UNDERSTANDING THE URBAN LANDSCAPE: CIVIC, COMMEMORATIVE, AND SACRED SPACE IN ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of George Mason University in Partial Fulfillment of The Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy Cultural Studies

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UNDERSTANDING THE URBAN LANDSCAPE: CIVIC, COMMEMORATIVE, AND SACRED SPACE IN ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

Jennifer Lynn Headley, Ph.D.

George Mason University, 2011

Dissertation Director: Dr. David Kaufmann

This dissertation describes the creation of three locations in Arlington County, Virginia as notable places in the urban landscape: Dark Star Park, the United States Air Force Memorial, and the Pentagon Memorial. All three cultural objects were created through government programs and are public sites for civic, commemorative, and sacred activities. For each location, I outline the planning steps for the concept, design, and construction of the space. Dark Star Park, the first work of the Arlington County Public Art Program, is an important civic space but nothing more. The Pentagon Memorial successfully transforms the site of recent tragedy into a sacred space for reflection. The Air Force Memorial is both a sacred and commemorative site, with a troubled history that adds to the story of the memorial’s creation. By placing these three cultural spaces in context, I create a narrative of Arlington County’s urban sites and outline their success and failures as consecrated spaces framed by memory and cultural studies.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

**Consecrate** (verb): to make or declare sacred; set apart or dedicate; to make (something) an object of honor or veneration; to devote or dedicate to some purpose.¹

*Dark Star Park*, the United States Air Force Memorial, and the Pentagon Memorial occupy distinct places in the landscape of Arlington, VA. These three cultural objects seem quite different at first glance, but are important sites of study to understand commemoration and sacred space. *Dark Star Park* was created through a collaborative process involving local and national government entities over twenty-five years ago. It is the vision of a singular artist, Nancy Holt, and her interpretation of a particular place and time. The Air Force Memorial endured a fierce battle over contested space before arriving at its current location. It was originally intended for placement at the end of Arlington Cemetery next to another iconic military monument, the Marine Corps War Memorial, more commonly known as Iwo Jima. The Air Force Memorial evolved from its original design to the final location on a hill overlooking Washington, DC through the battles fought by the memorial foundation and opposition from the Marine Corps. The Pentagon Memorial opened in 2008 to commemorate one of the sacred sites of the terrorist attacks of 2001 with the nation watching the unveiling. *Dark Star Park* was

¹ These definitions were found in Merriam-Webster and Dictionary.com.
created for less than a quarter of a million dollars, and at its time of completion was
lauded as an exemplary piece of public art. It propelled Arlington County’s Public Art
program into a vibrant cultural community asset, but the sculpture soon became only a
citation in art history textbooks. The Air Force Memorial cost over thirty million dollars
and incited some of the fiercest Congressional battles of the last twenty years about
military monuments and the control of public space. Upon its completion in 2006, it was
unveiled to nearly unanimous accolades and it is now a well-known landmark. The
Pentagon Memorial’s progress was unusually fast, and the innovative design received
praise for its role in transforming the site of tragedy into a peaceful space for reflection.
It was the first of three memorials created to commemorate the victims of the September
11, 2001 attacks and is one of the most visited new spaces in the Washington region.

My dissertation looks at these three cultural objects as examples of public spaces
that fulfill unique roles in the urban landscape. Their origins and intended purposes are
vastly different, but all three are urban sanctuaries with similar characteristics and
provide a compelling cultural studies project. Much of the critical literature of cultural
studies can be used to analyze the creation, dissemination, and analysis of such sites,
including the works of Emile Durkheim, Maurice Halbwachs, Andreas Huyssen, Edward
T. Linenthal, Pierre Nora, Marita Sturken, and James E. Young. My study of these
objects incorporates history, memory studies, sociology, and theoretical approaches to
understanding the consecration of sacred space and commemoration. These sites provide

2 I first heard about Dark Star Par in the text Women, Art, and Society by Whitney Chadwick (1997) and was
shocked to realize that it was located in the same county where I had lived for several years, but I never knew
of its existence. It is also noted as an important work for Holt. Upon researching the park, I discovered its
importance to Arlington County as a public art space and the NEA as an Art In Public Places project.
a location for civic, commemorative, and sacred activities and are loci for the production, circulation, and consumption of cultural meaning attributed to public spaces. Memorial culture is an important part of the larger societal narrative, and provides an examination of how divergent populations consecrate urban places.

The distinction of certain objects or places as sacred, commemorative, or civic locales within a larger landscape provides insight to the meanings and narratives constructed by a society. The study of memorials is similar to the material culture analysis of objects from a particular time or place. My analysis of memorial and public art objects is a cultural studies project that provides insight about the creation of public places in Arlington. Steven Hoelscher and Derek H. Alderman, in their essay “Memory and Place: Geographies of a Critical Relationship,” state that memory and social space provide the context for understanding modern identities. The Air Force Memorial is a social space created to honor the memory of those that served in the Air Force. However, memorials and social spaces of other groups also shaped it. The Air Force Memorial is the main object of my dissertation, but I am framing it between two less controversial objects, Dark Star Park and the Pentagon Memorial. Dark Star Park is an historical study of how Arlington County created its identity as an urban location for public art separate from the memorial landscape of Washington, DC. The Pentagon Memorial is an important study of how space is transformed from tragedy into a location to memorialize.

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3 Steven Hoelscher and Derek H. Alderman, “Memory and Place: Geographies of a Critical Relationship,” Social and Cultural Geography, September 2004. This essay is from a large volume dedicated to the study of social and cultural memory in the humanities and social sciences. Hoelscher and Alderman look at several sites of memory in South Africa, and map these geographies with the work of cultural studies theorists Pierre Nora, Maurice Halbwachs, and Andreas Huyssen. This provides an essential literature review for framing memory and memorial studies within cultural studies.
individuals and national events. The trajectories for the Pentagon Memorial and Dark Star Park were quite simple; each object was created without controversy or substantial stumbling blocks. In contrast, the Air Force Memorial is a more interesting object of study. I have focused the majority of my analysis on the history of the Air Force Memorial to show how divergent groups argue over commemoration and sacred space. Dark Star Park is included in my study because it enlarges the identity of Arlington County beyond the military monuments of Iwo Jima and Arlington Cemetery. A section focusing on the Pentagon Memorial is relevant to my work because its creation contrasts with the Air Force Memorial, and other recent memorials in the Washington region. The physical proximity between the two memorials is important to display how Arlington Cemetery has expanded beyond Rosslyn and framed the southeastern section of the county as a new space for memorial culture. These three case studies show the diversity of urban sites and provide a continuum of urban spaces across the county.

The concept of the sacred has been important throughout history to societies. Sacred sites, places of worship, and objects have been consecrated by cultures to be special locations of meaning. The concept of the sacred characterizes several types of spaces: historical landscapes, religious buildings, and places where pivotal events have taken place. Historical sacred sites include locations in Hawaii or Australia important to ancient or indigenous populations, or megalithic rock formations in the United Kingdom. The Pu'uhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park in Hawaii on the Big Island was a place of refuge in Hawaiian culture and a space of religious worship. This site was first
consecrated through historical events important to Native Hawaiians, and later designated
an important place by the National Park Service to the larger history of the state.

Sites exist over the globe that once held rituals or sacred spaces specific to various
cultures. Religious sites from temples to cathedrals are locations for collective worship,
and the rites performed in these sacred spaces are sanctified through rites and beliefs
particular to each religion. Entering a church or temple is viewed by society as setting
foot into a special realm outside the ordinary, and different rules of behavior apply inside
the sacred space. The battlefields of Gettysburg and the Alamo were consecrated through
sacrifice and valor. Tragic events transform spaces from the profane to the sacred. Sites
of mass slaughter, including the concentration camps of Dachau and Auschwitz, are
sanctified to commemorate the innocent victims and horrific acts, and to prevent similar
events from taking place in the future. The Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in
Oklahoma City was transformed into a memorial to those killed in the bombing of April
19, 1995 five years later in 2000. This transformation was a way to remember the
victims and sanctify the space from a site of violence to a space of mourning.

The term sacred is used to describe something apart from everyday space. Belden
C. Lane has written on sacred sites around the globe and how they are understood by
various cultures. He offers three ways of interpreting and understanding the concept of
sacred sites: an ontological approach that frames sacred places through a religious
perspective; a cultural history approach that sees sacred locations as contested sites of
meaning, and a phenomenological approach that places an emphasis on sacred
Much academic study has taken place on cultural objects such as *Tilted Arc*, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Oklahoma City Memorial, and the development of the World Trade Center Memorial. Such objects fulfill the roles of memorials, monuments, and sacred sites of reflection. *Dark Star Park*, the Air Force Memorial, and the Pentagon Memorial form a continuum of public space: *Dark Star Park* is a failed civic monument reframed as a successful instigator of the Arlington County Public Art Program; the Air Force Memorial is an important case study in the ownership and understanding of commemorative space and rival factions arguing over sacred sites; and the Pentagon Memorial is a rare example of a location consecrated as a sacred site by tragedy. My dissertation will frame these three cultural objects within Arlington County as case studies in the successful and unsuccessful consecration of civic spaces by community and

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government groups. The collaborative process between groups of stakeholders enabled success for each urban site, but each group reached their outcome in a different manner.  

*Dark Star Park* is a county-initiated project while the Air Force and Pentagon Memorials were created by Department of Defense entities, but all projects have ties to federal government programs. Arlington County’s application to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) enabled successful completion of the park, the Air Force Memorial had to navigate substantial bureaucratic entities to create a successful memorial site, and the Pentagon Memorial did not encounter any significant obstacles. *Dark Star Park* is framed as a local urban site by public art literature and administered by Arlington County. The Department of Defense and the Air Force Association oversee the daily operations of the Air Force Memorial, and this space is framed as national place. The Pentagon Memorial is a national and international site of commemoration and one sacred space in a larger continuum about the events of September 11th.  

*Dark Star Park* and the Air Force Memorial, through the course of their development, were both successful and unsuccessful urban projects. *Dark Star Park’s* succeeded in transforming an area of urban blight though bureaucratic partnerships with local and national government organizations. The park occupied land that was a vacant lot, so virtually anything placed in this space would be an improvement over the original site. The partnerships between Arlington County, the NEA, J.W. Kaempfer Corporation, and artist Nancy Holt were successful because they achieved the end result of an urban artwork as outlined in the guidelines of the NEA’s grant program. The program guidelines were an important barometer of local/national art partnerships, and the NEA
set government cultural policy. *Dark Star Park’s* success beyond a simple piece of sculpture was through the creation of a park planned and developed by the chosen artist, and this received accolades after its completion in 1984. Given these parameters, Nancy Holt, Arlington County, and the NEA achieved bureaucratic success. The Arlington County Public Art Program was built upon *Dark Star Park* and the credibility that the county gained through securing a successful Art in Public Places grant from the NEA.

