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From Mourning to Monuments: How American Society Memorialized the Dead After 1945

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From Mourning to Monuments:
How American Society Memorialized the Dead After 1945
By
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of the requirements for the degree of
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Introduction

While one waits for the ferry in lower Manhattan or goes out on a morning run through the Fens in Boston's Back Bay, it is possible not to notice one is in the midst of a commemorative piece of war architecture. One may mistake these structures for modern art, for irrelevant pieces of parkland, or for decaying remnants from an earlier time. Sometimes they are tucked away in the far corners of a train station with their memorial halls left in disarray. Wherever found, war monuments of the mid-twentieth century were features both in and of post-1945 America.¹

Following the violence that consumed the first half of the twentieth century, people grappled with ways to memorialize the dead. Cemeteries and monuments dedicated to millions of fallen soldiers appeared across the globe, from the western front in France to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii. Within a few hours, one can even ride a train from New England to Pennsylvania and visit memorials of this kind: the Boston World War II Memorial, the Brooklyn War Memorial, the East Coast War Memorial in Lower Manhattan, and the Pennsylvania Railroad World War II Memorial in Philadelphia. Such a journey would allow one to see how American society turned mourning into monuments.

War memorials are common. New York City alone has nearly 300 memorials, plaques, and flagpoles dedicated to war. The period following the First and Second World Wars brought diverse monuments into the mix, ones that emphasized structure and space as much as the subject matter. Their capacity to consume ample space for reflection heightened their meaning. The four memorials I will discuss represent only a few examples of the commemorative

¹I have chosen the post-1945 period for two reasons: First, it is a midway point between the onset of total war in the first half of the twentieth century and the proxy wars of the larger Cold War during the second half of the twentieth century. Second, the memorials that appeared post-1945 were different from the memorials that preceded them. We see a shift away from single statutes towards larger structures.

architecture that appeared after 1945. What one finds unusual about these monuments in particular is their distinctive nature. With that in mind, I will argue that war structures changed throughout the mid-twentieth century and became significantly different from one another.

When experiencing these four war memorials, we cannot immediately perceive how they differ. They share the element of space. Whether situated in a park or a train station, the war memorials compel the viewer to look beyond the statue. Thus, the viewer sees the monuments in their entirety, from the physical structures to the areas surrounding them. Each war memorial occupies a particular space. This enhances our view of the structure and of the act of remembrance. Both the Boston World War II Memorial and the East Coast War Memorial are located in parks. The Pennsylvania Railroad World War II Memorial is situated in the 30th Street train station in Philadelphia. The Brooklyn War Memorial is found in Cadman Plaza in Brooklyn. The park, train station, and plaza all emphasize a similar idea: the memorials are about more than just structure and their space allows for alternative forms of remembering. As we will see, space was crucial in the construction and placement of each memorial.

The similarities among the four monuments end there. Their attention to space is their only likeness. While some scholars suggest that the commemorative architecture of this period manifested more commonalities than differences, I argue the reverse. Their historical backgrounds are different. For example, their funding originated from various sources, both private and public. Second, some sculptors found their inspiration in religious ideology while others did not. Last, there were varying degrees of public support for each of them. Instead, the memorials demonstrate the various ways in which three cities and their people memorialized their war dead. I will examine this point by breaking down what we know about each memorial

in terms of structure, space, and historical background. I will argue that their features rarely overlap. Instead, the memorials are characterized by their differences.

Scholars have claimed something different. They argue that certain, shared standards differentiated post-1945 monuments from previous war structures. These new, living memorials pay homage to the dead and serve society by providing physical spaces for activities, parades, and events juxtaposed with the act of remembrance. They have a more functional purpose and are classified by the following five criteria: they share a common structure and appearance;² they maximize their physical space, paving the way for utilitarianism;³ they combine the use of vertical and horizontal elements, which offers room for reflection on loss;⁴ they reflected the needs of the American public;⁵ and, post-1945 war monuments were the direct products of and

²In his essay “Planning Memory: Living Memorials in the United States during World War II,” Andrew Shanken argues this point. He suggests that America’s interaction with the violence of the early twentieth century highlighted the capacity of the modern world to disregard human life for the growth and power of a nation. In this kind of society, we see the birth of living memorials. What personifies the memorials is how they juxtaposed spaces for reflection with community service. Statues did not fall out of fashion; instead, they grew from single forms of representation into structures that provided the same value as stadiums, auditoriums, town halls, and memory gardens. Andrew Shanken, “Planning Memory: Living Memorials in the United States during World War II,” *The Art Bulletin* 84, no. 1 (March, 2002), 130-133.

³More physical space allowed for higher functionality. In her piece “Mapping monuments: the shaping of public space and cultural identities,” Nuala Johnson argues that physical location created larger “sight-line[s] of interpretation.” Space was as important as the structure itself. Space allows us to stop and reflect, rather than pass by. These memorials have auditoriums and benches for reflection. Nuala Johnson, “Mapping monuments: the shaping of public space and cultural identities,” *Visual Communications* 1, no. 3, (Belfast: Queen’s University, 2002), 293.

⁴In his book *War beyond Words: Languages of Remembrance from the Great War to the Present*, Jay Winter indicates a significant shift in “the geometry of remembrance” and further defines commemorative architecture in terms of space. A combination of vertical statues and horizontal elements (benches, paths, and gardens) “provide space for reflection on loss.” This gives the viewer a plane to memorialize. Jay Winter, *War beyond Words: Languages of Remembrance from the Great War to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 171.

⁵Living monuments were direct products of “memory-makers” in society. Once again, we see this theme in Johnson’s piece. In order to properly reflect their loss, people, or memory makers, looked to redefine what commemorative architecture looked like. We would express our need to remember the dead through the forms of monuments we chose to build. If citizens wanted an auditorium to accompanying a war structure to account for veterans committee meetings, the eventual memorial would reflect their needs with little backlash or redefinition.

were overseen by the government.⁶ With this in mind, one can begin to understand the language some have used to define war memorials of the mid-twentieth century.

While the existing scholarship outlines the particular criteria and rules that defined the post-1945 memorials, certain qualities of the memorials themselves, ranging from appearance and structure to historical background, break these boundaries and defy the literature. While the monuments do not undermine the definitions of living memorials, the Boston World War II Memorial, the Brooklyn War Memorial, the Pennsylvania Railroad World War II Memorial, and the East Coast War Memorial demonstrate that multiple forms of commemorative architecture arose in the wake of World War II.

