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Remembering and Forgetting at The Waikiki War Memorial Park and Natatorium

ON THE WESTERN SLOPE of Diamond Head, commanding a majestic view west towards Waikiki, Honolulu, and further towards Pearl Harbor, there once stood a Native Hawaiian structure known as Papa'ena'ena Heiau. Clearly visible from nearby Waikiki village, the *heiau* or place of worship, measured 130 feet in length and 70 feet in width. It consisted of a *mana* (supernatural or divine power) house approximately 50 feet long; an oven house (*hale umu*); a drum house; a *waiea* or spiritual house; an *anu'u* or tower; a *lele* (altar) and twelve large images. The *heiau* was bordered by a rectangular wooden fence approximately six to eight feet tall with an eight-foot wide base, which narrowed to three feet at its apex. On the western side of the *heiau* there were three small terraces, on the highest one of which were planted five *kou* trees at regular distances from each other. The *heiau* was the center point of an area of land considered sacred or spiritual to Native Hawaiians, which may have stretched across what is now Kapi'olani Park as far as to the Kupalaha *heiau* situated near the present-day intersection of Kalākaua and Monsarrat Avenues.

It is likely that the *heiau* was built in 1783 by Kahekili, the *mō'ī* or ruler of Maui, as part of a victory celebration following Kahekili's conquest of O'ahu. After King Kamehameha's victory at the Battle of the Pali in 1895,

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Kamehameha ordered the sacrifice of the defeated *aliʻi* (chiefs) of Oʻahu at Papaʻenaʻena Heiau. The *heiau* was probably used for sacrificial or sacred purposes for 35 years. However, following the death of Kamehameha and the subsequent diminishment in status and practice of Hawaiian religious beliefs, the *heiau* was leveled along with many of the other traditional religious *heiau* and monuments. Its ruins lay relatively undisturbed until the 1850s when the stones that comprised the *heiau* were carted off to build roads in Waikiki and walls at Queen Emma's estate.¹

In sharp contrast to Papaʻenaʻena Heiau, and nine other sacred structures that once stood in and around Kapiʻolani Park, there now stands an incongruous *beaux-arts*-style, neoclassical memorial, another *place de memoire*, called The Waikiki War Memorial Park and Natatorium, which opened in 1927. Although it has fallen into disrepair, in its prime the memorial was an impressive structure. The swimming pool was over 100 meters long, twice the size of an Olympic pool, the *mauka* (mountain-facing) wall was composed of an arch at least 25 feet high, flanked by two 12-foot arches each topped with four large eagle sculptures. Approximately 9,800 of Hawaiʻi's citizens served in the U.S. armed forces after America's entry into World War I in 1917 and the names of 101 of those who died are inscribed on a plaque attached to the "Honolulu Stone" situated *mauka* of the Natatorium and unveiled in 1931.²

There is, however, some considerable doubt as to the veracity of those casualty figures. According to statistician Robert Schmitt, of the 9,800 Hawaii residents who served in World War I,

102 died—14 overseas during the war, 61 in Hawaiʻi or North America or after the armistice, and 27 in unknown circumstances. Twenty-two of the 102 recorded deaths occurred among Island residents serving with the British. Actual battle deaths of persons in the U.S. armed forces whose preservice residence was Hawaiʻi numbered six: seven others were wounded.³

These figures are not entirely correct: 101 names are listed on the memorial not 102; eight soldiers were "actual battle deaths," not six. Nevertheless, these figures raise questions about the purpose of the

memorial. Since only eight Hawai'i residents died by enemy action under the U.S. flag—the others having died of other causes before and after the war's end—the Memorial obviously exaggerates the death toll, thus magnifying the sacrifices made by "Hawai'i's sons."

Memorials are an important way of remembering. They are not just part of the past; they help shape attitudes in the present and thus act as a guide for the future. Professor Charles Griswold, chair of the philosophy department at Boston University, argues that memorials are "a species of pedagogy" that seeks to instruct posterity about the past and, in so doing, necessarily reaches a decision about what is worth recovering.⁴ In *Lies Across America*, sociologist James Loewen asks, "Where . . . do Americans learn about the past?" He argues persuasively that it is "surely most of all from the landscape."⁵ One recurring theme of Loewen's analysis of American memorials is their importance as a political statement. Although many memorials outwardly project discourses of "remembering" or "honoring," they may also have covert and hidden meanings. Rather than simply paying tribute to the dead, the Waikiki War Memorial actually promotes militarism. It is a triumphalist monument to the glory of war, which dishonors the dead by masking the horror of mechanized trench warfare behind a pretty facade and noble but misleading words.

Furthermore, when one adds the memorial's architectural style, which is so incompatible with its Pacific island setting, to the discrepancy between actual casualty figures and those listed by the memorial, it becomes clear that the Waikiki War Memorial was built also to further the "100% Americanism" of Hawai'i. The memorial acted as a channel through which Hawai'i's American settler community could express its nationalistic pride. Patriotic groups used it to further the cause of Americanism and to glorify war as a noble and heroic sacrificial act. Conveniently forgotten in this narrative, however, are the soldiers actually named on the memorial. Details of why they enlisted, and how and where they died, are missing from the memorial's dedication. This paper will address how and why these soldiers are remembered by the memorial and evaluate if the extant structure is either the best or only way to remember their deaths.