*Dark Star Park* is also an unsuccessful project in several ways. After the unveiling in 1984, the sculpture fell into disrepair in part because of the materials Nancy Holt chose to construct the sculpture, the landscape elements of the park, and the county’s lack of planning for maintenance and upkeep of the site. *Dark Star Park* is not a well-known landmark to local residents or office workers in the Rosslyn neighborhood, or in the larger Washington region. *Dark Star Park* is not an active space with events or community activities. The only activity that takes place at the park is an alignment ceremony every year on August 1st, but this event is unrecognized outside the Arlington arts community. Thus, *Dark Star Park* is an example of bureaucratic success through the public private partnership created art by its inception, but a failure as an active civic or commemorative space. The alignment ceremony that takes place every August 1st to mark the founding of Rosslyn at the sculpture park is largely an unknown event. The county recently highlighted this work as a starting point for the larger Arlington Public Art program, and conferred some importance on its role as an instigator for later, more successful works. The act of its creation is far more important than its physical presence.
The Air Force Memorial is a very successful urban space. The Air Force Memorial Foundation’s goal was to create a structure and space that would be comparable to other military monuments in the Washington region, especially Iwo Jima. Iwo Jima’s iconic status on the edge of Arlington National Cemetery and its relationship to the original image of the flag-raising in the South Pacific during World War II provide an aura of sacrifice and nostalgia for the monument. The Air Force Memorial’s placement at the opposite end of Arlington Cemetery as a prominent site in the skyline establishes it as a well-known military space. The memorial’s design is significantly different than Iwo Jima; its three abstract spires are symbolic of flight and distinct in the urban landscape. The Navy Annex location of the Air Force Memorial was chosen before the events and creation of the Pentagon Memorial, but this second monument has helped increase visitation and visibility of the Air Force Memorial. The two memorials are often grouped together in sightseeing tours of the city, and draw visitors from across the globe to what was once an unknown section of urban space in the southern corner of the county. Its proximity to the Department of Defense buildings of the Navy Annex and Pentagon makes the Air Force Memorial a popular spot for events and ceremonies. The location is a very active space, with weekly concerts in the summer, retirement ceremonies, and other military events that take place year round. The memorial is also integrated into the urban landscape through a connection to popular running and biking paths that link the Mount Vernon Trail to the Columbia Pike and Pentagon City neighborhoods. The Air Force Memorial has plans to create an electronic registry of Air
Force and Civil Air Defense veterans, and kiosks on the site will provide information through a database for visitors.

The overwhelming success of the Air Force Memorial was made possible by the failure of the original memorial location and design. The first location selected for the memorial was Arlington Ridge in close proximity to Iwo Jima, and the design had height and size restrictions as not to overpower the older, more established memorial. The Air Force Memorial would have been a secondary monument next to the larger and better known symbol of the Marine Corps. The original design for the Air Force Memorial was a small, short five-sided shape meant to frame the sky when viewed from within the structure. Only after significant legislation against the site and opposition from the Marine Corps, Congress, and neighborhood groups did the Air Force Memorial Foundation opt to use the Navy Annex location. The second location called for a different design, and the current spire formation was created specifically for the hill overlooking Washington, DC.

The Air Force Memorial succeeds as a civic space and site of commemoration for Air Force personnel and families. It commemorates air force personnel past and present, and shows the importance of this branch to the larger American military through quotes, inscriptions, and sculptures around the central motif of three soaring spires. The first proposed location of the memorial next to Iwo Jima created problems because the two branches of the armed forces each saw their memorial space as more sacred than the other. The Marines did not want an Air Force Memorial in the sanctified shadow of Iwo Jima, and the Air Force Memorial Foundation was partially drawn to the location because
of the status that Iwo Jima would convey upon their new military shrine. The sacred space of Iwo Jima was very different to the two groups, and a turf war ensued for many years until a compromise was reached by placing the new Air Force Memorial far away from the powerful symbol of the Marine Corps. The final compromise saw each site location as sacred, but to different audiences. The two military branches also struggled over scarce financial and governmental resources, and the Air Force Memorial Foundation navigated a complex set of bureaucratic laws through the Commemorative Works Act. The second location for the proposed memorial was successful because the resources were allocated and the process streamlined by the Department of Defense and Senator John Warner. The new site also allowed for a less restrictive design proposal on the hill promontory.

The Pentagon Memorial is an example of successfully transforming a space of loss and terror into a sacred memorial. It encountered very few obstacles from its inception to completion. This is due to the events that took place on this location; the terrorist attack and deaths transformed the space into a very sanctified place. Kenneth Foote, a cultural geographer who studies sites of mass murder, claims that society deals with these locations in three ways: obliterating the site to erase the horror of the events, returning the site to its previous use to impose a sense of normalcy, and transforming of the site into sanctified space to make sure the events are not forgotten.\(^5\) The Pentagon Memorial was an example of this transformation, and the resulting memorial was created without any significant issues. It is a very successful memorial space in a location of

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national security failure that was witnessed by most of the world. The imprinting of such horrific events on the national psyche allowed the idea for a memorial to gain momentum and progress faster than most commemorative developments. The memorial site and design quickly reached consensus, and the formal dedication of the space took place a mere seven years after the originating events. The momentum from the terrorist attack and the wishes of the victims’ families to erect a memorial ensured a quick completion of the sacred space. At the dedication, art and architectural critics along with bureaucratic and governmental entities did not dare to criticize the memorial because the space had become hallowed ground and the wounds of the attack were still fresh on the American psyche. The Pentagon Memorial is similar to the battlefield of Gettysburg and the Lorraine Motel in Memphis as location of sacrifice and valor consecrated in the American cultural landscape. Creating a memorial on a site of mass tragedy is not an easy task, but the stakeholders involved in the process all agreed on the importance of the sanctification of the space.

These three cultural sites have very different audiences, roles, and responsibilities as urban locations. The expectations for Arlington County to achieve success with Dark Star Park were far lower than the national audiences of the Air Force Memorial or the Pentagon Memorial. Dark Star Park was the first county initiated art project, but the Air Force Memorial was one of many major monuments in the Washington region. The Pentagon Memorial was one of three sites of the attacks on September 11th, and part of a larger continuum of national events. The Air Force Memorial Foundation had to navigate several federal gate-keeping agencies by complying with the Commemorative Works
Act, while *Dark Star Park* had to only comply with the guidelines of the NEA’s grant program. The Pentagon Memorial did not have to navigate the same processes because of its location and preceding events. The original Air Force Memorial project encountered significant obstacles, and through later collaboration between the Air Force Memorial Foundation, Department of Defense, and members of Congress a compromise was reached and a successful memorial was unveiled in a new location. This collaborative approach between the AFMF, DOD, Arlington County, and Senator John Warner echoed the earlier federal and local partnerships that created *Dark Star Park*, but the expectations were much higher for the Air Force Memorial. The Pentagon Memorial had a collaborative approach from the start of memorial planning, and the sanctity of the site helped ease the process from planning to dedication. A national audience viewed the unveiling of this space, and the pomp and ceremonies surrounding the dedication were as important as the memorial design and location.
Memorials and monuments serve as collaborative symbols of a people, place, or event and are both celebratory and mournful. In the past fifty years, there has been an explosion of public sculpture that commemorates events and celebrates places. These objects include military monuments, site-specific memorials, and public art. The Tilted Arc, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and the Aids Quilt have ignited controversies and a wide range of scholarship on the role of memorials and commemorative space. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was the most controversial public monument erected in Washington, DC in the past forty years and incited a building frenzy of additional monuments and memorials in the city and its surrounding areas. Soon after its unveiling in 1982, several less controversial public spaces followed: United States Navy Memorial (1991), Korean War Memorial (1995), Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial (1997), George Mason Memorial (2002), National World War II Memorial (2004), U.S. Air Force Memorial (2006), Pentagon Memorial (2008), and plans are underway for a Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in West Potomac Park. The increase in new memorials and monuments in the Washington region was coupled with several key events that necessitated the creation of commemorative spaces for mourning, specifically the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 and the September 11th attacks in 2001. The Oklahoma City National Memorial was unveiled in 2000 and the Pentagon Memorial was unveiled
in 2008; both memorial parks were erected very quickly after the events that incited their creation compared to other national monuments. Construction of the World Trade Center Museum and Memorial in lower Manhattan is still underway, with an estimated completion date of 2011. Outside of the United States several key buildings and monuments that commemorate events surrounding World War II have been unveiled in the past ten years, especially in Germany. Jochen and Ester Gerz designed a “Monument against Fascism” in Hamburg in 1986, and this counter-monument slowly sank and eventually disappeared in 1993 with several thousand signatures added to the tower. Citizens visiting the monument were invited to sign their name to the object as a witness to its disappearance. Daniel Libeskind’s expansion of the Jewish Museum in Berlin was completed in September 2001, and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe was unveiled next to the Brandenburg Gate in 2004.

**Academic Scholarship**

The explosion of national memorials in Germany and the United States has produced a significant amount of scholarship devoted to collective memory and memorialization. The study and interpretation of memorials and commemorative space is a broad topic that encompasses sociological and anthropological interpretations of memory. Scholarship surrounding the retelling of events and memories, especially cultural phenomenon experienced by large groups of people, is the focus of public history. Visual culture analyzes images and texts disseminated through the media of recent events. Sociological texts, public history studies, and visual culture analysis have

Emile Durkheim is often credited as the originator of the concept of collective social thought in his text *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912). Durkheim cites social and religious rituals as settings for “cultural effervescence,” a collective cultural interaction that bonds people together. These rituals sustain a society’s beliefs and allow for remembrances of the unifying moments of the community. These memories also serve to unify and bind groups together.6 He further classifies cultural objects as sacred

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and profane in primitive society. Sacred cultural objects hold memories for the group, are set aside from everyday life, and have spiritual or totemic attributes.

Maurice Halbwachs, a student of Durkheim, incorporates the concept of collective social memory created through religious experiences and further elaborates on the relationship between the individual and groups. In The Collective Memory (1952), Halbwachs poses the concept of individuals who remember events in group contexts, and see individual memory as a singular viewpoint of collective memory. He takes Durkheim’s concept of collective interaction and poses it as plural; one individual may be a member of several groups and these group interactions construct collective memories over a long period of time.8

Historian Pierre Nora has written extensively on French national memory. To Nora, history and memory are two very oppositional concepts: “History…is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past.”9 Thus Nora’s concept of history is static, while memory is a dynamic force that changes and evolves. Nora characterizes locations, objects, and practices as sites of cultural memory. These sites are important to telling and retelling narratives as memories change within a society. His seven-volume text Les Lieux de

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Mémoire\textsuperscript{10} discusses French national memory, which he describes as formative and didactic in contrast to the plural and diverse history within the United States.\textsuperscript{11} Nora’s work is important in the study of historiography and understanding national memory.

Andreas Huyssen claims that contemporary Western society is obsessed with the concept of cultural memory, and this is demonstrated through the prominence and importance of the museum. Using several examples of contemporary monuments within Berlin, he sees cultural memory as a temporal and frantic urge to resist amnesia and explore survival strategies of public and private memorialization.\textsuperscript{12} Huyssen uses the term “memory boom” to refer to the unprecedented number of monuments and memorials that have been created since the 1980’s and the discourse surrounding these objects.\textsuperscript{13} Huyssen is concerned with the end of history and the reification of images and media through technology, and the effect this will have on how collective and cultural memory is created. His work on monuments and memorials in Berlin, New York, City, and Buenos Aries organizes memory into four parts: generational memory, national memory, personal memory, and the inscription of memory into memorials.

Durkheim, Halbwachs, Nora, and Huyssen introduce concepts that are important to current scholars who study memorials and commemorative space, such as James E. Young and Edward T. Linenthal. Durkheim places importance on the collaborative religious rituals of society in creating collective cultural memories and sanctifying space.

\textsuperscript{10} This was a seven volume text in French published as essays between 1981-1993, but was translated into three volumes as an English-language edition under the title \textit{Realms of Memory} by Arthur Goldhammer in 1996.
\textsuperscript{11} Nora, “Between Memory and History: \textit{Les Lieux Mémoire},” p.10.
\textsuperscript{13} Huyssen, \textit{Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia}, 1994.
Halbwachs expands Durkheim’s understanding of collective groups and introduces the term collective memory. Nora’s work shows how cultural memory is constantly recreated in locations that help recall the past. Huyssen traces the importance of memory to different audiences and cites images and media as tools for its understanding. The foundations of Durkheim, Halbwachs, Nora, and Huyssen are important to my understanding of cultural memory in the work of Young and sanctified space in the work of Linenthal. These frames of analysis will inform my study of *Dark Star Park*, the Air Force Memorial, and the Pentagon Memorial as cultural objects and allow me to plot them in a continuum of public space from civic to commemorative and sacred.