This is so because American society was far more complex than the scholarship allows. What we recognize by looking closely at these structures is a more expanded definition of post-1945 war memorials. The following four memorials — the World War II Memorial in The Fens in Boston, the Brooklyn War Memorial in Cadman Plaza Park, the Pennsylvania Railroad World War II Memorial in the 30th Street Station, and the East Coast War Memorial in Battery Park — suggest that mid-twentieth century architecture possessed defining characteristics that differentiate them from monuments of the previous era and from each other. This makes it difficult to define this architectural period in a unified way as a series of motivations resulted in a variety of ideologies and spatial usages of the memorials. These differences reveal the

⁶War structures were built by federal investments, through monetary value or as a patriotic catalyst. As Shanken again argues, “[Federal agencies] linked the ideal of patriotic sacrifice to the creation of institutions that would promote the sort of bodies ready to defend the nation. Living memorials embodied this connection. In giving them government sanction, [it] made their erection that much more patriotic.” Shanken, “Planning Memory: Living Memorials in the United States during World War II,” *The Art Bulletin* 84, 133. With government approval, living memorials became popular. They emphasized a commitment to patriotism. The memorials would define justice, defend peace among nations, and stand as a testament to the power of the nation.

heterogeneity of American memorial culture during this time period which stands in opposition to the historical literature.

Boston World War II Memorial (1950)

The Boston World War II Memorial, completed in 1950, stands as a testament to the idea that diverging types of war memorials appeared after 1945. A deeper analysis of the history of its construction furthers the conversation on what this era of architecture looked like. The overarching element of space is an immediate feature of Boston's World War II Memorial. However, a closer look into the historical background suggests just how much the public influenced the memorial's structural outcome. This key feature is the main takeaway from the memorial. Specifically, local veterans played a large part in the final composition of the benches and memorial garden of the Boston War Memorial. Their impact allows us to see the additional ways in which post-1945 war structures evolved — through the influence of public opinion.

Nestled in the bustling city of Boston, the Boston World War II Memorial (and the larger Back Bay Fenland Park it calls home) is near the epicenter of Boston city life. Past the athletic field and rose garden, visitors arrive at the amphitheater-like structure which features stone benches facing a semicircular arc. One finds oneself in the midst of a garden of intertwining walkways as one encounters the monument. The walkways are made of stone and intersected with plants and grass. As one approaches the entrance, one sees low benches aligned in a circular pattern, which face the inner memorial stone garden.

At the apex of the structure is the bronze figure Victory, which represents dignity and beauty. It is the focal point of the memorial and is placed at the front of the base of a large, stone shaft. Atop the shaft sits a “glass-encased eternal light, shining through a cluster of 48 bronze stars symbolic of the United States.”⁷ The figure's outstretched wings do not exceed the height of

⁷“Boston War Memorial Center Being Planned for Citizens By Mayor Curley and Trustees Through Funds Provided Under Will of Late George Robert White, February 21, 1948,” Boston City Record, vol 40, no. 8: 169.

the massive, stone shaft but are nevertheless as magnificent in height and soar above the onlooker. In the angel's hands are a sword and branch.⁸ The bronze figure and shaft sit atop a platform raised slightly above the benches and garden.



The structure is accompanied by an arc that bears twenty-seven bronze plaques and lists the names of the nearly four thousand men and women of Boston who lost their lives in the Second World War.

The auditorium setting — made clear by the benches that face the elevated platform — leads us to believe the structure was intended not just to memorialize the dead but to serve an additional purpose. A closer look at the Boston City Council records validates this claim. The council decided the memorial would consist of “ample space for the accommodation of speakers, musicians” and “practical and useful facilities for gatherings of a patriotic and educational nature, for large and small audiences.”¹⁰ The structure of the memorial goes beyond the winged

⁸“World War II Memorial, (sculpture),” Smithsonian Institute, 2018, accessed December 30, 2018, http://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:siris_ari_299667?date.slider=&q=Paramino+John+Francis&dsort=title&record=28&hlterm=Paramino%2BJohn%2BFrancis.

⁹“Boston War Memorials: 15 Memorials Honoring Our Fallen Heroes,” Boston Discovery Guide, 2008-2018, accessed December 30, 2018, <https://www.boston-discovery-guide.com/war-memorials.html>.

¹⁰“Boston War Memorial Center Being Planned for Citizens By Mayor Curley and Trustees Through Funds Provided Under Will of Late George Robert White, February 21, 1948,” Boston City Record, vol 40, no. 8: 169.

figure of Victory; one should view it in its entirety. The benches and plot of land were intended to have some purpose other than to serve as a space for reflection and remembrance. Boston's World War II Memorial becomes more than just the stone figure we see by making practical use of the structure and garden. Rather, it functions as a space for remembrance and practical activities.

The space selected for the memorial is as symbolic of its utility as the place it inhabits. The Boston City Council designated the Fens as the location for the memorial, a park situated in the centrally located Fenway-Kenmore neighborhood. It would be surrounded on three sides by water and by a nearby rose garden and athletic field.¹¹ Boston city planners chose the park as the final resting place for the memorial and thus equated its construction with the utilitarian function a park serves. Its functionality hovers somewhere between the tranquil rose garden and the bustling athletic fields that accompany it. The memorial is functional within the park, as are the garden and baseball fields.

The space consumed is important in two significant ways: first, the location of the memorial is functional as it allows for gatherings, parades, and veteran meetings. Second, the space of the memorial, as suggested by its benches and auditorium setting, allows it to function as more than just a structure. This is seen through a closer look into the history of the monument. Last, war veterans on the Boston City Council heavily sanctioned the memorial. This less apparent history of the structure liberates the memorial from any restrictive definitions, and also makes for a more interesting and complex background on the birth of war monuments in the post-1945 era.

¹¹“Boston War Memorial Center Being Planned for Citizens By Mayor Curley,” Boston City Record, 169.

