

= Indiana World War Memorial Plaza =

The Indiana World War Memorial Plaza is an urban feature located in Indianapolis , Indiana , United States , originally built to honor the veterans of World War I. The five @-@ city @-@ block plaza was conceived in 1919 as a location for the national headquarters of the American Legion and a memorial to the state 's and nation 's veterans . At the north end of the plaza is the American Legion Mall , which is the site of the administration buildings of the Legion , as well as a memorial cenotaph . South of that is the Veterans Memorial Plaza with its obelisk .

The centerpiece of the plaza is the Indiana World War Memorial , modeled after the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus . Within is a military museum , the Shrine Room , and an auditorium . At the south end is University Park , the oldest part of the plaza , filled with statues and a fountain . On October 11 , 1994 , the Indiana World War Memorial Plaza was designated a National Historic Landmark District .

= = History = =

The origins of the Indiana World War Memorial Plaza lay in a 1919 attempt by the city of Indianapolis to lure the newly formed American Legion from its temporary headquarters in New York City . The American Legion , chartered by Congress in 1919 after World War I , is an organization of veterans that sponsors youth programs , promotes patriotism and national security , and provides commitment to Americans who have served in the armed forces . Three Indianapolis veterans wanted to attract the Legion to the city , which already had the Soldiers ' and Sailors ' Monument . At an American Legion national convention in Minneapolis during November 1919 , cities sent representatives to lobby to become the new headquarters . Indianapolis drew support because of its central location within the United States and the city 's shows of patriotism . Although Washington , D.C. received the most votes on the first ballot , Indianapolis gained a majority and won the second with 361 votes out of 684 cast .

The city and state then had to provide a location , and one of the promises the city made was to erect a fitting memorial to those who served in World War I. Thus , in January 1920 a public library , St. Clair Park , University Park , and two occupied city blocks were designated as the site for the plaza , with one new building for the American Legion to use as their national headquarters , various public buildings , and a war memorial . The Indiana War Memorial Bill was passed in July 1920 and appropriated \$ 2 million for construction and land . Work began in 1921 . The city and state reached an agreement whereby the city would pay for the site and maintenance costs , while the State of Indiana would pay for the memorial 's construction . The Plaza was dedicated by the Legion in November 1921 with the laying of a cornerstone from the bridge over the River Marne at Château @-@ Thierry .

Various architects were invited by an appointed War Memorial Board to submit designs for a memorial intended to honor all who fought in World War I and also to provide meeting places , archives , and offices for the American Legion . The partnership of Walker and Weeks of Cleveland , Ohio was chosen in 1923 . Their plan consisted of a main memorial and two auxiliary buildings , an obelisk , a mall , and a cenotaph . Bids for the American Legion building , one of the two auxiliary buildings , were put out in 1925 and construction by the Craig @-@ Curtiss Company began the same year . In style the structure complimented the nearby local library . The second auxiliary building was not constructed until 1950 . When Congress authorized the payment of WWI veterans ' bonuses in 1936 , the state of Indiana used the money for construction of the memorial plaza , rather than paying it to the veterans . The Neoclassical design incorporated the existing library , federal building , and University Park . One additional building was planned but never built .

The War Memorial and the parks in the plaza are an example of the City Beautiful movement , which supported classical , uniform , and beautiful public architecture . The plaza covers a five @-@ block strip north of Monument Circle between St. Clair , Pennsylvania , New York , and Meridian Streets . In 1989 , the plaza was listed on the National Register of Historic Places , and it was named a National Historic Landmark District in 1994 . The Historic District includes the plaza as well

as the Indianapolis Public Library , immediately north of the plaza , and the Birch Bayh Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse , immediately south . The Scottish Rite Cathedral is across the street on the west side of the plaza , and the Minton @-@ Capehart Federal Building is across the street on the east side .

The Indiana World War Memorial Plaza is a popular location for celebrations , including the Fourth of July festival , Veterans Day , and Memorial Day services . The Chase Tower , located three blocks directly south of the Memorial building , has a roof with a design similar to the Memorial 's .

= = American Legion Mall = =

The two auxiliary buildings on the plaza are used by the American Legion . Both buildings were constructed from Indiana limestone in neoclassical style , similar to the public library just to the north . The east building at Meridian and St. Clair , designated building B on the original plan , houses the Indiana Department of the American Legion , the American Legion Auxiliary , and the National Forty and Eight . The four @-@ story building served as the national headquarters until the second building was completed .