**Commemoration and Memorial Culture**

Current scholarship on memory studies interprets objects of commemoration, such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, AIDS Quilt, United States Holocaust Museum, Oklahoma City Memorial, and temporary memorials in response to September 11th. My work is part of this larger continuum of scholarly memorial studies, but instead of writing about a singular memorial or monument I focus on three objects within one geographical location, and analyze how they have transformed public space. The beginning of discourse surrounding memorial culture can be traced to the significant amount of scholarly literature on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, created and unveiled in Washington, DC in 1982. This memorial was a break from the design and interpretation of prior military monuments, and served as a catalyst for subsequent literature and studies on commemorative space. Maya Lin’s geometric design was unanimously selected in a
blind competition by a panel of architects and sculptors, and it was unlike any other commemorative memorial in the nation’s capital. Lin’s design did not include any figurative elements; only a listing of names of each veteran killed or missing in action in chronological order and this individual recognition was a break from prior military memorials. The names did not include rank or title, and were engraved in highly reflective marble that cut a slash into the National Mall. Lin’s design reflects the image of the visitor in the inscriptions of the dead and missing, and sinks into the ground at the axis between the two halves.14

Controversy over the unconventional memorial design was heated and eventually two sets of figurative sculptures were added to placate veterans and government officials opposed to the stark design. The first, *The Three Soldiers*, was a highly stylized grouping of three men commissioned by Frederick Hart and added in 1984, only two years after Lin’s design was unveiled. *The Three Soldiers* was seen as a compromise to the opposition to Lin’s stark minimalist monument, and was criticized by the Commission of Fine Arts and several of the original jurors for taking away from the minimalist experience of her original concept.15 Another figurative addition to the complex was added in 1993 when women’s groups criticized a lack of female representation in the memorial. This sculpture, entitled *The Women’s Memorial*, showed three female nurses caring for a wounded soldier. Lin’s original design is still the most prominent part of the complex, but the two figurative additions create an entire complex for the memorial. The

addition of figurative works after the initial design demonstrates the power of special
interest groups over public spaces.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a place of commemorative pilgrimage, with
more visitors annually than any other memorial in the DC region. Visitors to this space
bring personal objects for individuals listed on the wall, and all this ephemera is collected
by the National Park Service and stored in an archive. It is an active site of memory and
commemoration for individuals and groups. When the memorial design was first
unveiled, scholars concentrated on the design and designer. In the past thirty years,
studies about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial have expanded to include personal
narratives of visitors, architectural interpretations, and cultural criticism. A significant
amount of work has been devoted to the way the memorial has changed concepts of
commemorative space and memorial culture. Levi Smith has chronicled the importance
of the visitor in the memorial experience. He has stated that the commemorative
experience of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is personal and dependent upon the
interpretation of the viewer; some visitors see their image reflected in the granite as a
mirror while others view the wall as a window onto their own memories of the conflict.
Smith sees the Wall as a changing medium of memory that evolves with each visitor who
views and experiences the memorial.\(^1\) Michael North also explored the concept of
reflection as part of the personal experience, citing a rupture in the memory of the past
with the reflection of the present.\(^2\)

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Memorial is intertwined with the personal memories of each visitor to the site. Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz cite the memorial’s role as a commemorative object to the changing context of its visitors, who they see as producers of meaning and sponsors of memory. Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz see the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as a cultural form of memory that changes and evolves over time, constantly shifting its commemorative meaning through the changing memories of its collective audience.

Current analysis of memorials focuses on the changing nature of public sentiment and experiences surrounding the commemoration of a particular event. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is viewed very differently now than when it was first unveiled, and the evolving population of visitors to the site also reflects this shift. The role of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a compelling case study for how individuals are memorialized. It combines the commemoration of group experience while also honoring individuals. It ushered in the concept of commemorating each person. Older military memorials used a single sculpture or icon to represent the anonymous or as a symbol for a larger collective group. This anonymous representation of the individual solider is different from the figurative statues that glorify a war hero, such as Ulysses S. Grant on horseback at the west end of the National Mall or George McClellan, a Civil War general at the edge of Connecticut Avenue. Arlington Cemetery’s Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is a powerful symbolic representation of one individual who is representative of all. The

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Marine Corps War Memorial is a figurative sculpture that uses six figures that symbolize all Marines who have served and sacrificed. In contrast, recognition of each individual in a memorial began with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, since this design listed each person lost in the conflict in a unified democratic manner. Memorialization of the individual reached an even more personal level in the construction and display of the AIDS Quilt. The AIDS Quilt, officially called the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, began in San Francisco in 1985 through the efforts of Cleve Jones to commemorate friends who had died of the disease. The quilt is made up of individual panels, created by the family and friends of each victim. The panels are each the size of an average grave, three by six feet, and highly personalized through an array of media and materials. Some quilt panels are decorated with mementos of the deceased such as hair, photographs, or clothing. The quilt is a mobile memorial and constantly growing. It was displayed in its entirety on the National Mall in 1996, but at this time is too large to be displayed in one place. It also contains over 91,000 names and weighs an estimated fifty-four tons.¹⁹

Marita Sturken explores individual recognition in the AIDS Quilt and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in her text *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*. To Sturken, both are commemorative cultural objects that are intertwined; she states that many of the first deaths from AIDS were homeless veterans who contracted the disease through heroin addiction. She approaches memorialization as a collective cultural phenomenon. Sturken states that cultural memory is shared outside of formal historical discourse and incorporates images

and objects from popular culture and mass media.20 She also distinguishes between cultural memory, personal memory, and historical discourse. Cultural memory is collective and different from personal memory. It may also be intertwined with an official historical discourse when objects, oral histories, and ephemera are amassed into an institutional archive or museum. Sturken states that “…memories and memory objects can move from one realm into another, shifting meaning and context. Thus personal memories can sometimes be subsumed into history, and elements of cultural memory can exist in concert with historical narratives.”21 Her concept is especially interesting because it allows for collective or cultural memories to inform an official historical discourse, and gives memorial and commemorative spaces agency to inform the cultural memory affiliated with those spaces. For instance, the meanings ascribed to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial have changed over the past thirty years, even though the physical space of the memorial is the same. Some of these changes are a result of items brought to the memorial, because the objects are added to the official historical discourse when they become part of the National Park Service archive. The collective memories surrounding visits to the memorial change over time as well since the visitors have a very different historical perspective now than they did in the 1980’s.

James E. Young’s work on the culture of commemoration surrounding the Holocaust, and the changing dynamics of such memorials, arguing that memorials evolve over time: “New generations visit memorials under new circumstances and invest them

21 Ibid.
Young’s distinction between monuments and memorials is useful: monuments are heroic but permanent objects, and memorials are places for remembrance and reinterpretation of historical events. Memorials are also memory sites, and the physical locations of these spaces lend a common frame and place for different individual experiences. Young draws on Durkheim’s work on rituals and shared social experiences and Halbwach’s interpretation of collective memory in his claim that the state tries to create a sense of common values and ideals through the creation of national memorials. To Young, a memorial is created in part for a nationalist agenda. He also claims that the designer of any public monument or artwork is also marking the memory site with his or her own distinct time and era. These memorial sites can also become detached from everyday life, and Young cautions against this:

“Under the illusion that our memory edifices will always be there to remind us, we take leave of them and return only at our convenience. To the extent that we encourage monuments to do our memory-work for us, we become that much more forgetful.”

Another key concept of Young’s work is the counter-monument: a space or site beyond the traditional monument that is not intended to console, reassure, or heal but instead to disrupt the space of memory. Jochen and Ester Gerz designed the “Monument Against Fascism” for the city of Hamburg, Germany in 1986, and to Young this structure opposed the traditional concept of the monument because it placed the burden of remembering upon the viewer. Visitors to this memory site wrote their own thoughts and memories on its surface until it disappeared completely. The counter-monument is also opposed to the

23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
traditional memory sites he describes because it may be impermanent, requires the viewer to experience the memorial through firsthand interpretation, and is an effective way to avoid forgetting the events that were commemorated or memorialized. Young discusses two memorials in his writings: the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC and the Jewish Museum addition in Berlin. Both of these are museums, but Young describes them as counter-monuments.

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC opened to the public in 1993 on the National Mall. Young describes the visitor’s experience through the museum space, and notes how the identification with a particular person who was a victim of the Holocaust upon museum entry transforms this experience. The visitor experience is also mediated through film, video, and photographs. These are personalized records and real footage of the liberation of the concentration camps. Coupled with actual victims’ artifacts such as hair and shoes, the experience is haunting and anchored in a specific time and place. The return to the real world outside the museum is another shift for the visitor, and Young states that the memorials on the National Mall take on a changed meaning after experiencing the Holocaust Museum. The ability of the museum to alter the visitor experience is one reason that Young frames this place as a counter-monument. Another important attribute of the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum that challenges traditional monument ideas is that the museum has expanded its mission to tell the story of all displaced and persecuted peoples, not just those affected by the Holocaust. Stories of Rwanda, Darfur, Chechnya, and other locations where human rights are abused have become topics of the museum’s
exhibitions. The progression from telling the story of the Holocaust to becoming a symbol of global human rights has transformed the museum into Young’s counter-monument and a space for historical lessons on world events.

Creating a museum to remember the victims of the Holocaust on American soil was a challenging task, but creating a museum about the Holocaust in present day Germany was even more daunting. According to Young, Germany’s role in Jewish history was very complex and this made memorialization and even more delicate task. Young cites the expansion of the Berlin Museum into the Jewish Museum as an example of an “…extraordinary response to the nearly paralyzing dilemma Berlin faces in trying to reintegrate its lost Jewish past.”25 Citing the symbolic use of the void in architecture, Young claims that Daniel Libeskind challenged architecture’s function as a redemptive and stable site of memory. He also claims that traditional memorial architecture is inadequate in designing a site for an exploration of German Jewish history.

The Jewish Museum began as an expansion to the existing Berlin Museum and a place to house the extensive collection of the city’s Jewish artifacts and ephemera. The Berlin Senate viewed creating a separate museum as problematic and inappropriate, and instead tasked the city museum with integrating missing Jewish culture into its own history. The expansion of the museum would not attempt to redeem the history and persecution of German Jews, and instead placed the emphasis of the new wing on telling their story. Libeskind, the architect chosen for the expansion, placed two fractured

corridors in the new wing, symbolic of the relationship between Berlin and its Jewish history. His design was unconventional and added an ultra-modern addition to the Baroque building. Libeskind’s was instructed to create an expansion to the original Berlin Museum, but he transformed the existing museum into a different entity with the addition. The addition is a sharp angular mix of descending pathways and voids, missing any windows on the bottom three floors, and covered in a reflective zinc shell. Internal temperature is kept cold within the lower pathways of the museum, and several rooms open into symbolic voids of light and sound. Young calls this structure a postmodern interpretation of memorial space that “…make[s] the traces of history its infrastructure, the voids of lost civilizations literally part of the building’s foundation, now haunted by history, even emblematic of it.”26 Young’s characterization of Libeskind’s Jewish Museum as postmodern echoes the intent and goals of the counter-monument; the museum design does not try to redeem the memorial into a singular meaning, but instead fractures and exposes very different histories.

Consecrating Sacred Space

The concept of the sacred is important in understanding commemoration and the consecration of monuments and memorials. Durkheim’s work on ritual and collective memory established the concept of the sacred within a community. He distinguished between the sacred and profane in his text *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* and this dichotomy was a central theme of his work. To Durkheim, the sacred and profane

26 Ibid. Pg. 140.
divided the world into two realms. The everyday of the profane was diametrically opposed to the sacred, which was set apart from the everyday by rituals or extraordinary characteristics. Durkheim’s view of the sacred was not just religious, but totemic and included nature in addition to gods and spirits. James M. Mayo has written extensively on war memorials and how they preserve political memory. He cites Durkheim’s concept of religious thought as beliefs that guide personal moral life, and claims that new meanings are created when these ideals are transformed into space.  