Despite the considerable influence of the Boston City Council, proceeds donated from the late philanthropist George Robert White contributed to the construction of the monument. The endowment, established by White at the time of his death in 1922, funded “works of public beauty and utility” throughout the city of Boston.¹² White, a Bostonian, supported the creation of such utilitarian works. The city of Boston purchased the site of the World War II Memorial on April 12, 1948 for \$25,000.¹³ The memorial came to be known as the George Robert White War Memorial Center.¹⁴ Although the city of Boston inquired about borrowing money for the construction of its own war memorial auditorium, funding the memorial in the Fens came from a private endowment rather than from federal or state funds.¹⁵

In terms of reception, the memorial paints a clear picture of Boston society at the time of its construction. In the late 1940s, the Boston City Council passed a measure to consider the needs of veterans from both world wars upon constructing a war memorial. The Committee on War Veterans Memorials proposed a voting body that consisted of all City Council veterans, the mayor, and members of the George Robert White Fund. Together, they worked to propose a “suitable memorial to revere the memory of those veterans who died in all wars in which the United States has been engaged, and likewise to provide a suitable memorial for those living veterans of said wars.”¹⁶ Moreover, they intended to supplant previously established war

¹²“George Robert White Memorial Fountain,” The Boston Preservation Alliance, last modified 2018, accessed, December 31, 2018, <https://www.bostonpreservation.org/advocacy-project/george-robert-white-memorial-fountain>.

¹³“Sale of Land in Fenway to White Fund, May 15, 1948,” Boston City Record, vol 40, no. 20: 482.

¹⁴“Boston War Memorial Center Being Planned for Citizens By Mayor Curley,” Boston City Record, 169.

¹⁵Boston City Council, Legality of City Load for Construction of War Memorial Auditorium, City Council Proceedings January 1, 1949 to December 31, 1949, (March 1, 1948), 44.

¹⁶Boston City Council, *Committee on War Veterans Memorial*, City Council Proceedings April 12, 1948, 82.

memorials with this new monument.¹⁷ From here, the privately established committee decided the final outcome of the war memorial.

Although the original memorial's design was not clear, veteran city council members and veterans' organizations "favored a utilitarian memorial."¹⁸ The resulting structure was, in fact, utilitarian. It allowed for veterans of both world wars to participate in the act of remembering by utilizing the space of the memorial for their gatherings. According to Councilor William A. Carey of Roxbury, no memorial had been constructed in Boston to memorialize the dead or to accommodate the veterans of the First World War.¹⁹ This pushed the committee towards an all-encompassing memorial. Veterans on the city council, including Councilor Milton Cook, a veteran of World War II, supported a memorial that had functionality and paid tribute to the "dead of all wars."²⁰

To accomplish this task, City Council members recommended an auditorium to suit the needs of all veterans, which provided a space for their meetings and a monument to memorialize the dead of World War II. The proposed memorial was a necessity for Boston veterans who spent nearly twenty years with no formal structure to remember their fallen comrades. Although the new memorial only memorialized the dead of the Second World War, its structure provided a functional space for veterans of all wars. The veterans' aims resulted in the memorial we see today. It stemmed directly from the needs of Boston society. This, by far, is the most striking feature of the Boston World War II Memorial, though it is not as apparent as the structural features one immediately recognizes.

¹⁷"Plaque on Common to be Dismantled," *Daily Boston Globe*, 29.

¹⁸"War Memorial in Fens Given Initial Approval," *Daily Boston Globe* (1928-1960), Apr 13 1948, p. 23.

¹⁹"War Memorial in Fens Given Initial Approval," *Daily Boston Globe*, 23.

²⁰Ibid.

As the city records make clear, the veterans of both world wars had a major hand in the design of the memorial. At city council meetings, the veterans were the most vocal individuals. In the Boston city records, we see that veterans are among the many people who lobbied for efficient representations of their needs. The monument was the result of their desires. The city of Boston intended to supplant other war memorials scattered around the city with this new monument, which offered better methods of memorialization.²¹

The structure and space of the memorial are its most distinctive features and catch one's attention at first glance. It offers spaces for reflection and memory as depicted through the benches and open, auditorium-like space. Its position in the Back Bay Fenland emphasizes the idea that it is meant to be an active structure in Boston. The memorial is intended to be used for purposes beyond memorializing the dead, including events such as Memorial Day functions and veterans meetings. It would not be incorrect to classify this memorial as a living memorial, a monument capable of juxtaposing memorialization with functionality.

The story of the monument is told through its distinctive history. The influence of private players in its construction is the key point. The George Robert White Fund introduces us to the significant effect private funding had on municipal structures in Boston. Besides the Boston War Memorial, other monuments and structures are found throughout the city reflecting White's endowment. Clearly, citizens can have an input on structuring society.

²¹"Plaque on Common to be Dismantled," *Daily Boston Globe (1928-1960)*, December 02 1949, p. 29.

Brooklyn War Memorial (1951)

Dedicated on November 12, 1951, the Brooklyn War Memorial paved the way for new definitions of post-1945 war structures. A closer look into its lengthy history reveals a story that is different from other monuments of its time. Despite the functionality of the structure as suggested by its space, the legacy of the monument in New York City’s commemorative architectural landscape points to a significant distinction between it and other war memorials. Despite the detailed planning for the larger Brooklyn Civic Center, the memorial fell short of its intended purposes. The legacy of the monument is uninspiring and is worth exploring.

When traveling into Brooklyn via the Brooklyn Bridge, one comes upon a war memorial that had been one of the largest monuments in the city. Built in 1951, the monument is located in Cadman Park Plaza.²² It stands twenty-four feet tall and consists of a granite and limestone structure that is one hundred feet wide and sixty feet deep. Although its size is apparent at first glance, what cannot be seen is the indoor auditorium that seats nearly 600 people.²³



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²²“Cadman Park Plaza: Brooklyn War Memorial,” NYC Parks Department, last modified 2018, accessed December 30, 2018, <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/cadman-plaza-park-and-brooklyn-war-memorial/monuments/177>.

²³“War Memorial Approved: Committee Passes Plans for the Brooklyn Tribute to Heroes,” *The New York Times* (1923-Current File), May 11, 1950, 31.

²⁴“The Brooklyn War Memorial,” Cadman Park Conservancy, last modified 2018, accessed December 30, 2018, <http://cadmanpark.org/the-brooklyn-war-memorial/>.

