the San Diego Fire Department to burn down the then-vacant structure.³⁰

Meanwhile, Director Glenn Rick, along with City Councilmen Ernest J. Boud and Walter Austin, wanted the veterans memorial building in the proposed Cedar Street Mall Project. Considered second in importance only to the development of Mission Bay Park as part of San Diego's municipal post-war construction program, the mall would link the City/County Administration Center on Harbor Drive up along Cedar Street to Balboa Park. The mall's chief disadvantage was its prohibitive cost, because most of the property would either have to be purchased or acquired from private owners through condemnation.³¹

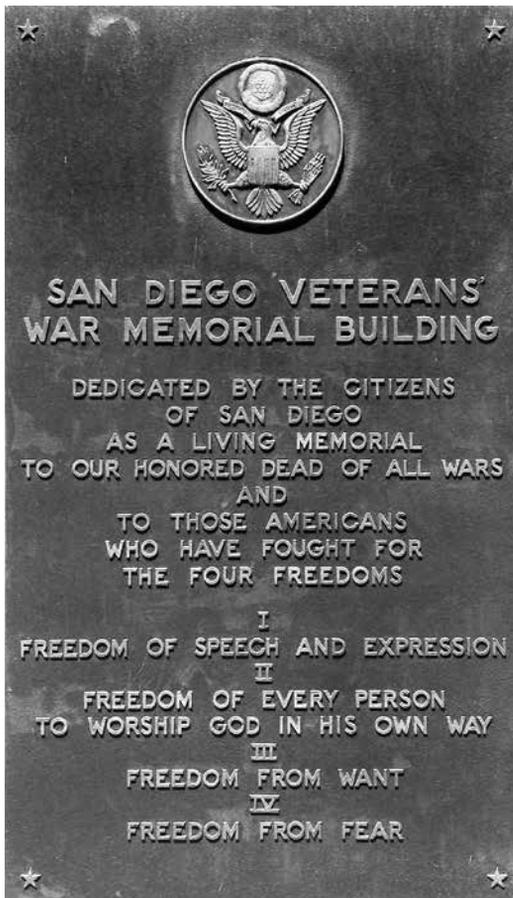
San Diego's veterans had conflicting views as to the memorial building's location. Captain Homer Hacker, who had led a group of vociferous veterans that had lobbied for a Balboa Park site as early as 1943, supported the abandoned Pueblo Village site. Nevertheless, Carl Zahn, commander of American Legion Post 6, regarded the Hacker group as a splinter organization. Zahn, who favored

the Cedar Street Mall site, agreed that it would be expensive to build but felt that local taxation and grants from the state and federal governments could meet the building's proposed \$3 million price tag. Both Zahn and Hacker did agree that the building's ownership and control should go exclusively to veterans' organizations. City Councilman Boud, a veteran of World War I, said that if the building was to be paid for by taxation, it should be regarded as a publicly owned building, the use of which should not be limited to veterans, but to all San Diegans. He was not, however, opposed to having veterans' groups operate and occupy the building through a perpetual lease.³²

In 1948, the San Diego City Council agreed to locate the war memorial building on the Pueblo Village site. A sudden windfall had helped make the building a reality. The city had previously reacquired Camp Callan, a former U.S. Army

Coastal Artillery training base built on land the federal government leased from the city. After selling the base's barracks buildings for their lumber and fixtures, the city saw a \$300,000 profit. The city would place the money in a special fund to meet the estimated \$234,000 needed to design and erect the war memorial building. The city could also use an additional \$18,500 from a war trust fund to furnish the building's interior. This, in effect, resulted in the building being built and furnished as Mayor Harley E. Knox pointed out, "without one cent of cost to the taxpayers."³³

The city asked Siebert and Hamill to submit a new set of plans for the building. Instead of a massive building that tried to be all things for all people. Siebert and Hamill's design was scaled back to meet the restrictions of a relatively small site and reduced



Veterans' War Memorial Building Plaque featuring the Four Freedoms to honor all veterans who died in all wars. Editors' collection.

budget. Designed in a new modern style, the modular building would contain a central 500-seat auditorium and six smaller meeting rooms in two side wings.³⁴

Hamill and Siebert based their new design on the two emerging Modern Contemporary styles of the late 1940s: the American International and California Ranch House. The former style influenced the building's flat-roofed central auditorium with its box-like construction, undecorated stucco-clad walls, and metal-framed plate glass windows. The low-pitched, cross-gable roofs of the opposing side wings, as well as the bands of metal-framed awning windows, were common elements of the ranch house. They were rarely found on homes higher than two stories and almost never on commercial or municipal buildings over one story.³⁵ This made the Veterans War Memorial Building unique and, quite possibly, the prototype for similar public schools, libraries, and administration centers built between 1950 and 1970.³⁶