Mayo characterizes war memorials as objects, places, or reenactments and claims all three have a social purpose through utility and sentiment. Utility and sentiment are opposite characteristics: the higher an object’s utility, the less sentiment or sacred value it has. To Mayo, if a public space has a high utility, it is not as sacred, and truly sacred spaces are not used for anything but activities that reinforce sanctification. His two concepts mirror Durkheim’s sacred and profane; the high utility of sites to Mayo is the profane to Durkheim, and vice versa. For instance, the battlefield of Gettysburg has reenactments with elaborate rituals to recreate the events that consecrated this location. In contrast, if a monument or memorial is forgotten, it will lose its sacred nature and become nothing more than a regular object in everyday life. To Mayo the sacred reenactments that take place in consecrated space are as important as the space itself. These reenactments can also take the form of knowledge of past events or verbal expression. The Holocaust Memorial in San Francisco is important to Mayo’s argument because it remembers the past but also is
enriched through a connection to the present. This space is framed by events that recall the horrors of the Holocaust, but is infused with recent tragedies through events and vigils for victims of other atrocities, such as the Rwandan genocide.

Commemorative space is linked to the history of a nation and remembrance of past events. Diane Barthel in her work *War and Remembrance* studied battlefields and their role in sanctifying space and encouraging future valor:

“Commemoration serves to encourage future acts of sacrifice, as it promises the would-be heroes that they will not die in vain and that they will be remembered by future generations. It is an unwritten pact between the dead, the living, and the unborn, and it is enacted through social rituals – the acts of commemoration.”

Barthel’s link between the past, present, and future is important to national identity and establishing historical sites of commemoration. Sacrifices of the past are remembered to shape the future, and past valor is important in framing an event or battle as sacred in the present. It is also important to the memorial or monument to show the historical necessity of an event to ensure that those who sacrificed themselves did not die in vain. This is especially important to military memorials that use their sacred sites as recruiting tools for future generations. The sanctification of military victory requires heroes, and these heroes can be remembered anonymously, like the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery, or individually with monuments to famous military officials like Robert E. Lee or General McArthur.

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28 The Holocaust Memorial is located at the Legion of Honor Park in San Francisco and consists of a grouping of figurative sculptures by George Segal set behind a wire fence. This work has been vandalized several times with anti-Semitic symbols in the 1990’s. These acts show that prejudice and hate are still issues in contemporary society. See [http://www.chgs.umn.edu/museum/memorials/segal/](http://www.chgs.umn.edu/museum/memorials/segal/). Accessed 3/13/2011.

Edward T. Linenthal has studied the sacred space of cultural objects and written extensively on battlefields. He researches landscapes of tragic events, including military sites and locations of terrorist attacks, and has studied the process of development surrounding the Oklahoma City Memorial. His work focuses on the consecration of the space through memorialization. Citing Durkheim’s concepts in distinguishing between sacred and profane space, he concentrates on the production of the sacred through memorialization. Linenthal also claims that memorialization has now become a significant form of cultural expression, and this is reinforced through tourism to important sacred and historical places.\(^\text{30}\) Part of the draw of contemporary memorial sites is the democratization of the memorial experience. This takes place from the individualization of memorials, such as the list of names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, to the process of leaving token objects for the mourned. The individual is recognized as part of the larger group, and thus ownership of the memorial experience is spread across the community. For example, in the aftermath of September 11\(^{\text{th}}\) in New York City, objects were left around the World Trade Center site to commemorate the victims who were killed or missing. This outpouring was a communal response of grief, and the symbols of the victims created a democratized sacred space around the site of mass tragedy. Any person touched by the events could leave a memento in this space, and the temporary memorial process was created and owned by the community as a whole. Linenthal also claims that objects are transformed by tragedy from ordinary things to sacred artifacts by the act of consecration. The items left at the Vietnam Memorial...\(^{\text{30}}\) Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, *The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*, 1996.
Veterans Memorial are collected once a day and enshrined in the memorial’s archives as cultural ephemera. The objects placed as temporary memorials in lower Manhattan were collected and stored by the National September 11 Memorial & Museum, the organization responsible for oversight and development of the World Trade Center commemorative site. Any citizen could contribute their artifact and became part of the larger memory project. Linenthal states that memorial objects can also be transformed by their proximity to the event. Rubble from the World Trade Center building is now housed in museums, and the rebar from the concrete structure in the Oklahoma City Bombing has become consecrated through the tragedy of this site.

Linenthal’s most extensive academic work is on the transformation of everyday spaces to sanctified sites. He has studied the battlefields of Gettysburg, the Alamo, and Little Bighorn. He claims that each site is important because of the sacrifice of individuals for a larger heroic purpose that has become part of American cultural history. Gettysburg was the most heroic of the Civil War battlefields, and cemented the outcome of the war. The Alamo embodied the fight to the death mantra of American troops, and the Battle of Little Bighorn solidified the myth of Custer’s Last Stand and the claim to the American West. All three sites are just a few of many larger battles in the history of the nation, but the mythology that surrounds each particular place is important to the larger narrative of American culture. Linenthal states that these are “…prime examples of sacred patriotic space where memories of the transformative power of war and the sacrificial heroism of the warrior are preserved.”

sanctified space of the warrior, an important archetype of sacred space. Their heroism and valor is preserved through the sanctification of the site.

The warrior is the most common of sanctified types, but the innocent victim and the heroic rescuer also serve important purposes in Linenthal’s writings. He studied the Oklahoma City Memorial extensively over the course of its development, and claims that both the innocence of the children killed in the federal building and the heroism of the rescue teams helped transform the space. On April 19, 1995 bomber Timothy McVeigh targeted the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City and set off a blast that claimed 168 lives, including nineteen children under the age of six. Nearly seven hundred people were also injured. The news reports of the event focused on the children and the rescue workers who fought to find the victims and survivors in the rubble. Linenthal states that the heroism of the police and firefighters, coupled with the compassion of ordinary citizens in donating blood and serving food, was as important to the mythology surrounding the memorial as the victims themselves. This culture of compassion is commemorated in the Oklahoma City Memorial as much as the innocent victims and the survivors of the event. Like the heroism and valor of the soldiers celebrated in the battlefields of Gettysburg and the Alamo, the rescue teams and heroic citizens are as important in transforming the sacred space of the monument. The memorial design includes a symbolic empty chair for each of the victims of the bombing, but also groves of trees dedicated to the rescuers and children killed in the attack. A museum was opened adjacent to the memorial that includes all of the ephemera left by the community in response to the tragic events and their aftermath. This site was
transformed into an important part of cultural history, or contemporary memorial culture in Linenthal’s definition, and now is an important tourist destination to learn about historical events.

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Jewish Museum in Berlin were created several decades after the events they commemorate. The events of September 11\textsuperscript{th} ushered in a new way of thinking about memorialization within the United States, specifically because the terrorist attacks took place on American soil. Much has been written about September 11\textsuperscript{th} and the shared memories of these events. Temporary memorials sprang up almost immediately in New York City, Shanksville, Pennsylvania and Arlington, Virginia. These temporary memorials consisted of flowers, photographs, and notes naming the dead and missing. The three locations became sacred spaces for mourning and commemoration. The process of constructing a permanent memorial in each location is very different; each place was distinct from the others before the events of September 11\textsuperscript{th}. The World Trade Center has had the most scrutiny and attention of the three sites. The entire world watched on television as they towers collapsed, contributing to the public’s investment in the rebuilding and commemoration of this site. The Shanksville, Pennsylvania location of the crash of United Airlines Flight 93 was an open field in a rural area outside Pittsburgh. The third site of September 11\textsuperscript{th} was on one side of the Pentagon, the largest military structure in the country. Of the three locations, the first permanent memorial was unveiled at the Pentagon site on the anniversary of the attacks in 2008. The three memorial sites are quite different, but the design and
conceptual process for each are cohesively linked together through the shared events of one day.

Anthony Kolenic describes the three sites as sacred because they were set aside as designated locations for mourning and commemoration by the events that took place: “The official setting aside of place is itself an act of taking what is otherwise profane and claiming it as sacred.” Each location is a symbolic place because of the events that occurred on each site. The sacred nature of the Pentagon and World Trade Center sites was further expressed by using light as a symbol in temporary memorials. On the first anniversary of the attacks at the Pentagon, one hundred eighty four individual beams of light were shown at the Pentagon. Starting in 2002, two beams of light were used to mimic the missing towers of the World Trade Center in the temporary work *Tribute in Light*, and this work is illuminated each year on the anniversary of the attacks. By using beams of light to connect the earth with the heavens, a transcendent sacred space was further emphasized in both locations. Kolenic argues that the temporary memorials of light informed the design selection of the Pentagon Memorial’s “Light Benches.” The illuminated beams became a symbol of rebirth and commemoration in the temporary work *Tribute in Light* at the World Trade Center site, and the selection committee chose a similar motif for the Pentagon memorial. The final design selected for the World Trade Center site also incorporates light beams and water. Kolenic claims that the design is

33 Ibid.
used to present a transcendent, sacred space, but that the governing body inscribes the meaning of that space:

“These three formal memorials are heavily invested in impersonalized, nationalistic meanings, borrowing much of their imagery and context from religious expressions for the creation of a specific an usable past…the national memory constructed out of these places and the citizenry’s experiences and relationships to them carries an impersonal set of meanings meant to imbue the values officially represented at these places with sanctity.”34

To Kolenic, the meaning of the memorial spaces is standardized, and no longer an individualized sentiment. He also criticized how the design was appropriated and influenced by religious ritual, citing the illuminated benches as common symbols of redemption in church iconography. This concept is the opposite of Young’s idea of the counter-monument, which is a fractured space with many different meanings.

The scholarship of Young, Mayo, Linenthal, and Kolenic are several examples of how sacred space and commemorative sites are created and analyzed. Linenthal writes about sites that are consecrated as sacred though events, such as military battles or acts of terrorism. Once these events take place, the site is consecrated and the bureaucratic entities that oversee the development of a memorial or designation as a National Military Battlefield complete the consecration by transforming the space into a sacred site. Kolenic focuses on how bureaucratic entities shape the final sacred space through this transformation. My work surrounding the Air Force Memorial, Dark Star Park, and the Pentagon Memorial is about how these spaces are transformed and consecrated into symbolic locations. The process of consecration is extremely important to the Air Force

34 Ibid.
Memorial because it did not have an originating tragedy like the Pentagon Memorial. Instead, a few key stakeholders created the concept of a memorial dedicated specifically to the Air Force. The memorial did not originate in an event, but rather was created through the process. This process was very turbulent and thus infused the memorial with a larger meaning than originally intended by the Air Force Memorial Foundation. The patriotic outpouring after September 11th added to the momentum that saw the monument to completion, and the placement of the Pentagon Memorial adds to the larger national significance of the site. The physical location of the Air Force Memorial, the ingenuity of the design, and the active role it plays in current military events further consecrates this space. In contrast, Dark Star Park is only about the process, and the final sculpture is an afterthought. The process of creating this artwork is the most important part.

Arlington County designated a site for a park, and by creating Dark Star Park the county created the public art program. The physical site of Dark Star Park was never consecrated in the same manner as the Air Force Memorial.

My analysis of three cultural objects in Arlington County fits into the larger narrative surrounding memorial culture that began with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and expanded with Holocaust remembrances, museum culture, the Oklahoma City Memorial, and events surrounding September 11th. Over the past twenty years, a proliferation of literature has been created studying the importance of commemorating tragedy, and focusing on how groups of people mourn and remember victims of such events. This is the continuation of scholarly literature that studied the reception and controversy surrounding the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, including the works by North,
Smith, and Sturken mentioned earlier. The history of the Air Force Memorial is a continuation of controversies from the different stakeholders that claim the Air Force locale or the Marine’s Iwo Jima as sacred spaces. I see a direct link between the rhetoric surrounding the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the controversy over the first site of the Air Force Memorial near Iwo Jima. The later interpretation of these two spaces is also similar, with contested histories giving way to positive reviews of both sites. The overwhelming impact of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is not the same as the Air Force’s site, but the older memorial has years of history to add to its narrative.