Situated on either side of the memorial are two statues sculpted by Charles Keck (1875-1951), which one clearly sees through the park's foliage. The visitor begins to make out "two colossal allegorical figures — war and peace, or victory and family — flanking a dedication to the men and women who fought."²⁵ In ascending the few steps towards the auditorium, one is able to read the inscription on the face of the memorial: "This memorial dedicated to the heroic men and women of the borough of Brooklyn who fought for liberty in the Second World War 1941-1945 and especially to those who suffered and died. May their sacrifice inspire future generations and lead to universal peace."²⁶ It honors those 320,000 Brooklynites who served, roughly 7,000 of whom died in the war.²⁷ The words soar above those who are reminded of their duty to memorialize the dead.

The structure is part of a lengthy commitment to revitalize this part of Brooklyn and to supplant the paltry war memorials scattered throughout New York City. The winning design for the original memorial consisted of an auditorium intended to seat between 1,500 and 2,000 people, with many smaller rooms. The memorial auditorium was to sit against the backdrop of four or five additional buildings on the property.²⁸ These utilitarian buildings included structures such as a high school, a post office, and a welfare center.²⁹ The larger plan, known as the Brooklyn Civic Center, was part of the "planned central urban development"³⁰ of downtown Brooklyn, an idea that gained traction in the early 1940s, when it was proposed by Robert

²⁵David W. Dunlap, "A War Memorial Lists Thousands, but is seen by Few," *New York Times*, Jun 14, 2016, Late Edition (East Coast).

²⁶"Cadman Park Plaza: Brooklyn War Memorial," NYC Parks Department.

²⁷"Brooklyn Asks Aid on War Memorial: Cashmore Seeks \$45,000 From City - Reports Project Will Be Completed on Nov. 1," *The New York Times*, August 19, 1951, 29.

²⁸NYC Parks Department, "Dedication and Opening Ceremonies of Brooklyn War Memorial and S. Parks Cadman Plaza Park at the Brooklyn Civic Center," Press release, (1951), accessed December 30, 2018,

²⁹"Mayor Dedicates \$500,000 Memorial Honoring Brooklyn's 7,000 War Dead," *The New York Times (1923-current file)*, November 13, 1951, 16.

³⁰"Mayor Dedicates \$500,000 Memorial Honoring Brooklyn's 7,000 War Dead," 16.

Moses, acting New York City Parks Commissioner. The plans to tie the war memorial to urban development gave new meaning to the living memorial as a foundation for development and a site of functionality. The larger structure of the civic center served as more than just a memorial; it had a practical function. Moreover, in the years following its completion, a variety of organizations used the monument's indoor auditorium.³¹ The larger memorial hall provides space for activities and reflection.

In terms of space, the original plans and the completed form of the Brooklyn War Memorial coincide with the other monuments discussed here. Similar to the Boston monument, the war memorial in Brooklyn is in a park — in this case — Cadman Plaza. A 150-foot wide lawn sits in front of the building, in addition to the auditorium inside the structure.³² The lawn provides ample space for organized, large gatherings, specifically, events associated with remembering war — Veteran's Day and Memorial Day. As we saw with the Boston War Memorial, the structure offers practical possibilities.

As opposed to its spatial similarities with other memorials, the Brooklyn War Memorial diverges from the others. It is the only monument linked to private initiatives intended to remake the commemorative landscape of New York City. This is seen by identifying the key figures in the planning of the memorial: Robert Moses, the New York City Parks Commissioner; and Frank D. Schroth, publisher of the now defunct *Brooklyn Eagle*. Moses was a civil agent of the city of New York, while Schroth represented the public and private sectors. Both Moses and Schroth directly influenced the construction of the Brooklyn War Memorial. Their direct impact over the outcome of the war memorial is compelling and differentiates this structure from the rest. In no

³¹Dunlap, "A War Memorial Lists Thousands, but is seen by Few."

³²"War Memorial, Plaza Dedication on Today," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle (1841-1955)*, November 12, 1951, 1.

other instance do we see a direct correlation between prominent individuals and the outcome of the memorial structures.

Some of New York City's great, structural achievements are due in part to Robert Moses, including building borough-wide war memorials. Because of Moses, new structures replaced the paltry, aimless monuments of the past. As Moses wrote to President John Cashmore of the borough of Brooklyn, "We simply can't afford to have the parks and public places in the city filled with third-rate, inadequate, ugly and undignified neighborhood memorials, originating in the kindest and most patriotic impulses, in the end defeating the very objects the sponsors have in mind."³³

Moses dedicated his time as Parks Commissioner to eradicating the construction of the city's antiquated memorials. Despite the patriotic background of their construction, previous war monuments proved inadequate for memorializing the dead. In the wake of World War I, a number of smaller memorials were built around New York City; yet these failed to provide much service to society other than occupying street corners. They were simple structures like flagpoles, plaques, and nameless statues of soldiers. Determined to erect new borough-wide memorials, Moses planned to have war structures serve a function in society. As we see in his letter to President Cashmore, Moses urged each borough to erect its own war monument to overcome the mistakes of the past.

Frank D. Schroth of the *Brooklyn Eagle* took up this initiative. In June 1944, he convened a committee to judge a competition for the design of a war memorial in Brooklyn. This monument would meet the standards set forth by Moses.³⁴ The committee consisted of Schroth's

³³Robert Moses, Letter to Hon. John Cashmore, President of the Borough of Brooklyn, April 19, 1944, Robert Moses Papers, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

³⁴NYC Parks Department (1951), *1951 Annual Report*, New York, NY: NYC Parks Department.

team at the *Brooklyn Eagle*, borough President John Cashmore, and others. It raised funds through public subscription.³⁵ The influence for the building of the memorial originated from the recommendation of Robert Moses. But, the involvement of Schroth's committee, "which raised \$750,000 for a dignified, permanent World War II Memorial in the new Civic Center at Cadman Plaza,"³⁶ was a private endeavor. Schroth himself acknowledged that the main force behind "the development of a wholesome community should not be the function of government alone; that its problems call for the unselfish efforts of community leaders who know the needs of the people."³⁷ In this instance, we see a mixture of public and private enterprise. The Brooklyn War Memorial adds a layer of intricacy to the criteria for a post-1945 war memorial. Moses' influence, Schroth's initiative, and Cashmore's involvement highlight the mixture of government and public affairs.

Despite Frank D. Schroth's belief in the war memorial's capacity to mirror societal needs, what transpired after the committee's community outreach led to the demise of the monument. Unfortunately, "the fund drive was not supported by the general public."³⁸ Despite the grand vision of many and Robert Moses' belief in the necessity for borough-wide memorials, the design plan fell short of the necessary funding. While the committee for the Brooklyn War Memorial had roughly \$500,000 in funds available for construction, the majority of the money

³⁵"War Memorial Approved: Committee Passes Plans for the Brooklyn Tribute to Heroes." *The New York Times (1923-Current File)*, May 11, 1950, 31.