The larger west building at Pennsylvania and St. Clair , building C , serves as the Legion 's national headquarters . The headquarters deals with the mail , archives , and other internal administrative functions of the Legion ; the lobbying efforts of the Legion are based in its Washington , D.C. office . Its two wings each mirror building B and are joined by a recessed central entrance .

Three semi @-@ circular granite memorials list the names of the Hoosiers killed in World War II , the Korean War , and the Vietnam War .

= = Cenotaph Square = =

Cenotaph Square is located between the two auxiliary buildings used by the American Legion . It is in a sunken garden with the rectangular black granite cenotaph centered in it resting upon a base of red and dark green granite . Four shafts of black granite , with gold eagles surmounted on them , mark the corners of the square . The inscription on the north face of the cenotaph memorializes James Bethel Gresham , a Hoosier who was the first member of the American Expeditionary Force to be killed in action in World War I. A native of Evansville , he was a corporal in the 16th Infantry Regiment and was killed at Bathelemont , France on November 3 , 1917 . The inscription on the south side says " A tribute by Indiana to the hallowed memory of the glorious dead who served in the World War . "

= = Veterans Memorial Plaza = =

The Veterans Memorial Plaza , also called Obelisk Square , has an obelisk and fountain and is located on the plaza south of the Mall . The 100 @-@ foot (30 m) black granite obelisk was built in 1923 , and the square was completed in 1930 . Near the base of the obelisk are 4 @-@ foot (1 @.@ 2 m) -by @-@ 8 @-@ foot (2 @.@ 4 m) panels placed in 1929 representing law , science , religion , and education intended to represent the fundamentals of the nation . The obelisk rises from a 100 @-@ foot @-@ diameter (30 m) , two @-@ level fountain made of pink Georgia marble and terrazzo . The fountain has two basins , spray rings , and multicolored lights . On the east and west sides fly the flags of the fifty states , which were installed in 1976 for the US Bicentennial . They were replaced with the flags of countries of the Americas during the 1987 Pan American Games . The square was originally paved with asphalt , but it was landscaped with grass and trees in 1975 .

= = The War Memorial = =

Architects Walker and Weeks planned the Indiana World War Memorial Building as the plaza 's centerpiece , sitting between the federal building and the public library . Work on the actual

memorial to the veterans of World War I began in early 1926 . Five of the seven buildings located on the site had to be demolished before the construction commenced ; the other two , Second Presbyterian Church and First Baptist Church , were not demolished until 1960 . General John Pershing laid the cornerstone of the memorial on July 4 , 1927 , saying he was " consecrating the edifice as a patriotic shrine " . Funding problems in 1928 slowed the building of the interior . Even a new contractor in 1931 and \$ 195 @, @ 000 provided by the Public Works Administration in 1936 did little to speed the process of completing the structure . Although its interior was incomplete , it was dedicated on November 11 , 1933 (Veterans Day) by Governor Paul McNutt and Lt. Gen. Hugh Drum , Deputy Chief of Staff of the United States Army . In 1949 a local newspaper reported that the memorial was already deteriorating , its limestone scaling , paint peeling , leaks forming , and plaster cracking ; further reports were published in 1961 . Despite proposals to develop the area instead of completing it as originally planned , the memorial and surrounding landscaping were finally completed in 1965 .

The memorial 's design is based upon the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus , which was one of the Seven Wonders of the World . At 210 feet (64 m) tall it is approximately 75 feet (23 m) taller than the original Mausoleum . The blue lights which shine between columns on the side of the War Memorial make the monument easily recognizable . It is the most imposing neoclassical structure in Indianapolis due to its scale and size .

The cubical structure is clad in unrelieved ashlar Indiana limestone on a high , lightly rusticated base , and is topped with a low pyramidal roof that sheathes its interior dome . It stands on a raised terrace approached by a wide monumental staircase . The structure has four identical faces . On each face an Ionic screen of six columns , behind which are tall banks of windows , and is surmounted by symbolic standing figures designed by Henry Hering : Courage , Memory , Peace , Victory , Liberty , and Patriotism . The sculptures are repeated on each façade . On the south side , standing on a pink granite base in the center of the grand access stairs , is Hering 's colossal exultant male nude bronze Pro Patria (1929) ; it is 24 feet (7 @. @ 3 m) high , weighs seven tons , and was the largest cast bronze sculpture in the United States .