ORIGIN OF THE WAR MEMORIAL

Local citizens formed a War Memorial Committee in 1918 in response to the promptings of a group called the Daughters and Sons of Hawaiian Warriors. There were a number of interested parties involved including the Daughters of Hawaii, the Rotary Club, the Outdoor Circle, the Pan-Pacific Union, Central YMCA, St. Andrew's Cathedral, Hawaiian Women's Guild, Kamehameha Alumni Association, Hawaiian Civic Club, Order of Kamehameha, Longshoremen's Mutual Aid Association, Knights of Pythias, and the Ad Club. Notable interested individuals included former territorial Attorney General W.O. Smith and territorial tax collector Colonel Howard Hathaway.⁶ As historian Kirk Savage has noted, they were following a relatively new trend in monument building that began in the 19th century:

In the expansive era of the nineteenth century, monuments were not bestowed by the state on the citizenry, or at least they weren't supposed to be. . . . What gave monuments their particular appeal in an era of rising nationalism was their claim to speak for 'the people'. . . . Most monuments therefore originated not as official projects of the state but as volunteer enterprises sponsored by associations of 'public-spirited' citizens and funded by individual donations. These voluntary associations often had direct links to officialdom, but they received legitimacy only by manufacturing popular enthusiasm (and money) for the project.⁷

The first designs for the memorial had no connection whatsoever to the extant construction. In fact, there was considerable support at one stage for either a memorial designed by architect Roger Noble Burnham⁸ to be erected in Palace Square close to the statue of King Kamehameha, or for a Memorial Hall.⁹ Burnham suggested that his design would "symboliz[e] Hawaii's contribution to Liberty. It consists of three figures, the central one typifying Liberty while beneath are a Hawaiian warrior and a Hawaiian maiden. The warrior offers his spear while the maiden extends in outstretched hands a lei."¹⁰ This design would feature a rostrum enclosed on three sides by a wall. Unlike the extant memorial, Burnham wanted to honor both the military and Hawai'i's civilian population, which had contributed to the war by buying bonds and helping the Red Cross. One wall, therefore, would have inscriptions

dedicated to Hawai'i's civilian population and the other walls would depict military activities.

Burnham's modest design was championed by Mrs. Walter (Alice) Macfarlane. She was born Alice Kamokila Campbell, daughter of wealthy landowner James Campbell and Abigail Kuaihelani Maipinepine, who was from a mixed Native Hawaiian and *haole* (Caucasian) family from Lahaina, Maui. When James Campbell died in 1900, his estate was held in trust for his wife and daughters. Alice Macfarlane, who in later years would become a voice against statehood for Hawai'i, was a respected and influential woman. She opposed notions of a memorial hall, an auditorium, or civic center as she was concerned that a "memorial hall would commercialize the memory of the men who had paid the supreme sacrifice." Supporters of the memorial hall design, however, believed that it would become a center of civic life where "people could go and hear enlightening talks and entertaining music."¹¹ One other suggestion at this time, by the Chamber of Commerce, was for the memorial either to be placed in a prominent position at the entrance to Honolulu Harbor or on Sand Island, where "it would be the first thing that would greet the arriving traveler, and the last thing he would see."¹² These early deliberations over the placement of the monument, and its design as either a traditional monument or as a usable, "living" structure, would characterize the nature of the debate for many months.

In early February 1919, further designs were considered; Burnham exhibited sketches of a design that incorporated his original sculpture into a larger design that also included a memorial hall.¹³ The cost of this project would be somewhere in the region of \$750,000,¹⁴ the equivalent today of \$7,674,333.33.¹⁵ Another suggestion at this point was for a very practical memorial that would comprise one new wing of the Queen's Hospital.¹⁶ Yet another design by T.H. Ripley & Davis architects envisaged an impressive memorial hall surrounded by large Grecian columns, which would feature a large rotunda filled with "statuary tablets."¹⁷

On March 24, 1919 it was reported in the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* that the War Memorial Committee was finally going to announce that a general design had been agreed upon for a monument and memorial hall

to be situated on a “strip of land along Punchbowl Street, between King and Queen Streets.” This was to be the majority report’s proposal. A dissenting minority report, led by Alice Macfarlane, questioned the cost of the proposed memorial and suggested once again that it be limited solely to a monument without the additional expense of a memorial hall. Macfarlane stated that the monument should “emphasize the spiritual side of victory, rather than . . . show the wealth of the community.”¹⁸ The next day, however, the *Advertiser* reported that the memorial would not be situated on Punchbowl and that proposals had been made to approach the Irwin Estate to buy property at Kapi’olani Park instead. For some time John Guild, chairman of the Beach Park Memorial Committee, had been in correspondence with the Irwin Estate about buying the property for use as a Pan-Pacific Peace Palace. However, at the War Memorial Committee meeting, Guild suggested that the land be purchased for a war memorial park instead. It seems this was a compromise to ease the tensions raised between those responsible for the majority and minority reports.

The site of the memorial had now been resolved but the debate over its design had not. Guild’s letter to the Legislature envisaged a memorial park with an “arch or statue” as opposed to a memorial hall.¹⁹ Perhaps it was believed that the open spaces of the park would provide a natural amphitheatre and that a hall was no longer appropriate. Or perhaps there was no way to overcome the objections of Mrs. Macfarlane and still maintain a consensus. In any event, Guild was insistent that the memorial plans be given due consideration and that they should not rush into accepting a design. He worried that,

We do not want to erect a monument which shall at some future date be looked upon as a thing of bad taste. Too many of the soldier’s [sic] Monuments of the past have been of this character. I believe the memorial should take a form that will express the spirit of Hawaii and be in harmony with the wonderful tropical surroundings of the proposed site.²⁰