³⁶Moses, Robert. "Guide to Giving by Robert Moses: Private citizens and corporations can contribute to the public joy of living. Wollman Memorial has set the pattern. Here's how we can do more." *Herald Tribune*, November 4, 1951.

³⁷"Park Association's '51 Citation Award to Frank D. Schroth." *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle (1841-1955)*, January 24, 1952, 14.

³⁸Elmer Sprague, *Brooklyn Public Monuments: Sculpture for Civic Memory and Urban Pride*, (Indianapolis, IN: Dog Ear Publishing, LLC, 2008), 17.

came from the nearly 3,500 contributions donated mostly from private businesses rather than from individual donors.³⁹ It is unclear why this apathy occurred.

There was some public reaction to this. Citizens responded to *Brooklyn Daily Eagle's* publication of the names of the war dead listed on the memorial. Brooklynites wrote to the *Eagle* in an effort to add names to the list of war dead. Everett M. Clark, treasurer of the Brooklyn War Memorial Committee, reported to Schroth that he sorted through almost 400 communications and letters to the editor concerning names. This correspondence came from “relatives, teachers, clergymen and veterans groups,” which deluged “his office as soon as the first names were printed in the *Eagle* on Dec[ember] 1.”⁴⁰ It appears that the community wanted the memorial, yet was unwilling to make the necessary monetary commitments. Whether this is a testament to the fundraising shortcomings of the community outreach effort or a general lack of funds on behalf of Brooklynites is unclear. Nevertheless, the committee could not rely on the general public to match its fundraising goals.

The Brooklyn War Memorial illuminates the differences among post-1945 structures. What is particularly interesting about the early days of planning the war memorial is the significant impact that individuals such as Robert Moses and Frank D. Schroth made to its development. We see a direct correlation between Moses' call to action and the structure itself. Moses' letters to the boroughs — calling for a revitalization of commemoration — prompted Schroth and others to work toward a practical monument. The desires of the key figures are similar to the actions of the Boston veterans associations; however, here we can pinpoint the idea for the construction to a small group of people. The impact of individual initiatives is clear. The

³⁹NYC Parks Department, “Dedication and Opening Ceremonies of Brooklyn War Memorial.”

⁴⁰“Check More Names for War Memorial.” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle (1841-1955)*, January 14, 1951, 7.

Brooklyn War Memorial breaks from the traditional ideology, which suggests that federal influence was the only source of construction plans for post-1945 war memorials.

What is also peculiar about the structure is the low public response and lack of usage of the memorial. It is unclear why a substantial response to the memorial coincided with such paltry funding. Perhaps Brooklynites could not afford to support the structure, yet this does not explain why in recent years the structure remains unused. The legacy of the functionality of the Brooklyn World War II Memorial speaks volumes about the legacy of the utilitarian memorial as a whole. Despite the direct influence and passion of Schroth, Moses, and borough president John Cashmore, the Civic Center did not contribute to the rise of downtown Brooklyn. The practical function of the war memorial declined rapidly after its dedication in 1951, as it was used less and less for its intended purposes. Although different groups used the memorial for various events, the upstairs hall opens only for special occasions and functions.⁴¹ Other than the occasional affair, all Memorial Day ceremonies now occur outside the structure, “underscoring its fundamental purpose.”⁴² This swift decline in public history as well as the significance of individuals separate this monument from the rest.

⁴¹“Cadman Park Plaza: Brooklyn War Memorial,” NYC Parks Department.

⁴²Dunlap, “A War Memorial Lists Thousands, but is seen by Few.”

Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial (1952)

The Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial, completed in 1952, stands in the 30th Street Station in Philadelphia. Although the war memorial is simple — a bronze, angelic figure with no additional accompaniment — it both enhances and is enhanced by the train station where it resides. Although the space it occupies is minimal and unlike the other monuments, its size does not diminish its ability to memorialize. The overall goal — to pay homage to the dead — is accomplished; this is its most defining feature. In order to memorialize the Pennsylvania Railroad workers who died in World War II, a larger, more elaborate structure was unnecessary. The monument is a testament to the idea that memorialization took a variety of forms. With that said, it allows us to get a broader picture of how American society memorialized the dead after 1945.

The structure of the Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial — the Angel of Resurrection lifting the soldier from his grave — is striking in a number of ways. It towers over the commuter. As one enters the ticketing concourse, one sees the angel erect between two of the room's massive columns, its wings as tall as the station's ceiling. In addition to its monumental height, the wing length brings the monument to nearly forty feet tall.⁴³ Inscribed on its plinth are the words, "In memory of the men and women of the Pennsylvania Railroad who laid down their lives for our country. 1941-1945." This is followed by the names of the 1,307 Pennsylvania Railroad employees who died during World War II. It is not dissimilar from the two figures that bookend the Brooklyn War Memorial. The Angel stands alone in a crowded hall. The structure embraces the verticality of earlier memorials, while it purposefully neglects the aspect of

⁴³"Scale-model for Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial," Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, last modified 2018, accessed December 30, 2018, <https://www.mfa.org/collections/object/scale-model-for-pennsylvania-railroad-war-memorial-321599>.

physical, horizontal space. There are no benches directly facing it or large plaques behind it with names of fallen soldiers.

Structurally, the Pennsylvania Railroad War monument is one of the largest cast bronze statues ever made.⁴⁴ It is merely a monument — a single form that is different from the larger and more utilitarian living memorials; however, in its own way, the structure still pays close attention to the usage of space in amplifying the act of remembrance. The Angel of Resurrection, the centerpiece atop the “bronze tablets of the four sides of its base,”⁴⁵ functions as the primary focus of the monument. It stands in the hall of the Amtrak terminal amongst gargantuan, gold-embossed columns. Even the sculptor, Walker Hancock (1901-1998), acknowledged that the verticality of “the monument was dictated by the architecture of the cavernous space it was designed to occupy; the sculpture blends harmoniously with the fluted columns and windows of the station.”⁴⁶ The station enhances the features of the structure despite being built nearly twenty years earlier, in 1933.⁴⁷

A coffered ceiling and beautiful Art Deco chandeliers nearly one hundred feet in the air adorn the station. It is surrounded by decorative columns while the floor is made of Tennessee marble.⁴⁸ In spite of the elaborate decorations, the train station is practical because it has a purpose. The statue alone serves to provide the viewer with a vehicle for remembrance. When coupled with the functionality of its location, the structure is enhanced. The train station is a

⁴⁴“PRR Dedicates Memorial to its Own men and Women Lost in World War II,” *The Pennsy* 1, no. 4, September, 1952, 4.