A continuation of the narrative surrounding memory and memorialization occurs in the work of Young. His writing on Holocaust studies focuses on recent monuments and museums created in the United States and abroad to frame the events of World War II, and how these atrocities are mourned and remembered. Young has written extensively on the creation of the Jewish Museum in Berlin and the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC and how the location, history, and culture frame such spaces. He told the story of how the Jewish Museum was created through the obstacles that were overcome to create a successful museum site. The intersection of public space and the interpretation of history in museums is important to the work of Paul Williams, a professor of Museum Studies who writes about what he terms “memorial museums” and the controversy over the interpretation of history. Exhibiting the Enola Gay brought

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35 See the first chapter of Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt’s text *The Enola Gay and Other Battles’ for the American Past* for an in-depth narrative about the controversy surrounding the plane’s exhibition.

36 Paul Williams’ text *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* focuses on how memorial museums have taken hold over the past twenty-five years to recall historical events and provide interpretations of difficult subjects. It is an important study on cultural spaces and how they shape and are shaped by competing forces.
about controversy over how the plane was represented in a museum space, and the role of
the institution in educating the public about its history. My experience working with
museums informs my analysis of the Air Force Memorial and how concurrent histories
can be told about a singular event or place. Competing bureaucracies and power
structures form how a memorial, museum, or other public space is created and form a
narrative of the site’s history. These competing forces may also impact the interpretation
and ongoing history of such sites. The story surrounding the creation of the Air Force
Memorial is what I am interested in conveying in my analysis of the three sites, and how
this narrative enabled the memorial to develop into its final iteration.

The bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995
and the events of September 11th brought a new focus to commemorating spaces of
tragedy, and produced a significant amount of literature about the role and process of
building monuments as sites of public mourning. Linenthal, a historian who had
previously studied battlefields, wrote about the process of constructing the Oklahoma
City Memorial and the factions that had a stake in the creation of meaning surrounding
such a place. Kirk Savage has also written about recent memorials and how the creation
of the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC is a counterpoint to the Vietnam
Veterans Memorial and completes the monumental core of the National Mall.³⁷  Savage
calls for a different type of memorial manifestation through temporary works keenly
attuned to the political climate of contemporary times, such as public art projects. Erica

³⁷ Kirk Savage has written extensively on how memorials and memory shape national identity. In his text
Monument Wars, chapter seven focuses on how the National Mall in Washington, DC is now full. His example
of Krzysztof Wodiczko’s Hirshhorn Projection in 1988 shows two hands, one holding a gun and another holding a
candle, spaced between a group of microphones was projected onto the facade of the Hirshhorn Museum.
Doss has studied how temporary public memorials are constructed and provide a space for the outpouring of public grief.\textsuperscript{38} She has also written about the evolution of memorials from solitary statues to temporary sites encompassing public feeling and contemporary tragedy in her recent text \textit{Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America}. Doss’ analysis looks at the audience of such memorials and how the public seeks to understand and process feelings of grief and terror. Several other essays have been published on community-based memorials of September 11\textsuperscript{th} and the role of these events in the public psyche.\textsuperscript{39} My work on the Air Force Memorial and Pentagon Memorial takes into account the shift in memorial culture from scholarly essays written about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the monumental core of Washington, DC to the terrorist activities of Oklahoma City and September 11\textsuperscript{th}. It is not possible to write about any memorial space and not acknowledge the events of the past fifteen years and their impact on how memorials are created, perceived, and analyzed. In addition, my work uses the story of how the Air Force Memorial struggled and eventually prevailed.


CHAPTER THREE: THE ARLINGTON COUNTY PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

Arlington County, VA has both a local and national identity due to its proximity to the District of Columbia, and because it is the location of Arlington National Cemetery and the Pentagon military complex. Arlington County is urban and suburban; it lies outside Washington, DC, but it contains small urban enclaves and less populated suburban spaces. The county includes very dense population centers along the Metro transit corridor. Small neighborhood centers are situated along these public transportation hubs, which show all of the characteristics of larger, urban spaces: high-density housing, business centers with major corporations, and entertainment and dining areas. Additionally, symbolic markers of the area’s proximity to the capital include Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian Institution, and Reagan National Airport. Arlington County is often known as only an adjunct of Washington, DC or the location of Arlington Cemetery and the Pentagon. Nevertheless, outside of the urban villages of Clarendon and Ballston, and the economic and government centers of Rosslyn and Crystal City, there is a separate suburban space. The northern part of the county is suburban with sprawling single-family homes, cul-de-sacs, and park space. The population is less dense in this area, and cars are used over public transportation. The county draws civilian and government personnel from across the globe that work at Reagan National Airport, the Pentagon, and Ft Myer Army base, and Arlington Cemetery.
is also a major tourist destination. Arlington is unique in the large state of Virginia for its diverse population, liberal politics, and high population density. The county is the smallest urban jurisdiction in the state at 26 square miles, with nearly 20% of this land owned by the Federal Government, but has the highest population density in the state.\textsuperscript{40} The population is extremely diverse, with nearly 28% percent of the residents foreign born, and includes a significant Latino community.\textsuperscript{41} The income and education level of residents is also above average, with a median income of $93,806 and nearly 69% of residents with bachelor’s degrees or higher.\textsuperscript{42} A significant contributor to these statistics is the county’s proximity to the government and technology sectors in the area, and the migration of highly educated adults to Arlington to work in the government sector and related industries.\textsuperscript{43}

Arlington County’s dialectical position between the local and the national is an atypical factor in the development of a public art program. The program reaches into the urban and suburban spaces of the county. A significant number of projects exist in the urban villages, and art objects have been integrated into the schools and parks of the suburban areas. This public art program is a successful merger of innovative artist projects, developer initiated landscape designs, and collaborative educational works. The current collection includes thirty outdoor pieces owned by the county, several temporary and portable works, and a number of significant pieces accessible to the general public.

\textsuperscript{40} As of the 2009 census, the population for the county was estimated at 217,483. See \url{http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/51/51013.html}. Accessed 1/7/2011.

\textsuperscript{41} Again, see 2009 census figures at link above.

\textsuperscript{42} This information is drawn from 2009 census numbers and the essay “Northern Virginia Localities Home to Wealthiest, Most Educated Residents,” 12/14/2010, from Virginiabusiness.com. Accessed 1/7/2011.

created through partnerships between the county and private developers. Arlington’s program is part of the county government as a subset of the Arlington Cultural Affairs division of the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources. Arlington County is often known as only an adjunct of Washington, DC or the location of Arlington Cemetery and the Pentagon, but the public art program has created another important identity for the county. This program succeeded by establishing a collection of important works that voice historical narratives about the area, and by creating a model of how government officials and community participants in an urban environment can sustain a thriving arts program. The Public Art division is sustained through the county government, nonprofit regional arts agencies, and area businesses with a commitment to the arts. The works within the collection include local and national artists, a significant number of pieces by women and minorities, and collaborative ventures between artists and apprentice students. These works range from Miriam Schapiro’s dance celebration Anna and David (1987) to Ned Kahn’s digitally inspired Liquid Pixels (2002), and include freestanding sculptures, public plazas and parks, murals, and interactive sensory experiences with light and sound. The existence of the public art program is due to one important piece: Dark Star Park (1979-1984, restored 2003) by Nancy Holt. The creation of this work enabled the county to leverage their success with a nationally funded arts grant program to further explore art in an urban environment. The county’s success with the collaborative grant project also gave municipal leaders the confidence to embark on public-private partnerships that produced several award-winning public art installations.
The Arlington Public Art Program and its administrators created a program that enables art, artists, and county citizens to benefit from the program and to be involved in its progress at a time when other comparable public art projects have failed, earned significant criticism, and added to the debate surrounding federal and state funding for the arts. By integrating the arts with the urban landscape, the county created a culture where visual art moves out of the museum and into the public realm and is now accessible to local citizens. The public art program has used visual arts as a tool for fostering civic engagement, recreation, and livable urbanism by placing the arts in the public sphere and providing the community with tools to understand and interact with the works. Additionally, this program has highlighted the contributions of women and minorities to the visual arts, woven the arts into the civic fabric of society, made cultural objects accessible to all citizens, and included the arts in aspects of urban renewal, public works, and the everyday landscape of the region.

The first public art project in Arlington County was a series of murals initiated through the Treasury Department’s Section of Fine Art. Painter Auriel Bessemer created a series of New Deal-era murals in the county’s Main Post Office building in 1940. This was Arlington’s first public art piece created with federal funding, but the next significant work did not take place until nearly thirty years later. With the formation of the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities in 1965, and the General Services Administration’s Art in Architecture Program, a significant number of public art projects were proposed for urban areas. The first commissioned Arlington County public project and the first work since Bessemer’s murals, planning for what became Nancy
Holt’s *Dark Star Park* began in 1977. This work was completed in 1984 and was the first National Endowment for the Arts project to combine sculptural commissions with the landscape design of the surrounding area. Nancy Holt, an environmental earthwork artist, transformed an abandoned gas station and warehouse into a symbolic space that celebrates the history and founding of the county. This project was significant to Arlington County in that it was the first large scale public art project in the area, and became a predecessor to later work integrated into the urban landscape within the county.

During the next ten years, a number of public and private partnerships between the county and local developers took place and resulted in significant works such as Miriam Schapiro’s *Anna and David* (1987), Boaz Vaadia’s *The Family: David, Haggit and Adoniyya* (1992), and Wendy M. Ross’s *Bud/Blossom* (2002). This combination of public guidance and corporate commissions created a number of singular sculpture works placed within apartment and retail areas. The county government council collaborated with local developers, most notably the J.W. Kaempher Corporation, soliciting a percent for art fund from new building projects and overseeing the development of such works. The Public Art Program focused a smaller amount of revenue into temporary projects that were more experimental and fueled by the county’s links to local artist groups and contemporary art spaces. The county encourages experimental temporary installations, often in conjunction with activities at the Arlington Arts Center, a non-profit art space that is largely funded by the county but exists as a separate entity. Many of the experimental temporary works in the Arlington County program over the past twenty years question and disrupt their environments, and are often riskier than their permanent
counterparts and address contemporary themes such as politics and the environment. The recent installation *CO2LED* (2007) by Jack Sanders, Robert Gay, and Butch Anthony focuses on environmental waste, and the two sites of this work were placed near a busy highway and next to a current construction site. The work was created out of discarded water bottles and light bulbs, materials that are not known for their artistic properties. The artists arranged the recycled materials to form an elegant glowing cluster of tall forms, which received raves from local critics and residents.

There are several Arlington County Public Art proposals that were never realized; the most notable is the sewage treatment plant plan proposed by Mary Miss and approved at its initial stages by the Arlington County board in 2003. The artist’s innovative and ambitious plan for the county sewage treatment plant was terminated amid controversy over the use of public funds for art to decorate a sewage treatment plant and the cost of the project. Miss’s ambitious transformation of the public works facility cost was estimated at $2 million dollars, consistent with the one-percent of the total budget of the facility renovation. After learning that the sewage plant’s upgrade would be significantly more expensive, county government officials shelved the public art aspect of the project to save money. The controversial issue was not the design of the sewage plant, but spending significant funds to beautify a public works structure. The failed Miss project shows the complex relationship between the government, public, and artist from conception to the full installation of the public artwork. It also serves as the starting point for looking at a larger debate about the role of artworks, theories of art and urban space, and the public’s role in deciding the outcome of urban space.
Arlington County’s public art collection is by nationally known artists, but several have ties to important local organizations. By partnering with academic, institutional, and governmental organizations the program integrated itself with the region’s art world and established its reputation as a strong government cultural initiative. Works in the collection are by Kendall Buster, a Professor in the Department of Sculpture and Extended Media at Virginia Commonwealth University; Tom Ashcraft, Professor and coordinator of the sculpture program at George Mason University; and Dean Kessmann, Professor and head of the photography program at George Washington University. By incorporating the work of these artists, the county is linking itself to well-respected academic institutions and fostering collaboration with the galleries that represent such individuals. Wendy Ross, a local Maryland resident whose work includes historical memorials and abstract sculpture, has several pieces throughout Arlington, but her best known commission is the George Mason Memorial on the Tidal Basin.