Early deliberations over the erection, placement, and design of the memorial took place almost entirely within the American civilian community in Hawai’i. However, in August of 1919 the newly-formed American Legion entered the fray.²¹ Colonel Theodore Roosevelt (son of

the ex-president) and other senior officers created the American Legion in France to direct disaffected soldiers away from the lure of socialism. Journalist and author Marcus Duffield states, “The American General Staff was seriously concerned about how to keep up morale. American bankers and business men [sic] who visited Europe returned filled with anxiety. What would be the attitude of returning troops?”²² By early 1921, the Hawai‘i branch of the American Legion had wrested control of the memorial scheme out of the hands of the citizens’ War Memorial Committee. There is no suggestion of conflict or dispute in the historical record—a *Paradise of the Pacific* editorial noted simply that the “American Legion . . . has charge of the projected War Memorial”—but it would have taken a very brave or foolish citizen indeed to stand up to military veterans who had so very comprehensively wrapped themselves in the U.S. flag.²³

Despite many different ideas as to what design would constitute a fitting memorial and where it should be situated, by early 1921 the American Legion’s views held total sway. For example, CJS Group Architects note in their *Final Historical Background Report* on the memorial, that, “This concept of having a memorial [i.e. one that included a swimming pool] was originally initiated by the American Legion Chapter of Hawai‘i.”²⁴ This despite the fact that the Legion was not involved, in fact did not even exist, when some of Hawai‘i’s citizens were submitting plans and raising interest and money for the memorial in 1918. Of course, arguments over control of projects such as memorials are not unusual: The Daughters and Sons of Hawaiian Warriors were complaining as early as January 1919 that “they proposed the memorial first and then later on another element steps in and crowds them.”²⁵

However, even given that expected bickering, the question still remains, why did such a new and untried organization quickly gain such a hold over the Memorial project? Perhaps the answer can be seen in the preamble to the American Legion’s constitution, in which the Legion pledges not only to “preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great War” but also to “foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism.”²⁶ Coming so soon after the end of a devastating world war in which 116,000 Americans were killed,²⁷ it is hardly a surprise that a veterans’ group would quickly attain a position

of influence. However, what made the Legion so powerful was that its aims coincided with those connected to the powerful U.S. military presence in Hawaii, with some of the *haole* elite who were pushing for statehood, and with others who did not want statehood but did want to make Hawai'i less alien to their American sensibilities.

At the Memorial Park's formal dedication on Armistice Day, November 11, 1919, Governor James McCarthy symbolically handed over possession of the park to the American Legion whose Honolulu chapter had been formed barely two months earlier. The Legion's chaplain, Father Valentin, read prayers at what the *Advertiser* described as a "semi-military ceremony not without its lessons to present and future generations."²⁸ Although the Legion now had control over developing the park, it still had not solved the problem of the design of the war memorial itself. In that respect it had made no more progress than the war memorial committees from which it had assumed control. The Legion did, however, ignore all previous designs and schemes and published instead a rough outline of its own proposals:

. . . an arch or other memorial feature at the shore. To the landward would be an open space under the trees, carefully landscaped and prepared for seats so that memorial exercises, band concerts or other similar events may be held with the arch or monument as the stage and background. To the seaward would be a natatorium, but with its concrete walls rising only high enough above the waterline to keep their tops above the surf. . . By the plan suggested the views along the beach would not be obstructed in any way and yet all the features of other plans, and more, would be preserved.²⁹

Unlike Burnham's earlier design, this was to be a memorial dedicated only to the military, with no recognition of the contribution made to the war effort by Hawai'i's civilian population. It is telling that although the Legion was offering prizes for new designs, it had already established what the rough outline of the memorial should be. In fact, its outline is remarkably close to the extant memorial, the only real differences being the incorporation of the arch into the actual natatorium and the omission of the landscaped area on which now stands the Honolulu Stone and plaque.

In 1921, when the Territorial Legislature authorized the appointment of a “Territorial War Memorial Commission” to hold a competition to find an appropriate design for the memorial, Governor McCarthy asked the American Legion to put together the Memorial Committee, effectively handing it total control over the project. Governor McCarthy invited the Legion to submit names for the Memorial Committee and asked Louis Christian Mullgardt to be the Territorial War Memorial Commission’s advisory architect.³⁰ In choosing Mullgardt, the governor and the American Legion were virtually ensuring that a neoclassical-style *beaux-arts* memorial would be built. All of the architects favored neoclassical designs. For example, Mullgardt designed the Panama-Pacific International Exposition’s “Court of the Ages” and “Tower of the Ages.” The Territorial War Memorial Commission nominated three architects from the mainland to judge the competition: Ellis F. Lawrence of Portland, Bernard Maybeck of San Francisco and W.R.B. Wilcox of Seattle.³¹ All three were practitioners of the neoclassical style of design. Furthermore, the winning design had to conform to Mullgardt’s plan for the Memorial Park, in which the war memorial “was to consist of a

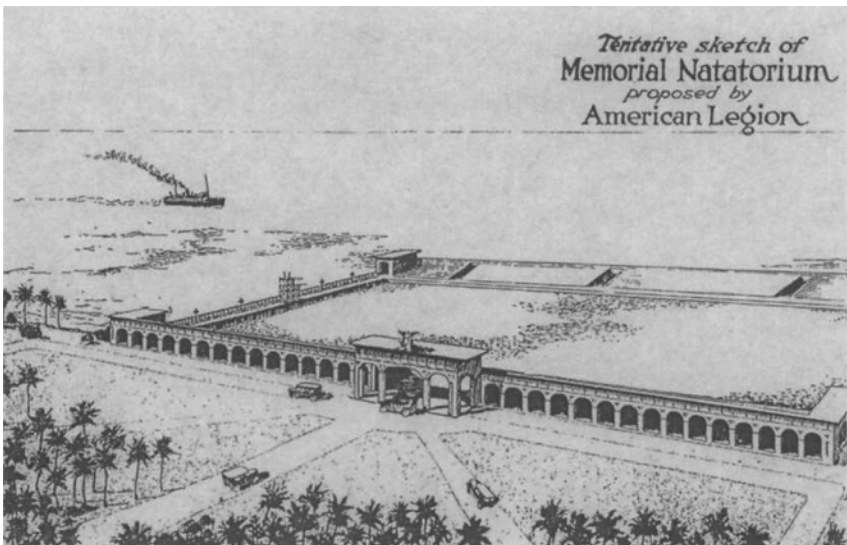


FIG. 1. Tentative Sketch of Memorial Natatorium proposed by the American Legion, ca. 1919–1922. War Memorial Commission. Hawai‘i State Archives.