A few months before the building's completion, all work stopped when Retired Navy Admiral William H. Standley, a former ambassador to Russia, complained to the City Council about the proposed inscription on one of the building's two dedicatory bronze plaques. He objected to the phrase, "veterans who have fought for the Four Freedoms." Popularized by Franklin D. Roosevelt and immortalized in a series of paintings by Norman Rockwell, the Four Freedoms—Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear—were considered to be basic human rights. Admiral Standley, however, regarded the Four Freedoms (particularly "Freedom from Want") as having "Communitistic connotations."³⁷

As a result, the City Council voted 4-3 to ask City Manager O. W. Campbell if the inscription could read:

DEDICATED BY THE CITIZENS OF SAN DIEGO AS A LIVING
MEMORIAL TO OUR HONORED DEAD OF ALL WARS.³⁸

The council's decision made national headlines. Meanwhile, the majority of San Diego's veterans and Central Labor Council objected, demanding that the Four Freedoms be reinstated. The council acquiesced, and recommended that the Four Freedoms plaque inscription should stay.³⁹

On Thursday, June 24, 1950, a brief but impressive ceremony was held on the brick terrace in front of San Diego's new Veterans War Memorial Building. Before a sizeable crowd, which included representatives from San Diego Council of Veterans Organizations, were Mayor Harley Knox, members of the City Council, a number of other public officials, and several military officials. Also in attendance were delegates from the California Disabled American Veterans Association, who



Vice Admiral J.B. Olendorf, Commandant of the 11th Naval District, hands over a check for war-time damages to 35 buildings in Balboa Park. February 18, 1947. Editors' Collection.

were attending their 29th Annual Convention in San Diego. Allan Lane, vice president of Veterans War Memorial Building, Inc., the non-profit corporation that would operate the building, was Master of Ceremonies. He introduced Mayor Knox, who gave a short history of the building's development. Knox concluded by saying, "In this building San Diego has beaten swords into something better than plowshares." The mayor then turned the keys over to Ambrose Redmond, president of Veterans War Memorial Building, Inc. All rose when Dr. Roy Campbell said a prayer, dedicating the building to the memory of San Diego's war dead and to surviving veterans, from all wars,

past, present, and future. Following Dr. Campbell's prayer, the United States Marine Recruit Depot Band played the National Anthem as the Colors were raised up the new flagpole.⁴⁰

San Diego's Veterans War Memorial Building was the first major public building erected in Balboa Park after World War II, continuing a 35-year tradition of placing such buildings in the park. On the national level, it was one of at least 365 living memorials planned or completed in this country at the time. Of these, 53 were used as community buildings and auditoriums; the remainder were parks, playgrounds, athletic stadiums, library, swimming pools, or other recreational civic improvement. More than half had a permanent maintenance fund. The majority also had dedicatory memorial bronze plaques so that, according to *American City*, "the living that will enjoy a better life through their community memorial may be reminded of those who sacrificed their lives for the greater good."⁴¹

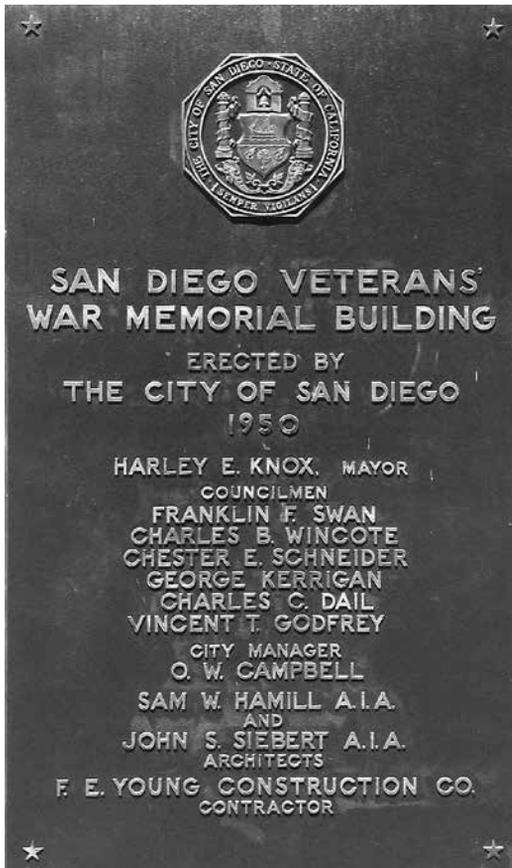
San Diego's Veterans War Memorial Building is a product of post-war America built by a generation that "fought the good war" and now sought to remember its local heroes. Not long after its completion, the concept of commemorating local veterans and war dead with "living" war memorials had already begun to phase out. After the Korean War (1950-1953), many communities felt less inclined