There are several themes that run through the works in the county: gender, ethnicity, history, and the environment. Many of the public artworks include a historical narrative or theme, such as the federal history of Arlington, the history of African Americans in the region, or the ecological characteristics of the area. Arlington County has encouraged commissions from women and minorities, and has encouraged partnerships between community groups, students, and educators to make a number of works about diversity and community collaboration. This outreach to underrepresented communities began twenty years ago and continues in several projects currently underway, such as the Columbia Pike planning initiative. The process of the county’s
collaborative projects with schools, educators, and community groups highlights the role of the general public in the artistic process, and provides a starting point to show how the public can shape the evolution of cultural objects in an urban environment.

Arlington County’s art initiatives have expanded to become tools for urban planning and development. In 2000, Arlington passed a Public Art Policy to focus development on permanent large-scale pieces, and held several public forums in 2002 to gather ideas and collect input from arts professionals and the general public for the 2004 public art master plan. The Public Art Policy significantly influenced the public art master plan *Public Art – Public Places* adopted in 2004, and these two key publications established rules and steps for the county’s program. *Public Art – Public Places* outlines a method for planning public art projects, the process of artist selection, and the vetting process with the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Arlington Commission on the Arts to complete the final product. The document outlined several strategies to integrate art into the fabric of urban planning, parks, and public spaces beyond the single, solitary sculptures often negatively referred to as “plop art.” This document is a policy guide for current and future county administrators, the public art commission, and artist applying for public projects. The intersection of art with public works is an important theme in *Public Art – Public Places*; urban development, transportation patterns, and county revitalization play a key role in the growth of several initiatives and types of projects and the plan calls for works that specifically address these current topics. With the current plan in place, a significant expansion of work took place between 2002 and 2007, including Ned Kahn’s *Liquid Pixels* (2002), winner of several awards for innovative
public art, and Jann Rosen-Queralt’s *Cultivus Loci: Suckahanna* (2004) children’s park and rain garden that also received several accolades.

*Public Art – Public Places* sets forth future expansion goals in four key locations to generate significant impact: the Columbia Pike corridor, the Potomac Yards area, the WALK Arlington initiative, and the upper and lower tracts of the Four Mile Run stream. Two of these locations are undergoing extensive revitalization: Potomac Yards and Columbia Pike. The Potomac Yards area is adjacent to Alexandria, VA and Reagan National Airport, and significant retail and residential expansion is underway in conjunction with a proposed Metro transit station.44 Redevelopment along Columbia Pike, an aging strip mall corridor in the southern quadrant of the county, has been a priority for the county for several years. This redevelopment plan includes residential, retail, and green space initiatives as set forth in the Smart Growth model the county has adopted. Smart Growth is a planning philosophy that incorporates pedestrian-friendly design in small urban enclaves to avoid sprawl. The Columbia Pike corridor also includes the Pentagon and Air Force Memorials; Navy Annex, Fort Myer, and Henderson Hall Military complexes, and the southeast portion of Arlington Cemetery. This area is also home to most of the Latino population in the country and includes the busiest bus transit route in the region. Currently, the county is focusing on two large-scale commissions in this area: a pedestrian and cyclist bridge crossing the Four Mile Run

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Stream, and a public park along the Columbia Pike corridor that will be the central square of the redeveloped Penrose Square Park.

The current state of Arlington County’s public art program is very different than in 1978, the year an application was submitted to the National Endowment for the Art’s Art in Public Places Program. The exponential growth of the county’s program over the past thirty years can be traced to *Dark Star Park*, and its legacy as an innovative community project enabled the county to grow into a model for other urban municipalities that wish to expand their cultural and visual art programming. The importance of *Dark Star Park* as a catalyst for the expansion of the program can only be understood by detailing the origins and development of this important work. It is also useful to examine its role twenty-five years later as a historical marker of the beginning of the arts programming in Arlington County. The collaboration between Arlington County, the National Endowment for the Arts, and private developers made *Dark Star Park* possible. In turn, *Dark Star Park* made the further development of the program over the past thirty years possible.
Nancy Holt’s *Dark Star Park* was the first major outdoor public art project in Arlington, VA and the first major artwork funded by local and federal government since Auriel Bessemer created a series of New Deal-era murals in the county post office in 1939. The park is situated in the Rosslyn neighborhood between two major roadways and amid several high-density office buildings. The park consists of several large sculptural spheres made of concrete, curved walkways, vertical steel poles, and a tunnel placed all on two green tracts of land. The park was originally commissioned through an Art In Public Places grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to Arlington County in 1978, but the work is important as an example of an urban redevelopment project that integrates public and private financing, the urban landscape, sculpture, and community collaboration. The work is also the starting point of Arlington County’s successful public art program. The work is historically important but largely forgotten in its current iteration. Arlington County’s Division of Cultural Affairs references the events that led to the successful completion of *Dark Star Park*, but frames it as a historical segment in the larger trajectory of the public art program in the county. Without the context surrounding the park, it loses its importance. As an individual sculpture, it is not particularly successful: the park is not a popular gathering spot, well-known outside of its historical importance to the county’s program, and overshadowed by
several newer public art pieces. The collaborative nature of its creation is the most important part of its existence, and this successful collaboration is framed as a historical starting point for the expansion of a much larger visual arts program. Compared to its contemporaries such as Ned Kahn’s *Liquid Pixels* overlooking Rosslyn\footnote{*Liquid Pixels* was created in 2002 on several sides of a parking garage in Rosslyn. The work is made up of several thousand stainless steel discs mounted on pins that move with wind currents. The work was named one of the top public art projects in the nation by the Americans for the Arts Public Art Network in 2002, and Ned Kahn was also awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 2003.}, it is far less successful as a unique and well-known visual landmark in the region. The creation of *Dark Star Park* propelled Nancy Holt to become far more successful as an artist. The collaborative success of *Dark Star Park* gave Arlington County credibility to expand into an urban visual arts program. Because of its function as an isolated and unknown work of art, *Dark Star Park* is unsuccessful, but it allowed the county to leverage future projects on the critical acclaim the collaboration received from the process of its creation. The importance placed on *Dark Star Park* several years later by Arlington County administrators demonstrates how the work was forgotten and overshadowed by later pieces in the county’s collection.

**Art in Public Places and the NEA**

Rosslyn was an area slated for urban redevelopment by local county officials and commercial interests in the 1970’s due to its proximity to Georgetown across the Potomac River and to the planned Metrorail station for the new Washington, DC area mass transit system. The park was created on a tract of land that was part of an easement between the county and Theodore Gould of Holywell Corporation. Gould granted the
stretch of land to Arlington County in return for increasing the density of three office buildings his company planned to erect near the future park site. When planning for an entry park in Rosslyn began in 1977, the land was an abandoned gas station overgrown with weeds.

This parcel of land was situated in a prime location, but the cost of creating a work of art or park was prohibitive for the county. Steve Weisburger, an Arlington County employee, found an opportunity to apply for grant funding to transform the land with public art. Localities across the country were utilizing national programs to beautify urban areas, and Arlington was searching for additional funding sources. The County Board of Arlington applied for an Art in Public Places grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1978. The prospectus stated:

“Grants in this category support public art projects of the highest quality and of national or regional significance which present visual artists with new challenges to create artwork for public places, broaden understanding of the opportunities for contemporary artists within the traditions of public art, and in which the artist has an integral role in all stages of the project.”

In addition, these grants were designed for site-specific development between a community and an artist, through “…imaginative approaches to possible sites: rivers waterfronts, parks, recreation facilities, airports, subways, roadsides, redevelopment zones, and public buildings.” Arlington’s parcel of land was definitely a redevelopment zone, and so fit within the guidelines. Arlington County would need to match the federal

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47 Ibid.
funds, but the NEA grant would provide a generous sum of money and expertise on artist selection through a panel process of nationally recognized cultural experts.

The NEA program was part of an initiative of matching grants to support public art in communities across the country, and based on the percent for art programs pioneered by municipalities and the General Services Administration (GSA). Percent for art programs place a fee on large scale development projects in order to fund and install public art; many of these programs are in large urban areas and require between 1 – 4% of the total construction cost to be directed toward public art. Art in public places programs allow developers to pay an in-lieu fee to a public art fund for larger community-wide projects. Philadelphia and Baltimore instituted percent for art programs in the early 1960’s, followed by state programs in Hawaii and Washington. The GSA’s Art in Architecture program existed since the New Deal, but was reintroduced in 1973 with the success of Alexander Calder’s large scale Flamingo sculpture in Chicago. The NEA initiated the Art in Public Places program with matching grants shortly before the GSA’s expansion in the 1970’s with another Calder work, La Grande Vitesse, in Grand Rapids, Michigan with equal success. Federal patronage and the Art in Public Places program began informally within the Visual Arts Department of the NEA under the direction of Henry Geldzahler, art critic and curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and awarded small matching grants to municipalities in order to place contemporary art in public locations. This initiative was part of the Visual Arts Program division at the NEA, which also provided fellowship grants to individual artists. Nancy Hanks, who overhauled and expanded the endowment during her tenure, was appointed chairman in
1969 and significantly expanded the Art in Public Places program to foster civic engagement with contemporary art in communities across America.48 Publicly funded art programs are often reviewed by a city or government council, or undergo review by a group of NEA or GSA selected art experts on the federal level, but may include citizen groups or county administrators in addition to art experts. Art in Public Places programs sought to link urban redevelopment with excellence in design and landscape architecture.

The County Board of Arlington applied for a Group II matching grant, requesting up to $25,000 for an urban sculpture. The application was approved for $18,000. Once the initial application was approved, a panel was convened to select an artist for the project. The Arlington County Board originally suggested Peter Regnator, Bob Stackhouse, Jim Sanborn, and Louise Nevelson as possible collaborators, but the panel selected Nancy Holt. This grant panel included three local Arlington residents and three individuals selected by the Endowment who have expertise in public sculpture. The local jurors included Stanley Westreich, an Arlington realtor and art collector, Charles Beck of the Arlington Arts Council, and Janet Flint, Curator of the National Collection of Fine Arts. The Endowment selected several individuals for the selection panel: John Beardsley, a curator at the Smithsonian Institution’s Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden during the late 1970’s, Ward Mintz, Director of the Nassau City Museum of Art in New York, and Julie Brown from the GSA’s Art in Architecture program. Holt was chosen because of her intention to turn the entire park into a sculpture, rather than create

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an isolated sculpture within the park. Holt also had a strong professional relationship with Beardsley, who wrote extensively about *Sun Tunnels* for a recent exhibition at the Hirshhorn Museum.

**Nancy Holt**

Holt is widely regarded as one of the founders of Earth or Land Art along with her husband Robert Smithson, and the works of this movement are large-scale monumental pieces often built into the natural environment. Holt’s works use the landscape to explore themes of celestial bodies and monumental time. Several of her pieces have an astronomical component, cite constellations, or mark a day or location within the calendar year. Holt’s works in the landscape range from pieces in isolated areas of the desert southwest to land reclamation projects in urban areas. Holt’s *Sun Tunnels* (1973-1976) is her most well-known and iconic piece. *Sun Tunnels* is located in western Utah near the Bonneville Salt Flats in a flat basin ringed by mountains. She spent a year searching for the right location in Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico before finding the appropriate site and buying forty acres for her work. The flat terrain of Holt’s chosen location was one of the few places where the curvature of the earth could be seen, and included remnants of earlier civilizations. Both of these components were important to Holt’s design for *Sun Tunnels*, and evoked prehistoric and monolithic structures such as Stonehenge and Avebury. The work consists of four large concrete tunnels anchored to the earth in an “X” formation. Each tunnel is eighteen feet long and nine feet in diameter. Holt’s frequent astronomical references are also present: each tunnel is aligned
differently and has a constellation represented on the top of the tunnel by holes representing stars. Each tunnel is aligned with the sunrise, sunset, summer solstice, and winter solstice, and indicates the cyclical time of the solar year. On June 21st and December 21st the sun is centered through one of the tunnels, and on the summer solstice the sun glows for several days inside the tunnel walls. In this major work, the material of concrete and the use of celestial mapping were precursors to later pieces by Holt, namely *Dark Star Park*.