temple of music, plaza, and colosseum [sic] with swimming basin.”³² It made no real difference, therefore, who actually won the design competition; it had already been decided that a neoclassical beaux-arts natatorium and landscaped park would be the outcome.

When the judges arrived in Hawai‘i in June 1922 to award the prize, they were met by officials of the American Legion under whose auspices the memorial was to be built. Within a few days the judges awarded the first prize to Lewis Hobart of San Francisco.³³ Between 1922 and 1927, when the Waikiki War Memorial and Natatorium was finally opened, Hobart’s original design, described as a “dream plan” by Maybeck, was twice pared down to stay within the \$250,000 budget. The original plan for a natatorium, temple of music, ticket booth, dressing rooms, and some very elaborate friezes, busts, and murals could not be built within the budget, and after attempts to appropriate more money failed, the temple of music became the cost-cutters’ main casualty.

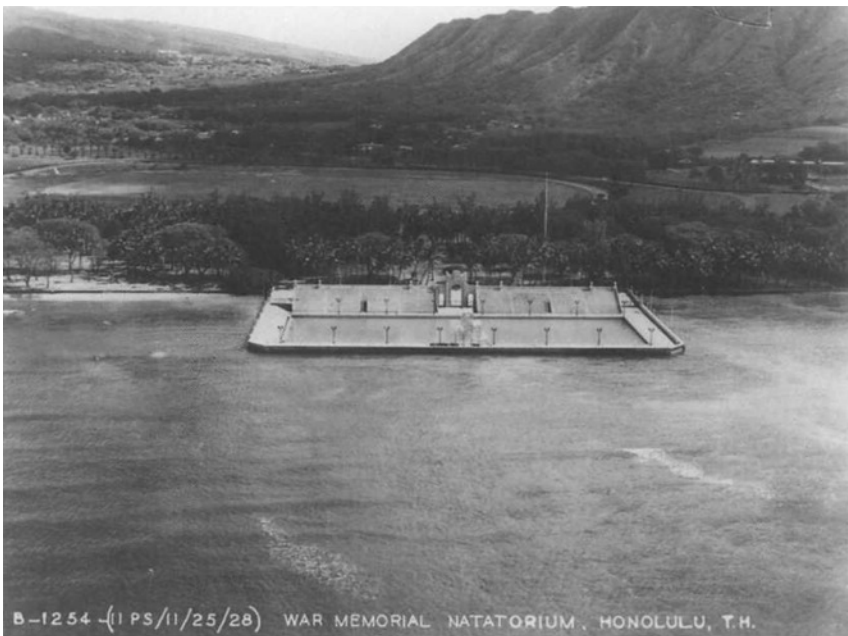


FIG. 2. The Natatorium, 1928. Hawai‘i State Archives.

HOBART'S FOLLY

Like most *beaux-arts* constructions, the Waikikī War Memorial Park and Natatorium is grandiose and pompous. The entrance is composed of a grand arch flanked by two pilasters projecting slightly out from the wall (pilasters are rectangular supports resembling a flat column). The top of the arch features typical classical ornamentation—a medallion and frieze topped with a round pediment in the Greek Revival style. Two large symmetrical eagles on either side flank the medallion. Adjacent to the main entrance arch are two smaller arches, above each of which is a



FIG. 3. Entrance Arch of the War Memorial, undated. Hawai'i State Archives.

decorative cartouche set into the wall, topped with elaborate cornices. The effect of the entrance is to present a symmetrical facade, an imposition of order, structure, and planning into the natural disordered surroundings of sea, beach, and parkland. In its imperial grandeur, it means to instruct viewers of the benefits of the stability and order that European civilization can provide. Architectural historian William Jordy states “the idea of stability was . . . implicit in the traditionalism of the Beaux-Arts esthetic; in other words, its academic point of view which held . . . that the past provided vocabularies of form and compositional themes from which the present should learn.”³⁴

Memorials can only work as designed when the shared memory of the past is uncontroversial, Historian Kirk Savage points out, for example, that memorials to the American Civil War avoided controversy by memorializing soldiers from both sides but not the disputed causes for which they fought. In the process, these memorial makers erased from their reconstructed history images of slaves and slavery. Conversely, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial remains controversial because its design reflects the arguments over the war it commemorates. American World War I memorials avoided such controversy by narrating that war as a noble cause, a clear-cut fight between good and evil, freedom and despotism—the evil “Hun” verses the freedom-loving, democratic nations of England and the United States.

While comparisons between war memorials dedicated to different wars can be problematic, some use can be made of comparing and contrasting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington to the Waikiki War Memorial. It should not be expected, of course, that the Waikiki War Memorial should in any way resemble the Vietnam Wall: the former is a product of a victorious war with relatively few American casualties (compared to other Allied losses), the latter is a product of a bitterly divisive war that America lost. However, rather than making any comparison between the two memorials inappropriate, those differences in historical context can actually serve to illustrate the functions of war memorials in a society at any given time.