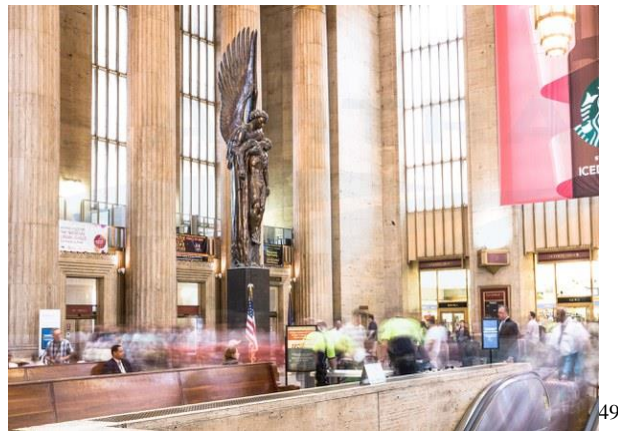
⁴⁵“PRR Dedicates Memorial to its Own men and Women Lost in World War II,” 3.

⁴⁶“Scale-model for Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial,” Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁸“Philadelphia 30th Street Station, 2013,” Amtrak Archives.

central location with countless visitors, which allows for optimal viewing of the structure. The vertical columns highlight the vertical elements and force the viewers gaze upward.



Moreover, the structure's size and location compel the audience to remember lives lost to war while waiting for their departure in a busy railroad terminal. On any given day, the lives of the Pennsylvania railroad workers are remembered because the monument sits in the station. Simply walking through the station and acknowledging that the structure exists compels commuters to remember.

While the monument does not offer any additional vehicle of remembrance (a park, an auditorium, or benches for reflection), the space of the 30th Street Station is itself a feature of the memorial. Although the Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial is a single structure among the spacious post-war monuments, it nonetheless emphasizes the importance of space. What the memorial conveys is the idea that remembering can take a physical form, either through a functional structure or singular monument.

The space and structure of the memorial work similarly to the other memorials I have discussed. But its rich history, as suggested by a deeper look into the life of sculptor Walk

⁴⁹“Philadelphia 30th Street Station, 2013,” Amtrak Archives, last modified September, 2014, accessed December 30, 2018, <https://history.amtrak.com/archives/@@archives?q=pennsylvania+railroad+memorial>.

Hancock, allows us to see a contrasting emergence of war structures after 1945. In this case, we see two things: First, the strong presence of religious elements offered by the structure's sculptor. Second, a direct reference to current events not found in the other war memorials. Although the memorial was built as a testament to the fallen of World War II, it served as a reminder not to repeat the violent mistakes of the past. This was evident during the dedication ceremony in 1952 in the words spoken by General Omar N. Bradley, who attended the event.

Walker Hancock's artistic influence over the construction of the Pennsylvania Railroad World War II Memorial was significant. Similar to the Brooklyn War Memorial, we see that individuals can directly influence the structures we experience. In this case, Hancock himself conceived of the Angel of Resurrection. Because of his artistic background, he intertwined religion in his works of art, including this memorial. Hancock defined the structure's appearance with heavy references to the spiritual. The Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial was influenced by Hancock's religious beliefs, rather than by a state-funded initiative or other ideological conversations.

Born in St. Louis in 1901, Walker Kirtland Hancock was deeply religious. After studying in Rome, Hancock was drafted into the army in 1942, and went overseas the next year.⁵⁰ When he returned, he became well-known for his war memorials, portraits, and religious works.⁵¹ This included the Angels of Victory at the Lorraine American Cemetery⁵² and a Christ figure in the

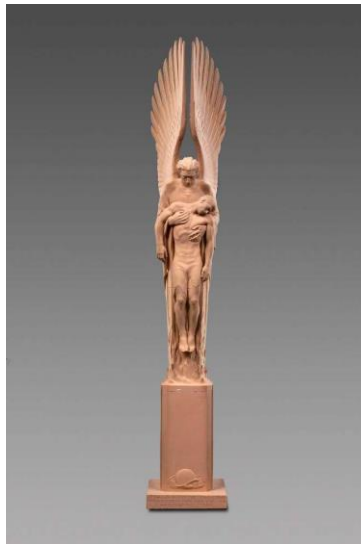
⁵⁰“Captain Walker Kirtland Hancock (1901-1998),” Monuments Men Foundation, last modified 2018, accessed December 30, 2018, <https://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/the-heroes/the-monuments-men/hancock-capt.-walker-k>.

⁵¹“Scale-model for Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial,” Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

⁵²D. Roger Howlett, “Thirties Sculpture in the Manship Tradition Reborn in the Eighties,” *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 16 (1990): 22-39.

central altar in the National Cathedral in Washington.⁵³ But Hancock was best known for the Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial.⁵⁴ The memorial's main focal point is the angel, which is a direct reference to Christianity and an indirect reference to religious resurrection. Specifically, the angelic figure represents religion and the scene we see before us indirectly reflects the death and resurrection of Christ.

The angel was meant to symbolize something beyond what the audience sees. The Angel of Resurrection's wings extend as if reaching for the heavens,⁵⁵ while the lifeless body of a soldier dangles below its breast.



Although appearing lifeless, the soldier takes on a different meaning when one considers Hancock's objective. According to a point made in the periodical, *The Pennsy*, we see that "The body of the soldier became more the spirit of the soldier; one who has risen, not fallen. The helmet and ammunition belt sculptured below his feet now seemed an endless distance away. He

⁵³Hubert B. Herring, "Walker Hancock, 97, Sculptor On War and Religious Themes," *New York Times*, January 2, 1999, accessed on December 30, 2018, www.nytimes.com/1999/01/02/arts/walker-hancock-97-sculptor-on-war-and-religious-themes.html.

⁵⁴"Scale-model for Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial," Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

⁵⁵"PRR Dedicates Memorial to its Own men and Women Lost in World War II," 4.