Nancy Holt continued another key component of her work with *Sun Tunnels* by creating a movie about the making of the piece in 1979. Holt completed several early movies as conceptual exercises about place, perception, and documentation. The film *Sun Tunnels* is different than all of Holt’s prior video and film work, and she makes this distinction when discussing how the filming was created: “Unlike my earlier films and videotapes, which are works of art in themselves, *Sun Tunnels* is a personal record of the building of my large-scale sculpture in the Utah desert during the course of a year.”

The remoteness of the work lent the video importance as it was an expanded record of Holt’s experiences, and served as a surrogate for visiting the site firsthand to many critics and art historians. Holt’s *The Making of Dark Star Park* (1988) served as a documentary about the artist’s experiences, included commentary by her architectural and engineering collaborators, and interviewed several people that frequent the completed park. This film helped Holt gain credibility as a public artist by showing her process of collaboration with Arlington and served as a promotional piece for the work after it was completed.

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**Design and Fabrication**

Concrete, astronomy, and the history of a specific place coincide in *Dark Star Park*. This was one of three commissions Holt received through the Art In Public Places program at the National Endowment for the Arts in 1978. This was not unusual; the Endowment used a cadre of several well-known and respected sculptors for their public commissions, and the size and scale of these awards allowed one artist to work on several commissions simultaneously. Two additional projects she was awarded that year were a $50,000 for a sculpture to be placed in a shopping mall in Glen Cove, NY and $18,000 for *Rock Rings* at Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA. The Arlington, VA commission proved to be the most time-consuming of the three, and took nearly five years from the initial planning stages until its dedication ceremony. Holt had worked on several large-scale pieces before these three commissions in 1978, but had not collaborated with so many different organizations for a public space. This was also her first urban commission.

Holt’s proposal was to design the entire park, including all sculptural elements and green space. This was unusual for a sculptor at this time; the developer and architect of a site often worked independently of an artist selected to create a piece for that public space. Holt spent a significant amount of time studying the space and characteristics of the surrounding buildings before deciding upon the park’s design. In a November 1979 article announcing that Holt was the selected artist, she stated, “I want to spend some time here and research the history, the local architecture, the materials indigenous to this
site. The site will generate the idea.”50 She also anticipated the flow of people through the space and studied the relationship of Rosslyn to Arlington County to form her initial proposal to the Arlington Board.

The original grant budget included an artist’s fee of $7,000; a landscape architect’s fee of $8,000; and $159,500 designated for construction for a total of $175,000 from the Arlington County Capital Improvement Program Budget. The Capital Improvement Budget was a fund set aside to create public art or artistic decoration from commercial building projects. This was matched by $37,950 by the NEA, $19,950 more than the original grant amount. Holt’s design included both a sculptural element and the landscape design, and she assumed the role of landscape architect in addition to her role as artist for the site. A thirteen-person panel of Arlington County officials, NEA staff, and local arts council members vetted her project design, and subsequent changes and alterations to the plan. This panel included Tom Parker, Planning and Zoning Chief within Arlington County government and designated project director, and public art critic and curator John Beardsley representing the Endowment. Both Parker and Beardsley were part of the six-member panel that selected Holt as the artist for the park. Holt presented her initial plan in April 1980, and the response was favorable. Since Holt was also designing the park, the committee requested clarification on several public works components of the plan. John Hummel, Chief of the Planning and Engineering Division within the Arlington County Department of Public Works, raised questions about the pedestrian flow, illumination, irrigation system, and water lines. The weakness of Holt’s

plan lay in the public works components, as she had not dealt with the public works issues of a site before this commission. Holt changed several aspects of the park’s design to incorporate recommendations for durable materials, pedestrian safety, and water drainage into the next version of her proposal.

Holt and Arlington County encountered two additional obstacles before the project could progress: one area included in Holt’s design was owned by the Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation (now VDOT), and an adjacent area near the planned park was slated for a high-rise commercial development. Both of these issues had an impact on the design and orchestration of the park. Holt felt that integrating the adjacent median strip next to the site would create a more organic flow between the traffic and the island, and wanted to include this piece of state-owned land in Dark Star Park. Arlington County contacted the state to obtain permission from the Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation to include sculptural elements on a median strip adjacent to the park site, and this was granted in May 1980. Arlington County’s planning and parks division recommended that the park should not be built prior to the construction of the adjacent site. To construct the building after the park was completed would significantly impact the area, and the county planning team called for a coordinated effort for both projects. The Kaempfer Corporation property was for a commercial high-rise office building called Park Place. Since this project and Holt’s shared a continuous tract of land, she contacted J.W. Kaempfer Jr. to see if the Park Place plaza and the site of Dark Star Park could be integrated. Kaempfer agreed to give the project $50,000 in exchange for using the park lot as a staging site for the Park Place
construction and included Holt on the site review committee to vet the proposed building design. Holt vetoed the first design of Park Place because it cut off the view in the park and placed the main building entryway in the center of her design. A second rendering moved the entrance to another side, and Holt worked with Kaempfer’s architect and landscape designer to create a more harmonious integration of Dark Star Park and the Park Place plaza. This significantly delayed work on the park, but the result integrated the adjacent commercial structure into the park design and added an additional sum of $50,000 toward the project’s costs. Additionally, J.W. Kaempfer’s involvement with Holt, Dark Star Park, and public art marked the beginning of a long-term relationship between the Kaempfer Corporation and Arlington County’s public art program. Kaempfer funded several other public art projects, most notably a commission by Miriam Schapiro to create a sculpture based on one of her quilts.

With these obstacles overcome, Holt still had to make several modifications to her original design as the Arlington County panel vetted it. Additional changes were made to the walkway component and to the plantings in Holt’s design. The plantings Holt suggested were not native to the Virginia region, and Arlington County was concerned about the upkeep and hardiness of non-native vegetation. The vegetation component of the park plan was modified to incorporate native Virginia plants, an irrigation system, and grading to keep maintenance costs down. Holt also suggested soil cement as the sidewalk material, and this low-cost mixture of sand, soil, and cement was not approved for use in the county’s sidewalks around the park. After suggesting several modifications to the infrastructure components of the park, the county panel approved Holt’s design in
September 1980, but the construction did not start until 1983 when the Park Place building was near completion.

Holt’s design for the park was inspired by the cement high-rises of the Rosslyn area, and she spent significant time in the region before the final iteration of the park took shape. Her design was a geometric composition with five large spheres, curvilinear paths, two large water pools, earth mounds, vertical steel poles, and two tunnels. The park was broken into two sections, the main site and a small sliver of land on a traffic island. Holt first worked on a small model with the tunnels and spheres until she was able to create the correct composition, taking into consideration every vantage point on the ground, from the nearby office buildings, and even from a plane flying into or out of Reagan National Airport nearby.

The overall design of the park integrated a public walkway, seating, vegetation, and the highways of the area. The celestial themes found in Holt’s earlier work were also present in Dark Star Park, and the “dark stars” were the concrete orbs. Holt envisioned these objects as burned out stars that fell from the sky, and she plays with the viewer’s perception of the space:

“It is called Dark Star Park because in my imagination these spheres are like stars that have fallen to the ground – they no longer shine – so I think of the park/artwork in a somewhat celestial way. With this artwork I’m also continuing my concerns with illusions of ordinary perception, especially as perception is altered by curvilinear forms. As people walk in the park or drive by it, spheres of different sizes may appear to be the same size, or one sphere may eclipse another in passing, or a sphere may be seen through a round hole in another sphere or through a tunnel or reflected in a pool.”

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The material of the nearby high-rises is echoed in the spheres and tunnels. Large spheres made from gunnite, a cement mixture blown onto a steel frame, form the central motif of the work and visually connect the two tracts of land. Three main curvilinear paths connect the spheres, and one enclosed circular tunnel echoes the round shapes and transverses an earthen mound in the center of the park. A second smaller tunnel is set off to the Southwest side of the main part of the park. The circular theme is again repeated in two pools, and each pool has gunnite spheres resting on the edges of the form. Several six-inch stainless steel poles are installed vertically, and these linear forms are a contrast to the curved three-dimensional shapes. The vertical poles meet a two-dimensional asphalt outline on the ground at a right angle, and the vertical poles align with their horizontal asphalt shapes once a year when the sun casts a shadow on August 1\textsuperscript{st} at 9:32 am. William Henry Ross, the founder of Rosslyn, purchased this land at 9:32 am on August 1, 1860 and named it after his sister. The alignment of the vertical poles and their shadows commemorates Rosslyn’s founding annually, and merges historical time with the celestial time of the once a year on August 1\textsuperscript{st}. This annual event would become an important gathering for the county administrators local residents, and the arts community.

Holt consulted with several specialists to create certain aspects of the park. The alignment of the poles with their shadows on the exact day and time each year was achieved by working with the Naval Observatory in Washington, DC and several astrophysicists. A local company that installed outdoor pools applied the material chosen for the spheres, gunnite, by spraying it onto wire mesh frames. Holt did not want set concrete for the spheres because she through the material was too heavy, and did not have
the ethereal quality of fallen stars. After several weeks of research, a contractor from Paddock Pools in Arlington conducted several tests to achieve Holt’s desired result. A local company, Chapel Valley Nursery in Woodbine, Maryland chose the vegetation for the park. Holt wanted to plant indigenous vegetation for practical and symbolic reasons, and the park included winter creeper (Euonymus Fortuei), crown vetch (Convallaria Majalis), and willow oak (Quercus Phellos).

**Dedication and Reception**

Dark Star Park was formally dedicated on June 1, 1984 with a ceremony including several speakers, funders, Arlington County officials, and several representatives from the National Endowment for the Arts. Nancy Holt spoke about the long and involved process of creating *Dark Star Park*, calling it “…long and arduous…five years is a long time to sustain an art idea and work toward its realization.” She spoke about how much she had learned and cited Dark Star Park’s possible influence on future work:

> “I became involved in areas of activity in which I had limited experience, such as architectural planning, landscape design, contractor specifications, engineering, guniting, drainage, sidewalk construction, bureaucratic procedures, etc…but during that time possibilities for other works have been evolving out of the intermediate stages, and my concern with the value of making art that is also functional and necessary in society has been reinforced.”

Ellen M. Bozman, Chairman of the Arlington County Board, stated that Dark Star Park was “…a fine example of innovative, public spirited investment can make an urban

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52 Arlington County publication for the dedication ceremony, 1984. Arlington County files.  
53 Ibid.
center more attractive and appealing as a place to work and live.”\(^54\) Art Critic John Beardsley, who was on the original grant panel that selected Holt for the commission, applauds the openness and collaboration that she displayed thorough the planning and vetting process of the public commission. He cites her work with landscape architects, engineers, and the general public to create a work of “intelligent public planning”\(^55\) and “…a model for excellence in public art projects.”\(^56\) Beardsley then goes even further to laud the aesthetic merit of the piece:

> "Yet is in the completed artwork itself that Holt’s project has most handsomely rewarded my optimism. Holt has molded earth behind serpentine walls and floated elegant spheres over pools of water. She has dispensed these sculptural elements in a series of intriguing formal relationships and intensified our perceptions of shifting alignments by the use of sight lines through the earthen berm and some of the spheres. The combination of monumentality and deftness makes this Holt’s best and most ambitious work since her completion of the majestic *Sun Tunnels* in the Utah desert in 1976."\(^57\)

The dedication program also included remarks from F.S.M. Hodsoll, then Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, and J.W. Kaempfer Jr., president of the Kaempfer Company, benefactor of Dark Star Park, and Holt’s collaborator on the Park Place building. Kaempfer, a businessman and art patron remarked, “…in working with Arlington County and Nancy Holt, we successfully merged two normally unrelated endeavors. The result is an addition to our environment which will inspire all those who share a moment here today and in the future.”\(^58\) A second ceremony was held two months later on August 1, 1984 at 9:32 am to showcase the alignment of the stainless

\(^{54}\) Ibid.
\(^{55}\) Ibid.
\(^{57}\) Ibid.
\(^{58}\) Ibid.
steel poles and the shadow patterns on the ground to commemorate the day William Henry Ross purchased the land that was to become Rosslyn and showcase this day in the history of Arlington County.