Unlike, the self-reflective Vietnam Veterans War Memorial, the imposing entrance of Hobart’s structure has most of its decoration and inscriptions well above eye level, and thus demands that its audience step

back, crane their necks and look up to the two American eagles. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is made with black reflective granite instead of the triumphant white marble or stone of *beaux-arts* monuments. Whereas the facade of the Waikiki War Memorial demands that viewers remain passive in contemplation of its majesty, onlookers at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial can see themselves reflected in the stone, which seems to mirror the self-reflective mood associated with the “Vietnam Syndrome.” The names on the Honolulu Stone plaque are arranged in a rigid and anonymous way: top and center is an eagle holding laurel leaves. Below that there is a five-pointed star in whose center is a circle with the letters “US”. Below that on a banner is the legend “FOR GOD AND COUNTRY.” Below that is the legend “ROLL OF HONOR” and below that again is the quotation, “DULCE ET DECORUM EST PRO PATRIA MORI.” Below that are the words “IN THE SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES.” The names are listed in three columns and split into Army and Navy. Below that, also in three columns, are the names of those who died “IN THE SERVICE OF GREAT BRITAIN.”

These categorizations group the soldiers together as if they died in a common cause, and make them anonymous servants to the greater glory of war. Compare that to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, where the soldiers’ names are arranged chronologically by date of death instead of country, rank, or regiment. This has the effect not only of verisimilitude—making it real—but also of presenting a more democratic “people’s” memorial rather than a regimented military monument. In order to find a name on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, relatives of those killed would need to come prepared with a certain amount of historical information about the war, including the date of the death of their loved one. Whereas most war memorials function as designed only if they remain vague about actual details of a war and its causes, in contrast, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial works only when precise historical details are present. Unlike the interactive Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which asks visitors to reflect on the causes of the war and the folly and waste that war entails, the facade of the Waikiki War Memorial and Natatorium means to inspire awe and respect for Euro-American achievements, to excuse warfare as a legitimate and honorable way of solving disputes, and to glorify the U.S. military and its role in the conflict.

The Waikiki War Memorial and Natatorium is dedicated to war, not peace. However, it is also dedicated to victory. The memorial contains, for example, three triumphal arches (an entrance arch, flanked by two smaller arches). In a 1919 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* article, architect C.R. Ripley had warned of the inappropriateness of utilizing such celebratory imagery. Ripley argued, "Surely we want no memorial arches. The watchword of the war has been, 'To make the world safe for democracy.' Where does the victory arch typify that inspiration? We want no memorials to glorify war and victory."³⁵ Hobart, however, relied heavily on the American Legion's arch-dominated design,³⁶ thus ensuring that the memorial would be dedicated to vanquishing America's enemies.

University of Kansas architecture professor James Mayo points out, "War memorials to victory are trophies that not only keep us mindful of who won, but also assure us that the war was honorable. God was on the side of the victors, and therefore their cause was righteous."³⁷ The Waikiki War Memorial fits neatly into Mayo's analysis of victory monuments: it is made to be "steadfast and solid," of those good materials [that] are practical expressions of permanence." The main design on the *mauka*-facing wall is above head level, a technique, Mayo notes, that "works as a metaphor, since we look 'up' to people we respect."³⁸ A major theme of this memorial is the sacrifice that Hawai'i and its citizens made for the greater glory of America. Advocating "peace" instead of victory was seen as weakness; war was a rite of passage to manhood transmitted "through inscriptions on war memorials which lauded martial virtues by accompanying the names of the fallen with adjectives such as 'brave' or courageous."³⁹

The Waikiki War Memorial does not make any bold or precise statements about those it commemorates. There are no phrases, for example, like "killed in action" or "killed by enemy fire." Instead, the memorial is coy and evasive about where and why these soldiers died. It utilizes non-specific phrases such as "For God And Country," "Roll Of Honor," "*Dulce Et Decorum Est Pro Patria Mori*," "In The Service Of Great Britain," and "In The Service Of The United States," all of which could refer to almost any war. Clearly the overall impression the memorial wishes to convey is that the soldiers died for a noble cause, which is why the legend does not linger on any specific reasons for the war, or mention

any battles. The effect of this is, as Mayo notes, “facetious,” as the high-minded and abstract ideals mentioned “are not grounded in the ugly realities of war.”⁴⁰ In this respect, the memorial is ahistorical. This narrative is, as historian Paul Fussell points out,

typical of popular histories of the war written on the adventure-story model: they like to ascribe clear, and usually noble, cause and purpose to accidental or demeaning events. Such histories thus convey to the optimistic and credulous a satisfying, orderly, and even optimistic and wholesome view of catastrophic occurrences—a fine way to encourage a moralistic, nationalistic, and bellicose politics.⁴¹

By employing a rhetorical device known as enthymematic argumentation, the memorial gives the impression that 101 persons from Hawaii died in France—79 died fighting under American arms, and 22 in the British Army. In enthymematic argumentation, the speaker builds an argument with one element removed, leading listeners to fill in the missing piece. Since it provides only limited information, one might assume from reading the text on the Honolulu Stone that all of those who died were killed as a result of enemy action. This is, however, not the case. For example, of the 79 who served in the U.S. armed forces, it can be ascertained that only eight were killed by enemy action—seven in France and one, Private Manuel Ramos, on the way to France, when his troopship was torpedoed in the Atlantic Ocean.⁴² The causes of death of the other 71 soldiers and sailors are more mundane than the memorial would have us believe. Thirty-six died of flu and/or pneumonia in the great epidemic that ravaged the world in 1918, five in accidents, one of suicide, two of heart attacks, eight of unknown causes, and 19 of other natural causes including tuberculosis, cancer, appendicitis, meningitis, blood poisoning, peritonitis ulcer, intestinal obstruction, and brain hemorrhage. Eight of the 71 non-combat-related deaths occurred in France: four of those soldiers died of flu, two in accidents, and two of unknown causes.