⁵⁶"Scale-model for Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial," Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

was free of them at last; he had been lifted by the resurrection angel to lasting peace.”⁵⁷ It seems that the colossal figure was meant to comfort viewers. Hancock’s goal was to offer a “comforting serenity”⁵⁸ to the onlookers, particularly the families of those war dead who were present at the commemorative ceremonies on August 10, 1952. Upon closer analysis, we are also aware that this scene mirrors the death of Christ, specifically his removal from the cross and resurrection three days later. Religion is key to understanding the memorial. Awareness of the subtle and not so subtle allusions to religion enhances the viewer’s experience.

In addition, the words of General Omar N. Bradley, who spoke at the ceremony, reminded Americans of the ongoing war with Korea: “We suffered enough in two world wars, and now in Korea, to know that if we wish to prevent war, if we wish to prevent involvement in war, we must be constantly involved in peace.”⁵⁹ While Bradley’s statement reflected on the past, the audience was reminded of the ongoing Korean War. Bradley did not directly link the construction of the Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial to the war; however, his reference to war reminded the viewer of the cyclical nature of violence. American society will forever remember the fallen of one war while preparing for the next. The pattern of violence continues. It is difficult not to see this structure and the feelings it evokes as the product of a society continuously engaged in war. The audience remembers the dead but should never forget that violence and war continue to plague their country. Eager to remember the fallen, they are determined not to commit the mistakes of the past.

While the memorial is similar to the others in terms of space, its history provides background that we have not yet seen. It stands out because of its structural and historical

⁵⁷“PRR Dedicates Memorial to its Own men and Women Lost in World War II,” 4.

⁵⁸Ibid., 3.

⁵⁹Ibid., 3.

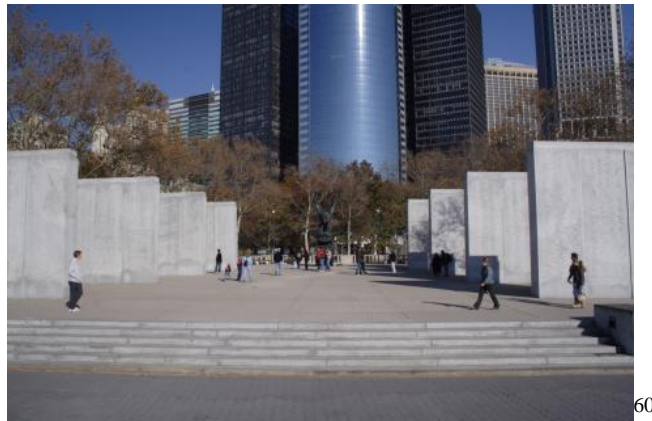
elements. The memorial's structure differs in that it is a single entity rather than a utilitarian monument. Nevertheless, its placement in the 30th Street Station elicits the same experience as those monuments found in parks and plazas. We experience the memorial and are aware of its functional space. The memorial's location prompts viewers to engage in the act of remembering while performing the mundane task of commuting. Through this experience, the structure's overall purpose — of serving society as a memorial — is intensified.

A closer look at the history of the structure adds some elements we have not seen in previous war memorials: the influence of religion and the effect of current affairs. Walker Hancock, an active player in the war memorial's construction, emphasized the religious elements through the depiction of the Angel of Resurrection as a representation of the death and the resurrection of Christ. As the evidence suggests, the Pennsylvania Railroad World War II Memorial is unique in emphasizing simplicity and religion.

East Coast War Memorial (1963)

The Battery Park Memorial, also known as the East Coast War Memorial, completed construction in 1963. Its history is deeply associated with federal agencies. Its physical space offers more than meets the eye. Built by the American Battle Monuments Commission, the structure memorializes the men and women lost at sea during the Second World War. The Battery Park Memorial blends so fluidly with its surroundings, that, although it serves as a vehicle of remembrance, it is also a utilitarian structure. It acts not just as a war memorial but as a meeting place, a site for recreation, and a vital component of Battery Park itself.

Structurally, the war memorial eloquently juxtaposes the themes of verticality and horizontality. The memorial sits behind the tree-lined paths and lines of tourists waiting for ferries. It is located on the southern tip of Manhattan in Battery Park, and overlooks the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. Out of the trees emerges an open stone courtyard lined on both sides by massive stone structures.



A large, concrete plaza interspersed with eight massive 19-foot tall granite pylons greets visitors. Four adorn the southern and four the northern side. Inscribed on these grey structures are the

⁶⁰“East Coast Memorial,” American Battle Monuments Commission, last modified 2018, accessed December 30, 2018, <https://www.abmc.gov/cemeteries-memorials/americas/east-coast-memorial#.W4hdKOhKiUk>.

names, rank, and organization belonging to the deceased.⁶¹ The stone slabs bear the names of 4,601 Americans soldiers who were lost at sea during the Second World War. The sheer size of these sheets of granite reminds the onlooker of the vast number of lives lost in the Second World War. At the same time, the open courtyard allows one to walk through the park — and the memorial — without knowing he or she is in the presence of a war memorial.

The erect, bronze eagle on its eastern side matches the pylons in height. Without previously knowing of the names written on the stone slabs, the eagle is the only clear indicator that a war memorial is there. Sculpted by Italian artist Albino Manca (1898–1976), the giant bird holds a laurel wreath over an ocean wave, which signifies the act of mourning those lost at sea.⁶² More specifically, it commemorates the 262 members of the Army and the Air Force, 2,895 Navy men, seven United States Marines, and 342 Coast Guardsmen missing in action, lost, or buried at sea in the Atlantic Ocean during the war.⁶³



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⁶¹“The Battery: East Coast War Memorial,” NYC Parks Department, last modified 2018, accessed December 30, 2018, <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/battery-park/monuments/1929>.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³“Kennedy to Dedicate War Memorial Here,” *New York Times* (1923-current file), April 13, 1963, 35.

⁶⁴“The Battery: East Coast War Memorial,” NYC Parks Department.

Benches face the memorial as well as a view of New York's harbor. One is immediately aware of the memorial's utilitarian function. It is more than a place of remembrance. It shares similar characteristics to the war monuments in Brooklyn, Pennsylvania, and Boston, and has the same advantages that those structures possess. It is within a park and is located in a densely trafficked neighborhood. Both work together in a similar manner. The park attracts the visitors while the busy locale allows for their large numbers. Together, the two features make the memorial functional.