The north and south entrances are guarded by shield @-@ bearing limestone lions , and on each corner of the terrace sits an urn . The pyramidal roof is stepped and has a lantern on top . Above the tall bronze doors on each side is the inscription " To vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the world . " On the north side is the building 's main inscription :

= = = Indiana World War Memorial Military Museum = = =

The main entrance of the Indiana War Memorial Museum is on the north façade , which opens into a large hall with Tennessee marble floors and Art Deco Egyptian themes . The museum is housed mainly on the lower level of the monument and honors the efforts of Hoosier soldiers in a timeline from the American Revolutionary War to modern conflicts . World War I and World War II are featured most prominently . Aside from firearms , it features a Cobra helicopter , and the USS Indiana 's commission plate . There are over 400 military flags housed in the museum , more than 300 of which are from the American Civil War . Indiana 's Liberty Bell replica is located near the main entrance . It is of the kind given to each state by the federal government in 1950 to encourage the purchase of savings bonds .

Additional museum exhibits are displayed on the main level of the monument . An exhibit replicating the radio room of the USS Indianapolis includes original equipment from World War II was opened on November 7 , 2009 . The Grand Foyer main level features the 500 @-@ seat Pershing Auditorium , built and decorated with materials donated from several states and World War I allies . The memorial also has three meeting rooms on the main level ; these rooms were originally named in honor of General George Patton , General Douglas MacArthur , and Admiral Chester Nimitz . In 2009 , the rooms were renamed in honor of Hoosier veterans : Admiral Raymond A. Spruance , General David M. Shoup , and Major Samuel Woodfill .

Above the main level is the Shrine Room , nearly a vertical double cube , 110 ft (34 m) high and 60 ft (18 m) on a side , clad in materials collected from all the allied nations of World War I.

Accessed by two staircases from the Grand Foyer , the Shrine Room Stairway 's American Pavonazzo marble walls bear the names of all Hoosiers who fought in World War I. On the east and west sides are paintings by Walter Brough of the leading soldiers of France , America , Great Britain , Belgium , Italy , and Serbia . Surrounding the room are sculptor Frank Jirouch 's marble frieze depicting events of World War I. At the center of the space , beneath a giant hanging 17 @-@ foot (5 @.@ 2 m) -by @-@ 30 @-@ foot (9 @.@ 1 m) American flag , is the Altar of Consecration , flanked at the corners with cauldrons on tripod stands . Above the flag is the Star of Destiny , made of Swedish crystal , representing the future of the nation .

= = University Park = =

University Park occupies the southernmost block of the plaza . It was originally intended to serve as the site of a state university , but this never occurred . Instead , it was the site of churches , a high school , and a training ground for Union soldiers during the American Civil War . In 1876 it was transformed into a city park . Surrounding the square are statues of prominent Hoosiers . Benjamin Harrison 's statue is on the south side , designed by Henry Bacon and Charles Niehaus ; seated Abraham Lincoln is in the southeast corner , designed by Henry Hering in 1934 ; and Schuyler Colfax is on the east side , designed by Lorado Taft in 1887 . There are also sculptures of Pan and the nymph Syrinx designed by Myra Reynolds Richards in 1923 . University Park was redesigned in 1914 by George Kessler for the park and boulevard system he had developed for Indianapolis , which included a fountain at the center . Street lamps on the walkways have acorn globes and fluted shafts , and two of them decorated with lions ' heads stand on the backs of metal turtles .

= = = The Depew Memorial Fountain = = =

The Depew Memorial Fountain is a free standing fountain completed in 1919 . It is composed of multiple bronze figures arranged on a five @-@ tier granite stone base with three basins . The bronze sculptures depict fish , eight children dancing , and a woman on the topmost tier dancing and playing cymbals . The dimensions are approximately 25 x 45 x 45 feet (14 m) .

The fountain was commissioned in memory of Dr. Richard J. Depew by his wife , Emma Ely , following Dr. Depew 's death in 1887 . When Mrs. Depew died in 1913 , she had bequeathed \$ 50 @,@ 000 from her estate to the city of Indianapolis for the erection of a fountain in memory of her husband " in some park or public place where all classes of people may enjoy it . " The original design was created by Karl Bitter , who was killed in a traffic accident in 1915 before the work could be finished . Following Bitter 's overall design , Alexander Stirling Calder created the bronze figures and the fountain . Architect Henry Bacon designed the fountain 's setting .

A memorial plaque on south side of the large granite basin reads " Depew Memorial Fountain . A gift to Indianapolis from Emma Ely Depew in memory of her husband Richard Johnson Depew M.D. whose long and honorable life was spent in untiring service to his fellow men . "