Whereas the British public knew by the end of the war that the battlefields of Belgium and France were slaughterhouses, an epiphany which led to the disillusioned literary style of the period, Americans, who had suffered far fewer casualties, and had been fighting for only about

six months, from March 1918 until the Armistice in November, were still inclined to think of the war as a “noble cause.” Historian David Kennedy states, “Almost never in the contemporary American accounts do the themes of wonder and romance give way to those of weariness and resignation, as they do in the British.”⁴³ This desire by Americans, to remember the war as dignified and purposeful is also why Latin was chosen as the language of the most forthright statement on the Waikiki War Memorial’s plaque. Such “[R]aised,’ essentially feudal language,” as Fussell calls it, is the language of choice for memorials.⁴⁴

By the end of the war, British writers left behind the “high diction” of 19th-century literary tradition—words and phrases like “steed” instead of “horse,” “strife,” instead of “warfare” “breast,” instead of “chest” and “the red wine of youth,” in place of “blood”—and instead described events in a more down-to-earth and realistic way.⁴⁵ However, memorials were a different matter: whereas it seemed appropriate, given the high death tolls and brutality of World War I, for writers to change to a more factual and graphic idiom, “high diction” remained the language of monuments and memorials. It seemed somehow inappropriate and disrespectful, given the solid dignified presence of a concrete or marble memorial, to tell the undignified truth about wartime deaths, a truth that would involve grisly descriptions of severed limbs, burst intestines, decapitations, and other bloody injuries. Moreover, if the purpose of the Waikiki War Memorial was to inspire Native Hawaiian devotion to the greater glory of the state (the United States)—to be, as historian John Bodnar states, “reminded of ‘love of country’ and their duty to their ‘native’ land”—it would be self-defeating to remind Hawaiians of the butchery of Flanders.⁴⁶

The purpose of the Waikiki War Memorial and Natatorium is only superficially a tribute to Hawai‘i’s Great War dead. In fact, the dead were used in death as they were in life, as sacrifices to the gods of war, to militarism, colonialism, and nationalism. This is evident in the memorial’s scale and in its deliberately vague and secretive inscription. James Mayo argues that war memorials “represent failure, the failure to prevent war.”⁴⁷ However, the American Legion and its supporters chose to build a huge neoclassical structure that exaggerates Hawai‘i’s role in the Great War. Given the relatively small number of casualties and minor

role played by Hawai‘i, a more honest memorial would surely have been the small token affair envisaged by Burnham and championed by Macfarlane.

CONCLUSION

The Waikiki War Memorial and Natatorium represents a grand, overstated tribute to the relatively small number of casualties sustained by residents of Hawai‘i. However, that, of course, is not its true purpose, as is evident in its design and scale. The message that it symbolizes is one of submission to imperial forces and glorification of both war and the American military. This is exemplified by the legend on the Honolulu Stone which reads (in Latin), “*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*,” or “it is sweet and noble to die for one’s country,” from Horace’s Odes. This phrase would not only have been familiar to those with a classical education, but also to a wider audience who had read popular war novels. As historian David Kennedy points out, “one of Edith Wharton’s characters [in her 1918 book *The Marne*] tearfully meditate[d] on the ancient phrase from Horace: ‘dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.’”⁴⁸ However, at that time, the more topical and relevant use of that quotation was by British soldier and war poet, Wilfred Owen. His poem entitled *Dulce et decorum* cautions against the very same triumphant patriotism that the Waikiki War Memorial Park and Natatorium represents:

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

Both Hobart and the American Legion probably knew of Owen’s poem. Like Siegfried Sassoon, he was well known and widely publicized at that time. They chose, however, to use the quote in its original context—as an obsequious and jingoistic tribute to war.

One-hundred-and-one persons from Hawai‘i died during the Great War. Who can know now what their motivations were in enlisting? Certainly for some it was not to defend the United States, as 30 or so of

them enlisted with the British Army before the U.S. even entered the war. On July 31, 1918, a military draft was introduced that applied to all residents of the United States between the ages of 21 and 30, whether native born, naturalized, or alien. The draft was expanded in October 1917 to all male residents between the ages of 19 and 40. In total 4,336 of those who registered for the draft were called up to serve in the 1st and 2nd Hawaiian Infantry.⁴⁹ Of the 79 non-Navy U.S. deaths recorded on the memorial, 40 men served with the 1st or 2nd Hawaiian Infantry. These units were, in effect, the Hawai'i National Guard, federalized and sent to Fort Shafter and Schofield Barracks, or garrison duty to release other more professional troops for war service. A soldier in these units had little chance of being sent to France. Many of them worked as laborers in the sugar plantations and, as scholar Charles Warfield notes, Washington recognized that Hawai'i's sugar was more important than any contributions in terms of manpower that it could make to the war:

The National Guard had been organized with the idea that it would be used only for the defense of the Islands and would never be sent overseas. A large proportion of its ranks was composed of men who were indispensable to the sugar industry of the Islands, which had been greatly expanded during the war in Europe. If the National Guard of Hawaii were mobilized when the United States went to war it would seriously cripple the sugar industry.⁵⁰