to commemorate their soldiers in this way. Not until the completion of the 1982 National Vietnam Veterans War Memorial in Washington, D.C. did Americans, once again, begin to appreciate large public war memorials.⁴²

The San Diego Veterans War Memorial Building remains an important part of people's everyday lives. Besides serving as a meeting place for various local veterans' organizations, it is used by local residents as an affordable meeting and recreational use center. Each time they enter the front foyer, the two bronze plaques and memorabilia in the foyer remind them that it is a "living memorial." Through their continued use of the building, they commemorate the contribution and sacrifice made by San Diegans who fought and died so that democracy could be promoted at the local level.⁴³

In 1999, the need for additional parking spaces in Balboa Park threatened the survival of the memorial. The San Diego Zoological Society, hoping to expand the San Diego Zoo toward Park Boulevard, asked the city to demolish and replace the Veterans War Memorial Building with a multilevel underground parking structure.⁴⁴ The proposal, which would also have removed the historic Balboa Park Carousel and Miniature Railroad, produced an onslaught of criticism from local neighborhood and veterans groups. The former argued that the proposal would take away 24 acres of public parkland, leaving "more zoo and less grass to picnic and play on." A representative member of the Uptown Community Planning Group admonished the Zoological Society, "No expansion, not one inch. Be creative with what you have!" Likewise, members of local veterans' groups regarded the proposed demolition as being tantamount to desecration. Hadn't Rev. Campbell, they argued, consecrated the building by prayer to the memory of San Diego's war dead and surviving veterans during the building's dedication?⁴⁵

Rallying their forces, members of the ad hoc Balboa Park Preservationists group sought to derail the Zoological Society's plan through a public awareness program. During one of its meetings, a member suggested that one of the best ways to prevent the Zoo's expansion would be to nominate the Veterans War Memorial Building for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. With the group's approval, he volunteered to prepare the nomination gratis in their name and submit it to the California Office of Historic Preservation for consideration by the California State Historical Resources Commission. Placement on the National Register would provide a degree of protection, mainly during the environmental review process if federal funds or licensing were necessary to demolish the building. More importantly, it would automatically place the building on the California Register of Historical Resources, which would garner its protection under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The latter would require careful consideration as to how the proposed Zoo expansion project might adversely



Plaque commemorating the completion of the Veterans War Memorial Building, Balboa Park, 1950. Editors' collection.

affect the historical resource. The Balboa Park Preservationists voted to accept the member's proposal and wholeheartedly supported the nomination.⁴⁶

With the unanimous support of San Diego's local Historic Resources Board and the San Diego City Council, the Balboa Park Preservationists were successful in their efforts. On May 26, 2000, the California State Historical Resources Commission unanimously recommended that the San Diego Veterans War Memorial Building in Balboa Park be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. On September 28, 2000, three months after the building's 50th anniversary rededication ceremonies, the Keeper of the National Register placed the building, as well as the triangular parkland surrounding it, on the National Register. By this act, the building was officially

recognized for its association with national events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of San Diego's history. As a result, the San Diego Zoological Society chose not to pursue its acquisition of the land occupied by San Diego's Veterans War Memorial Building.⁴⁷

Placement on the Register highlights the Veterans War Memorial Building's historical significance as well as its role in the community. The historic building continues to serve as a "Living Memorial" where veterans and civilians are welcome to meet, recreate, and socialize so that "patriotism might be renewed and gratitude nourished."⁴⁸