Essentially, the structure's location in the Battery is its defining characteristic and emphasizes its utilitarianism. Rather than posted on a street corner (as are many New York City war monuments), the Battery Park Memorial offers a place for reflection and serenity in an already tranquil location. Although it is meant for solemn reflection and to act as a "potent memory device,"⁶⁵ the memorial's location enhances its usefulness. The memorial serves as a meeting place, a crossroads, and a hub of vitality, due largely to its size. On any given day, you find tourists, businessmen, or students stopping by for tranquility near the monument. Although some of the other memorials I have discussed were meant to serve a utilitarian purpose, the East Coast War Memorial, by its placement in one of the busiest intersections of Manhattan, is practical.

The history of the conception of the East Coast War Memorial is uncomplicated. The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), an independent agency of the executive branch of the United States government, directly funded the memorial in Battery Park.⁶⁶ The

⁶⁵Marci Reaven and Steven J. Zeitlin, *Hidden New York: A Guide to Places That Matter* (Piscataway, Rutgers University Press, 2006), 345.

⁶⁶"The Battery: East Coast War Memorial," NYC Parks Department, last modified 2018, accessed December 30, 2018, <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/battery-park/monuments/1929>.

commission began as a post-World War I program with federal control of commemoration. Although initially involved with the construction of World War I and World War II cemeteries overseas, the ABMC eventually established permanent memorials to the Korean War, World War II, and to servicemen lost or buried at sea.⁶⁷ The East Coast War Memorial was therefore a product of a government affiliate. This is the only federally backed memorial I have studied making it different from the rest.

Overall, the East Coast War Memorial achieves utilitarian practicality through non-traditional methods. Compared with the more standard living memorials, the functionality of the Battery Park Memorial emerges in an unlikely way. Unlike the memorial in Boston and the Brooklyn War Memorial, there is no evidence in its history that suggests the East Coast War Memorial should function or serve as anything other than a vehicle of remembrance. It has no auditorium, nor is it equipped with a stage and benches for meetings. Nevertheless, the structure serves as a vehicle of utility on its own. Its location in Battery Park enhances the structure's open spaces. Similar to that of the Pennsylvania memorial, this particular locale allows for a high volume of visitors to experience the memorial and engage in an act of remembrance.

⁶⁷“American Battle Monument Commission: History,” American Battle Monument Commission, last modified 2018, accessed December 31, 2018, <https://www.abmc.gov/about-us/history>.

Conclusion

The four memorials I have examined are similar to each other in certain ways. As I argued, the use of space is a key factor in defining them. From their structure to the physical location they consume, their space increases their functionality. This is achieved in two ways. First, the site of the monument is already utilitarian (i.e., it serves a purpose in society); thus it already bestows some practical function to the memorial. Second, the area is densely trafficked, which allows for a high volume of visitors. Some of the structures discussed are endowed with both features. The characteristics of location and spatial consumption, either on their own or coupled together, are thus crucial in identifying memorials built after 1945 and are common to the memorials I have discussed.

But the unique qualities of the structures overwhelm the one similarity they share. Memorials built in the wake of 1945 (specifically the four monuments discussed) should be seen as singular entities with their own unique characteristics. In doing so, we can better understand and more broadly define the architecture that arose in the wake of World War II. While their points of intersection are worth noting, the differences are every bit as important for understanding and defining this period of memorialization.

The Boston War Memorial's dedication to space is similar to monuments of utility and to the monuments here; however, its historical backdrop makes it distinctive. The needs of Boston's veterans associations is clear and is not found in any of the other monuments I have discussed. Public influence from veteran's organizations determined the construction of a practical memorial. Their need was twofold: commemorate the dead and create a space for activity. In no other memorial do we see a strong push from a public group that supports a utilitarian monument to serve their community.

In the Brooklyn War Memorial alone we find the influence of key, local officials. Parks Commissioner Robert Moses, in partnership with Frank D. Schroth of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, had a significant impact on the construction of the war memorial and on the changing landscape of war memorials in New York City. With help from Schroth, Moses backed monuments of utility across New York City to better serve the community and memorialize the dead. Moses made it clear that memorials of specific intention needed to commemorate the fallen, as opposed to randomly scattered statues that were often overlooked. Despite this, no other borough built this kind of war memorial, save for the later East Coast War Memorial some years later. The involvement of Moses and Schroth in building a utilitarian memorial and in reconfiguring New York City's commemorative landscape was significant. Their participation adds to the definitions of post-1945 war structures. What the history of the Brooklyn War Memorial suggests is that this war monument was intended to be more than just a commemorative structure.

The Pennsylvania Railroad World War II Memorial is surely the outlier among the four monuments. Nonetheless, it converges with the others with respect to ideas of location and use of space. Its location in the 30th Street Station heightens its functionality and allows for optimal, appropriate viewing. Its space, although unconventionally configured, still conveys the utilitarian elements of the other memorials. However, it is the only monument we see that emphasizes the religious element. As this memorial demonstrates, sculptors and the ideology they brought to their work greatly influenced monuments of the post-1945 era.

Lastly, through non-conventional methods, the East Coast War Memorial achieves the utilitarian functionality shared by the other memorials. As I have suggested, its open courtyard and location in Battery Park offers more to visitors than just a war memorial. It was not intended

to serve as a utilitarian monument, but it inadvertently achieved this quality due to its location. What this memorial suggests, then, is that straightforward memorial halls and auditoriums were not the only way memorials achieved a higher, more functional purpose after 1945.

While these war memorials share a singular commonality, they diverge in how they were conceived, constructed, funded, and received by the public. What I have sought to do is to clarify some key aspects of post-1945 memorials: First, it is clear that fixed standards cannot speak for all war memorials built after 1945. While these memorials share qualities that link them to living memorials, they diverge significantly from the rest of the memorials examined in the literature. The scholarship I have discussed should therefore not be considered as definitive when analyzing these four structures.

In addition, post-1945 war memorials were more different than similar. They were funded differently. Public and private endeavors supported and commissioned their construction. They expressed distinct ideologies or sometimes none at all. And they occasionally even referenced current events. How then can we define this period of memorialization? I would suggest that we classify these memorials by their small number of similarities, namely, their shared time frame and use of space to convey a sense of utility. But in the end, the memorials reflect diverse ways to remember the dead as reflected in the motivations and influences of their creators.

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