Twenty-five of the non-Navy soldiers who are named on the memorial enlisted after July 1918, and 36 of the 67 men enlisted in non-naval forces were attached to the 1st and 2nd Hawaiian Infantry. In other words, nearly one third of those who died while serving in the U.S. military may have been unwilling draftees, not volunteers, and almost one half may have joined the Hawaii National Guard to avoid having to go overseas to fight in the World War.⁵¹

Of the 72,000 residents of Hawai'i registered for the draft as eligible to fight, 29,000—or 40 percent—were *issei* and *nisei*. Of the total that actually did serve in the U.S. Armed Forces, 838—approximately nine percent—were of Japanese descent.⁵² Since Japan was at war with Germany at this time, who can say with any certainty that those from Hawai'i were fighting for either America or for Japan? If they were

fighting for the U.S., like the famous 442nd Regiment of World War II, how many enlisted to prove their loyalty in an unwritten test that should never have been enacted? Undoubtedly, those involved in the advocacy, planning, design, and building of the Waikiki War Memorial were mostly *haole*. There is little evidence, for example, of the involvement of Native Hawaiians or Japanese residents of Hawai'i. Indeed, it is ironic that 838 Japanese residents of Hawaii volunteered to fight in France yet the American military, which in 1919 had asked the Hawai'i State Legislature to pass a bill regulating Japanese language schools, and the American Legion, which gave that bill its full support, were extremely antagonistic in both rhetoric and action to Japanese culture in Hawai'i.⁵³

Most newspaper accounts of Hawai'i during the Great War paint a picture of a dedicated, patriotic populace, eager to do "its bit" for the war effort. Occasionally, there is some slippage in this narrative. For example, a 1919 *Advertiser* headline complained that, "not enough Hawaiians are on hand at the railroad depot when the mustered-out soldiers arrive there each day from Schofield Barracks to form a real welcoming committee. Representative citizens are in a feeble minority in the crowds." This was in contrast to the U.S. mainland where "every town that has a railroad depot has its crowds on hand when a train comes in and the returning boys are given the biggest kind of welcome."⁵⁴

Author and sociologist Albert Memmi has noted that it is the colonialist's "nation's flag which flies over the monuments" in a colonized country and that the colonialist "never forgets to make a public show of his own virtues, and will argue with vehemence to appear heroic and great."⁵⁵ Both of these descriptions aptly fit the Waikiki War Memorial and Natatorium. It glorifies war and acts to consolidate the American imperialist presence in Hawai'i. Its celebration of the deaths of men for "freedom and democracy" masks the fact that World War I was fought between imperial powers, many of which were governed by unelected monarchies. Historian Jonathan Schell argues, "every political observer or political actor of vision has recognized that if life is to be fully human it must take cognizance of the dead."⁵⁶ But what is the proper way to remember the dead of a senseless world war? Should they be used, as the American Legion and others seemed to think, to perpetuate patriotic, pro-militaristic narratives? The architectural folly that is the Waikiki War

Memorial Park and Natatorium should remind us that, instead of glorifying war, nationalism, and militarism, there is no better tribute to those fallen than to remember war's waste and futility.

NOTES

- ¹ See Robert R. Weyeneth, *Kapi'olani Park: A Victorian Landscape of Leisure*. (Honolulu: Dept. of Parks and Recreation, City and County of Honolulu, 1991) 48-52, 62, 67. Also "Heiau found at La Pietra," *HSB*, Feb. 16, 1968: A-8.
- ² Anne Burleigh, "Save the Natatorium," *Hawaii Architect* July 1973: 12-13.
- ³ Robert Schmitt, "Hawai'i's War Veterans and Battle Deaths" *HJH* 32 (1998) 171-174.
- ⁴ See Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the Aids Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*. (Berkeley: U of California P, 1997) 48.
- ⁵ James Loewen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York: New Press, 1999) 15.
- ⁶ See Jeannette Murray Peek, *Stepping Into Time: A Guide to Honolulu's Historic Landmarks* (Honolulu: Mutual, 1994) 108; "Memorial Project Takes Real Shape" *PCA*, Feb. 19, 1919: 5; "Pan-Pacific Art Committee to Plan Memorial," *PCA*, Feb. 19, 1919: 4; "Statue Or Memorial Hall Issue Must Be Determined," *PCA*, Jan. 11, 1919: 5; "Proposes Aid for Memorial Funds," *PCA*, Jan. 9, 1919: 1; "Rotary Club To Honor Officials Of Old Republic," *PCA*, Aug. 12, 1919: 6.
- ⁷ Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton UP, 1999) 6.
- ⁸ Burnham was a well-known architect responsible also for the design of the United Spanish War Veterans Memorial (also called The Spirit of '98) erected in 1950 at the Wadsworth Hospital Center, West Los Angeles. Text from the plaque on the memorial reads: "1898—To Those Who Volunteered and Extended the Hand of Liberty to Alien Peoples—1902."
- ⁹ "Proposes Aid For Memorial Funds," *PCA*, Jan. 9, 1919: 1.
- ¹⁰ "Proposes Aid For Memorial Funds," *PCA*, Jan. 9, 1919: 1.
- ¹¹ "Proposes Aid For Memorial Funds," *PCA*, Jan. 9, 1919: 1.
- ¹² "Promotion Body Talks Memorial," *PCA*, Jan. 15, 1919: 2.
- ¹³ "Mass Meeting To Pass On Memorial," *PCA*, Feb. 12, 1919: 1-2.
- ¹⁴ "Rotarians Interested In Plans For Memorial For War Dead," *PCA*, Feb. 22, 1919: 5.
- ¹⁵ Economic History Services: <http://www.eh.net/hmit/ppowerus/>
- ¹⁶ "Mass Meeting To Pass On Memorial," *PCA*, Feb. 12, 1919: 1-2.
- ¹⁷ "Proposed Memorials For War Heroes Are Widely Discussed," *PCA*, Feb. 15, 1919: 4.
- ¹⁸ "Final Decision On Memorial Is Expected Today," *PCA*, Mar. 24, 1919: 6.
- ¹⁹ "Memorial Park Proposal Wins Warm Approval," *PCA*, Mar. 28, 1919: 1.