NOTES

1. Chaplain Boyd Fallwell, electronic-mail to Alexander D. Bevil, November 26, 2000.
2. Roger M. Showley, "Commission Spares Temple for Now; Historic Designations also Given 2 other S.D. Buildings Reprieve," *The San Diego Union*, May 27, 2000.
3. "Living Monuments to Our War Dead," *Better Homes and Gardens* (November 24, 1945), 12.
4. "Huge Memorial Building Planned," *The San Diego Union*, November 21, 1943, B-1.
5. Raymond S. Brandes, et al., *San Diego Architects: 1868-1939* (San Diego: University of San Diego, 1991), 162.
6. Ibid.; Siebert and Hamill, *San Diego Veterans' War Memorial Building*, AD 1066-013, San Diego History Center Architectural Drawings Collection; and "John S. Siebert, Architect, Former Councilman, Passes," *The San Diego Union* (September 17, 1948), A-20. No photographs of John Siebert have been located.
7. Laura Young, "The Silent Sentinel: Samuel Wood Hamill, F.A.I.A.," *The Journal of San Diego History* (hereafter *JSDH*) 31, no. 1 (Winter 1985), 52-54; "Hints on Home Designing Offered Readers of Union," *San Diego Union*, September 12, 1925, 12; and Richard S. Requa, "Southern California Architecture" *San Diego Union*, October 11, 1925, 7.
8. Ibid.; "Roosevelt Here Today," *San Diego Union*, July 16, 1938, 1; David Gebhard and Robert Winter, *A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California* (Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1977), 446; Kay Kaiser, "Relighting the Light of Designer's Life," *San Diego Union*, December 17, 1989, F-1; and "San Diego County Honors the Seven Arts, 1980-1981," n.d., n.p. On file at the California Room, San Diego Public Library.
9. Kristin M. Schmachtenberg and John E. Panter, "Guide to the Architectural Records Collection," *JSDH* 39, nos. 3-4 (Summer/Fall 2003), 174 and 229. Among Hamill's later accomplishments are the design of the Title Insurance Company's headquarters building, the County Courts Building and Sheriff's Facility, and as lead architect on the downtown Civic Center and Community Concourse. Active in civic affairs, Hamill "exerted every effort to participate in the most meaningful way possible in the development and preservation of things he considered most valuable." He was an active member of the Balboa Park Citizens Study Committee and Committee of 100. He helped prepare plans for the preservation and rehabilitation of many park buildings. During the early 1960s, he was a founding member of San Diegan's Inc., an organization interested in revitalizing downtown San Diego, and led to his appointment as lead architect on the Civic Center/Community Concourse Project. Hamill was elected president of the San Diego chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1938, 1939, and 1955. The national wing of the organization elected him to its college of Fellows in 1957. Hamill was also listed in *Who's Who in the West* in 1949; the *American Architects Directory*, in 1963; and *Who's Who in America*, in 1964-65.
10. Ibid., 178. "Designed S. D. Postoffice," *The San Diego Union*, July 3, 1932, II-1; and "New Streamlined Postoffice to Be Dedicated at Official Ceremonies Tomorrow Afternoon," *The San Diego Union*, January 9, 1938, 1.
11. "Huge Memorial Building Planned," B-1.
12. "War Memorials," *The American City* 59 (January 1944): 35-36.
13. Ibid. "Planning Memorial Community Buildings," *American City* 59 (June 1944): 113; Joseph Hudnut, "The Monument Does Not Remember," *American City* 60 (November 1945): 114; and "How the War Memorial Idea Has Evolved," *American City* 61 (July 1946): 82.
14. *Wayne County Veterans Memorial*, <http://wayneveteransmemorial.org/history.php>, accessed April 26, 2014; "War Memorials that Further Practical Democracy," *American City* 59 (October 1944): 72 and 74; and "World War Memorial—Richmond, Virginia," *The American Magazine of Art* 25 (November 1932): 293.

THE JOURNAL OF SAN DIEGO HISTORY

15. "Installation of Memorial in Park to World War Dead Fast Nearing Completion, *San Diego Union* (November 4, 1925), 26; "Honor Dead with Terry Memorial, *San Diego Evening Tribune* (November 16, 1925), 1; "Praises Spirit that Promoted Gift of War Memorial Tablet," *San Diego Union* (November 19, 1925), 6; and Schmachtenberg and Panter, "Guide to the Architectural Records Collection," 161.
16. "War Memorials that Further Practical Democracy," 72.
17. Ibid.
18. "Let's Have Living Memorials," *Recreation* 39 (May 1945): 74.
19. Ibid.
20. Quoted in "War Memorials that Further Practical Democracy," 72.
21. Quoted in Michael R. Hanna, "What Service Men and Women Favor in War Memorials," *The American City* 60 (August 1945): 107.
22. Quoted in "Planning Memorial Community Buildings," 113.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., 115.
25. Ibid. The kitchen, for example, "should be connected directly with the large room where dinners are to be served," and "storage spaces should open into rooms where the stored equipment is to achieve maximum use." By providing outside entrances to service rooms, they, according to the NRA, "can save wear and tear on other areas of the building and enable refuse to be removed easily without disturbing the program. The reduction of corridors, halls and unused spaces would "decrease [the] costs for cleaning, heating, painting, repairs and other maintenance. Furthermore, "the use of attractive, durable, and easily cleaned construction materials is not only appropriate in a memorial building, but proves economical in the long run.
26. Ibid.
27. Melvin Mayne, "Rick to Oppose Restriction of Memorial Site," *The San Diego Union*, April 16, 1944.
28. Gebhard and Winter, *A Guide to Architecture*, 450-451.
29. Florence Christman, *The Romance of Balboa Park*, 4th ed., revised (San Diego: San Diego Historical Society, 1985), 99, 110.
30. Mayne, "Rick to Oppose Restriction," B-1; Christman, *Romance of Balboa Park*, 124.
31. Mayne, "Rick to Oppose Restriction," B-1; "Choice of Vet Memorial Site Causes Tiff," *San Diego Union*, August 23, 1943, A-8.
32. "Choice of Vet Memorial Site Causes Tiff," A-8.
33. "Ordnance No. 3861 (New Series)," *San Diego Union*, September 23, 1948, B-8; "San Diego Veterans War Memorial Sketched," *San Diego Union*, June 19, 1949, A-11; "New Veteran Building Near Completion," *San Diego Union*, June 4, 1950, A-16; and "Vet Groups Attend Rites at Memorial," *San Diego Union*, June 25, 1950, B-1.
34. "Architect's Sketch of New War Memorial Building," *San Diego Union*, January 7, 1948, A-4.
35. Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), 477; and Gebhard and Winter, *A Guide to Architecture*, 704-705.
36. David P. Handlin, *American Architecture* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 202, 233; McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, 469.
37. "Council Bows out of Dispute over Four Freedom's Deletion," *The San Diego Union*, March 17, 1950, A-1.
38. "Council Bows out of Dispute," A-1; "Restore Four Freedoms, Says Labor Council," *San Diego*

The San Diego Veterans War Memorial Building

- Union*, March 14, 1950, B-14; and John S. Siebert and Samuel W. Hamill, *San Diego Veterans War Memorial Building*, sheet Z2. San Diego History Center Architectural Drawings Collection, AD 1066-013 F1-D11. The City Councilmen who voted to omit the Four Freedoms from the plaque were Chester E. Schneider, Charles B. Wincote, and Franklin F. Swan, and Mayor Knox. Councilmen Charles C. Dail, Vincent T. Godfrey, and George Kerrigan voted against their removal.
39. "Council Bows out of Dispute," A-1; "Restore Four Freedoms," B-14; "New Plaque to Include '4 Freedoms,'" *San Diego Union*, June 10, 1950, B-1.
 40. "Memorial Building Rites Set Thursday," *The San Diego Union*, June 18, 1950, A-3; "New Plaque to Include '4 Freedoms,'" B-1; "Vet Groups Attend Rites at Memorial," B-1.
 41. "Current Trends in War Memorials," *American City* 60 (July 1945), 5.
 42. Harold S. Rand, "Rochester, N.Y., Builds a \$6,000,000 War Memorial Auditorium," *American City* 69 (November 1954): 146.
 43. Estrada Landscape Planning, Inc., *Balboa Park Master Plan*, Table A-2—Monthly Attendance at Balboa Park (San Diego: City of San Diego Park and Recreation, 13 June 1991), n.p.
 44. James Steinberg, "Public to Finally Get a Voice on Zoo Plans for Expansion," *San Diego Union-Tribune* (February 8, 2000), B-3. See also: San Diego Veterans War Memorial Building, Balboa Park, Photograph #UT85: H725 #2-4 (July 10, 1968), San Diego History Center, Union-Tribune Photograph Collection.
 45. Ray Huard, "Panel Urged to Map Future of Balboa Park, Zoo Growth," *San Diego Union-Tribune* (January 10, 2000), B-3; James Steinberg, "Neighbors Exhibit Hostility to Zoo Expansion," *San Diego Union-Tribune* (May 21, 2000), B-1; James Steinberg, "Group to Discuss Zoo Expansion," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, July 14, 2000, B-3; and "A Better Idea; Zoo Now Pushes Balboa Parking System," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 19 September 2000, B-10.
 46. Daniel Abeyta, Acting State Historic Preservation Officer, Sacramento, California, letter to Alexander D. Bevil, Balboa Park Preservationists, October 18, 2000; and Governor's Office of Planning and Research, *CEQA Technical Advice Series*, Sacramento, CA, May 1996.
 47. Alexander D. Bevil, *San Diego Veterans War Memorial Building*, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, January 17, 2000; Roger M. Showley, "Commission Spares Temple, for Now; Historic Designations also Given 2 other S.D. Buildings Reprieve," *San Diego Union-Tribune* (May 27, 2000), B-2; and "The Zoo's Vision New Expansion Plan Would Benefit Park, City," *San Diego Union-Tribune* (May 19, 2001), B-8.
 48. "Living Monuments to Our War Dead," 12.