- ²⁰ Irwin Property Makes Ideal Site For Park As Memorial To Men Of Hawaii Who Served,” *PCA*, Mar. 30, 1919: 1.
- ²¹ “Veterans Plan to Launch a Post of Legion Here,” *PCA*, Aug. 29, 1919: 1.
- ²² Marcus Duffield, *King Legion* (New York: Johnathan Cape & Harrison Smith Inc, 1931) 5.
- ²³ “A Suggestion,” *PP*, Feb. 1, 1921: 3.
- ²⁴ CJS Group Architects. *Final Historical Background Report Waikiki War Memorial Park and Natatorium* (City and County of Honolulu, Dept. of Parks and Recreation, 1985) 2.
- ²⁵ “Proposes Aid for Memorial Funds,” *PCA*, Jan. 9, 1919: 1.
- ²⁶ Thomas A. Rumer, *The American Legion: An Official History 1919-1989* (New York: M. Evans & Co, 1990) intro.
- ²⁷ Christina K. Schaefer, *The Great War: A Guide to the Service Records of all the Worlds Fighting Men and Volunteers* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co, 1998) 161.
- ²⁸ “Beautiful Park Is Dedicated To Memory Of Men In Great War,” *PCA*, Nov. 12, 1919: 1.
- ²⁹ “American Legion Plans Memorials At Waikiki Park,” *PCA*, Aug. 10, 1920:1.
- ³⁰ Mullgardt was well-known both locally and nationally: he had designed the Honolulu Commercial Center (1919-1921) and, along with Bernard Maybeck, Mullgardt was on the Architectural Commission of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco (February 20-December 4, 1915).
- ³¹ “Memorial Architects To Look Over Plans,” *HA*, June 14, 1922: 3.
- ³² Ralph S. Kuykendall, *Hawaii in the World War* (Honolulu: The Historical Commission, 1928) 451-452.
- ³³ “Successful Architects Conception Of Hawaii’s \$250,000 Memorial,” *HA*, June 21, 1921: 1.
- ³⁴ William H. Jordy, *American Buildings and Their Architects: Progressive and Academic Ideals at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1976) 279.
- ³⁵ “Proposed Memorials For War Heroes Are Widely Discussed,” *PCA*, Feb. 15, 1919: 4.
- ³⁶ See “Tentative Sketch of Memorial Natatorium proposed by American Legion,” McCarthy-Territorial Departments War Memorial Commission, AH.
- ³⁷ James M. Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape: the American Experience and Beyond* (New York: Praeger, 1988) 61.
- ³⁸ Mayo 61.
- ³⁹ George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York & Oxford UP, 1990) 48.
- ⁴⁰ Mayo 88.
- ⁴¹ Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford UP, 1990) 21-22.
- ⁴² See United Veterans' Service Council Records, AH. The seven soldiers killed in action in France were Private Louis J. Gaspar, Sergeant Apau Kau, Private Antone R. Mattos, Private John R. Rowe, Private Henry K. Unuivi, Manuel G.L. Valent Jr.

(rank unknown), and Captain Edward Fuller. There is contradictory information about Manuel G.L. Valent (or Valente), Jr. (rank unknown). His home address is listed as Aiea, O‘ahu, and he was attached to Co. L. 298th Infantry. He was either killed in action or died in service—on either July 18 or Sept. 30, 1918. The *Star Bulletin* says “Died in Service,” in September 1918, but UVSCR card refers to him as “KIA.” See also “Hawaii Men Who Wear Wound Stripes: War Leaves Its Mark on 14 Island Heroes,” HSB, May 10, 1919: 3.

- ⁴³ David Kennedy, *Over Here: the First World War and American Society* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980) 214.
- ⁴⁴ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford UP, 2000) 21.
- ⁴⁵ Fussell 22.
- ⁴⁶ John Bodnar, “Public Place in an American City: Commemoration in Cleveland.” *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity*. John R. Gillis. (Princeton UP, 1994) 78.
- ⁴⁷ Mayo 58.
- ⁴⁸ Kennedy 179.
- ⁴⁹ Charles Lamoreaux Warfield, *History of the Hawaii National Guard From Feudal Times to June 30, 1935* M.A. thesis (U of Hawai‘i, 1935) 78.
- ⁵⁰ Warfield 72.
- ⁵¹ The figures may be underestimates: there was also a Naval Militia of the Territory of Hawai‘i, which was established in 1915. At the outbreak of war with Germany, the Naval Militia was federalized and 50 enlisted men and officers were accepted into federal military service. See Warfield, 69–70.
- ⁵² Franklin Odo and Kazuko Sinoto, *A Pictorial History of the Japanese in Hawai‘i 1885–1924* (Honolulu: Hawai‘i Immigrant Heritage Preservation, Department of Anthropology, BPBM, 1985) 208.
- ⁵³ Gary Y. Okihiro, *Cane Fires: The Anti-Japanese Movement in Hawaii, 1865–1945*. (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1991) 108.
- ⁵⁴ “Weak Welcome Is Given To Soldiers: General Public Is Not Turning Out To Meet Trains From Schofield Barracks,” *PCA*, Jan. 30, 1919: 1.
- ⁵⁵ Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967) 13, 54.
- ⁵⁶ Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth* (New York: Avon, 1982) 122.