War Memorials Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Reference	State	County	City	Resource	Address	Listed	Resource	Date Built	Note
97000554	AK	Greene	Paragould	Paragould War Memorial	Jct. of 3rd and Court Sts.	1997_06_20	OBJECT	1924	
89002065	ARKANSAS	Pulaski	Little Rock	Herschell--Spillman Carousel	Ar	1989_12_01	STRUCTURE		
00001167	CALIFORNIA	San Diego	San Diego	San Diego Veterans' War Memorial Building--Balboa Park	3325 Zoo Dr.	2000_09_28	BUILDING	1950	
80001283	HAWAII	Honolulu	Honolulu	War Memorial Natatorium	Kalakaua Ave.	1980_08_11	STRUCTURE	1927	1 st "Living War Memorial"
89001404	INDIANA	Marion	Indianapolis	Indiana World War Memorial Plaza	Bounded by St. Clair, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Meridian Sts.	1989_09_25	DISTRICT	1921-1950	
77000625	KENTUCKY	Jefferson	Louisville	Louisville War Memorial Auditorium	970 S. 4th St.	1977_12_27	BUILDING	1929	
76002194	MARSHALL ISLANDS	Majuro	Majuro Atoll	Marshall Islands War Memorial Park	Kalap Island	1976_09_30	SITE	1940-1946	Living museum/par
90000020	MASSACHUSETTS	Middlesex	Newton	Newton City Hall and War Memorial	1000 Commonwealth Ave.	1990_02_16	BUILDING	1932	
08000445	MASSACHUSETTS	Plymouth	West Bridgewater	War Memorial Park	River St.	2008_05_21	SITE	1936	
72000632	MICHIGAN	Lenawee	Adrian	Civil War Memorial	Monument Park	1972_0629	OBJECT	?	
86003480	NEW JERSEY	Mercer	Trenton	Trenton and Mercer County War Memorial--Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Building	W. Lafayette St.	1986_12_11	BUILDING	1930-32	
88002754	NEW YORK	Onondaga	Syracuse	Onondaga County War Memorial	200 Madison St.	1988_12_19	BUILDING	1949-51	
95000361	NEW YORK	Steuben	Corning	World War Memorial Library	149 Pine St.	1995_03_31	BUILDING	1926-1929	
01000377	NORTH CAROLINA	Guilford	Greensboro	World War Memorial Stadium	510 Yanceyville St.	2001_04_12	BUILDING	1926-1930	
95000637	SOUTH CAROLINA	Richland	Columbia	World War Memorial Building	920 Sumter St., at jct. with Pendleton St.	1995_05_26	BUILDING	1935	
83003011	SOUTH DAKOTA	Hughes	Pierre	Soldiers & Sailors World War Memorial	Capitol Ave.	1983_01_27	BUILDING	1931	
99000365	TENNESSEE	Dickson	Dickson	Dickson County War Memorial Building	225 Center Ave.	1999_03_18	BUILDING	1933	
11000979	TENNESSEE	Loudon	Lenoir City	War Memorial Building	103 N. B St.	2011_12_29	BUILDING	1951	
84000053	VIRGINIA	Richmond	Richmond (Independent City)	Virginia War Memorial Carillon	1300 Blanton Ave.	1984_10_04	BUILDING	1928-1932	
79002554	WASHINGTON	Snohomish	Everett	Community Center and War Memorial Building	1611 Everett Ave.	1979_02_26	BUILDING	1921	
93000227	WEST VIRGINIA	McDowell	Kimball	World War Memorial	US 52	1993_04_09	SITE	1928-1932	
97000787	WEST VIRGINIA	Wetzel	New Martinsville	War Memorial Building	501 N. Main St.	1997_07_09	BUILDING	1929	