The Arlington Arts Center, a small independent art gallery founded in 1974 and funded by the Arlington Commission on the Arts and Humanities, held “Sited Toward the Future: Proposals for Public Sculpture in Arlington County” in conjunction with the unveiling of Holt’s work. The exhibition included proposals by seventeen local artists for art projects to be situated on sites selected by the Community Arts Council of Arlington (now the Arlington Commission on the Arts). This exhibition was guest curated by Linda Roscoe Hartigan and planned specifically because of the momentum generated by Dark Star Park and the successful collaboration of Holt, Arlington County, local developers, and the Endowment. Benjamin Forgey, architecture critic at the Washington Post, reviewed the exhibition as spotty with a few promising art projects. Three of the proposals that Forgey gave favorable reviews were later turned into public art projects within Arlington County: Jim Sanborn’s *Invisible Forces*, a sculpture of stone pathways and stacked rock, was erected outside an office building on Clarendon Boulevard in 1987, Christopher Garner’s work *Cupid’s Garden* transformed a median into a tall metal sculpture of intersecting arrows in 1994, and Jerry Clapsaddle’s woven paving patterns were installed outside the Ballston metro station in 1996. Forgey applauded the Arlington Arts Center show overall, claiming that it highlighted the possibilities of involving the artist in the planning stages of an urban project, and helped to overcome unsightly “plop art.” Curator Hartigan used the derogatory term “plop art” to refer to
sculpture added to a site as an afterthought that did not fit in that location. He also called Holt’s park “…an exemplary piece of work”\textsuperscript{59} and commended “the idea of commissioning an artist to design an urban park to control the entire spatial experience.”\textsuperscript{60} Forgey’s official Washington Post review of *Dark Star Park* applauded the texture of the gunnite spheres and the contrast of the circular forms of the park with the tall rectilinear angles of the surrounding high-rise buildings. He returns to this park again when reviewing Baltimore’s Pearlstone Park in 1985 and artwork at National Airport in 1998 and called Holt’s work an excellent local example of architectural enhancement. In addition, Forgey stated that *Dark Star Park* was an example of the wisdom of allowing artists control over the design process from beginning to end and make socially relevant works.\textsuperscript{61}

Other initial reviews of the park were quite favorable. An editorial in the Washington Post from 1989 calls *Dark Star Park* “…a sculptural commentary written in concrete orbs set against rectilinear giants.”\textsuperscript{62} The editorial advised against changing the concrete canyon of Rosslyn and updating its 1960’s facades and brickwork, calling it an important location for a glimpse into the architectural history of the Washington region. The New York Times’ Douglas McGill had a giddy, playful experience within Holt’ park, and explained that “…to be in the space is to climb up and down, to pass through

shadow and light, to become part of shifting perspectives and optical illusions.”

An article in the Washington Post by Mary Ellen Koenig outlining interesting things to do with kids in the region called Dark Star Park a must-stop for parents, and ranked it with “The Awakening” sculpture by J. Seward Johnson Jr. formerly on Hains Point and the stature of Albert Einstein outside the National Science Foundation on Constitution Avenue as one of the most engaging places for kids in the city. Koenig describes an experience within Dark Star Park as “…the effect of having stumbled into the middle of a giant’s marble game.”

Maria de Herrera, writing for the Christian Science Monitor in Boston, calls Dark Star Park Holt’s most impressive completed work and claims that it functions very efficiently as a cosmologically inspired traffic island and functions very efficiently as a public space. She goes even further with her praise to call Holt a master artist in regard to the public process. In an essay critical of the concrete structure of Rosslyn’s buildings, Dark Star Park is an urban oasis of green space in the hardness of the area’s streetscapes.

The Washington Post and New York Times articles on Dark Star Park were very positive on the park’s ability to reverse urban blight and the successful collaboration of artist, architects, city planners, and funding agencies. Individual reactions to the site were more mixed; many pedestrians passing by Holt’s park did not know what the collection of concrete spheres was supposed to represent. Several people commented

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that the park’s name did not make sense, or that the artists should have included more than just concrete because Rosslyn already had too much of that already. Cecelia Cassidy, director of the nonprofit urban planning group Rosslyn Renaissance, refers to Dark Star Park as “Rosslyn’s Stonehenge” because it is an iconic monument on the center of the area. Bethesda resident John Butler, who takes part in a cleanup of the Arlington area every year, is surprised that more people do not attend the celestial event every August 1st that commemorates the founding of Rosslyn. These reactions show that without the historical context of the park as a successful collaboration between Arlington County and the NEA, it is not as important. The historical collaboration gives Dark Star Park a significant amount of its meaning. Arlington County administrators have added to this meaning by placing the park as the first true public sculpture created by the county’s public art program. This meaning is derived from the positive press Dark Star Park received in scholarly journals, including *Art In America, Art Journal, Landscape Architecture*, and *Leonardo*.

Several art magazines reviewed Nancy Holt’s *Dark Star Park* and did a more in-depth analysis than the newspaper reviews. Joan Marter, an art historian at Rutgers University and specialist on environmental sculpture and women artists, wrote two lengthy articles on Holt’s work. “Nancy Holt’s *Dark Star Park*” published in 1984 in *Arts Magazine* is primarily a review of the work and an explanation of the physical and bureaucratic process that created the sculptural park. She also provided a historical summary of the themes of Holt’s sculpture, and argued that *Views through a Sand Dune*,

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Hydra’s Head, Star Crossed, and Sun Tunnels are important forerunners to Holt’s oeuvre that enabled her to create “…the most successful artwork as an urban renewal project of the period.” Her review gave an overview of the Rosslyn region and its importance to the larger high-tech and economic commercial spheres within Washington, DC. She mentioned the location of the park at the gateway to Arlington as a challenging site with its urban decay and irregular shape framed by roadways and traffic islands. Marter cited the importance of giving Holt leeway to create the entire park and its sculpture as one organic space in her review, and compared this sculptural integration to less successful “plop art” pieces in other municipalities. She also references Holt’s Dark Star Park in a later article that was part of a special issue of Art Journal dedicated specifically to public art. Marter used Holt’s park as an example of how successful collaborations can take place and invokes the perception of the viewer as an important way to measure a project’s success:

“Holt involves the visitor in a total special experience by creating tunneled passages into the park that ‘frame’ certain sculptural elements or focus out the surrounding area. As the phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty insisted on the primacy of perception with regard to all aspects of human life, here, the viewer moves through the park, the work unfolds and discloses itself, and he or she experiences the nature of perception.”

Marter included Mary Miss’s South Cove (1988) in Battery Park City and Athena Tacha’s Promenade Classique (1986) in Alexandria, VA as two additional examples of works that created environments in blighted urban areas instead of monolithic “plop art.” Marter’s thesis is that interactive parks that include sculpture and far more effective in

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71 Ibid.
drawing in the public than isolated abstraction. Terry Ryan LeVeque wrote a review of Dark Star Park in *Landscape Architecture* in 1985, lauding Holt’s vision of the public planning process to extend her design past the physical and visual boundaries of the park.\(^\text{72}\) He also claimed her work as a hybrid of art and functionality, and an excellent example of the possibility for collaboration between artists and landscape architects.

Janet Saad-Cooke interviewed Holt for her essay “Touching the Sky: Artworks Using Natural Phenomena, Earth, Sky and Connections to Astronomy” in the journal *Leonardo*.\(^\text{73}\) Saad-Cook, who is also an artist, grouped Holt with James Turrell and Charles Ross as three individuals who use natural phenomena and astronomy in monumental scale projects. The article discussed each artist’s approach to materials and astronomy. She prefaced her questions to Holt with a brief explanation of two earlier sculptures, *Skymound* and *Sun Tunnels*, and framed her use of monumental time and the experience of the viewer in all three works. Saad-Cook’s questions focused on the differences between *Dark Star Park* and remote works such as *Sun Tunnels*, and Holt described the different processes of working in an urban space with a collaborative project and alone in a remote area. Holt outlined her historical framing of *Dark Star Park* in astronomical time, specifically the alignment at 9:32 am on August 1st every year to commemorate Rosslyn’s founding. She also explained her process for conceptualizing the park design, which included imagining the pedestrians moving through the space of the park and constructed materials. Saad-Cook stressed the importance of *Dark Star Park*


Park as a successful collaboration between artists, architects, Arlington County, and the NEA’s Art In Public Places Program.

Art historian Norma Broude returned to Dark Star Park a few years later for an essay in Art In America in 1991. Broude, a feminist art historian from American University, begins her essay about the 1980 International Sculpture Conference in Washington, DC by highlighting Holt’s work and its role juxtaposing the historical monuments in the city: “…for its duration this city of traditional monuments was converted into outdoor studio for experimental sculpture.” Juxtaposing the federal city of monuments with experimental temporary public sculpture, Broude celebrates the transformation of the bleak cityscape of the nation’s capitol. After the festival ended, few substantial pieces remained in the district proper. Broude claimed that far more interesting permanent works were found across the river in Arlington and Alexandra. The centerpiece of Broude’s essay is Miriam Schapiro’s Anna and David, a thirty-five foot pair of colorful dancing figures placed on top of a prominent shopping plaza in the Clarendon area of Arlington. J.W. Kaempfer commissioned this work as he was developing the site in 1987. Kaempfer’s involvement with Holt and Dark Star Park several years earlier began an appreciation for public art in the commercial real estate developer and art collector. Broude claims that this work is a welcoming landmark in the otherwise concrete landscape of the Clarendon section of Arlington, VA. With this essay, Broude expanded her analysis to include accolades for the Arlington County public art program in addition to the individual artworks.

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75 Ibid.
Abandonment, Renovation, and 25th Anniversary

The positive reviews of *Dark Star Park* and its inclusion in art historical scholarship on public art gave Arlington County momentum to forge ahead with several other public art projects. The county’s experience with federal funds and private donors enabled the development of planning documents to facilitate a public art collection expanded overwhelmingly by public sculpture. *Dark Star Park* became famous in public art planning texts as an example of how municipalities can work with national agencies, such as the Endowment, local companies, and renowned artists to craft an excellent space for the local community.76

The 1970’s and 1980’s saw a huge expansion in the number of public sculptures in local communities across the United States through partnership grants such as the NEA’s Art in Public Places Program and urban percent for art programs. This proliferation of public sculpture outdoors and away from galleries and museums led to a crisis in conservation for these works. Percent for art funds such as Arlington Counties CIP program were designed to create new works in conjunction with building projects, but the conservation and upkeep of these works was an afterthought. Most public sculptures such as *Dark Star Park* were designed with the wear and tear of the elements in mind and used building materials such as steel and concrete, but several decades of environmental corrosion and urban decay took their toll on outdoor public sculpture. The

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nonprofit organization Heritage Preservation, which tasks itself with preserving the
nation’s heritage for future generations through innovative leadership, education, and
programs, initiated the Save Outdoor Sculpture! (SOS) program in 1989 to assess the
state of public art across the country.\(^7\) SOS partnered with several thousand volunteers,
communities, and state organizations to inventory and catalog the state of public
sculptures across the United States. This data was collected and stored in the Inventory
of American Sculpture database housed at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The
initial survey, completed in 1995, found that over half of all public sculpture inventoried
was in need of significant conservation treatment, and ten percent required urgent
attention. The deterioration of the artworks was due to vandalism, traffic accidents,
pollution, and improper upkeep and maintenance.\(^8\) *Dark Star Park* was surveyed in
June 1995 and found to need treatment. According to the report, the gunnite spheres had
developed white crust and cracks on their surface, and the metal tubes needed to be
refinished. In addition, the pools no longer held water and the landscaping was
overgrown and weedy.

Arlington County’s Department of Cultural Affairs used the SOS report on *Dark
Star Park* to initiate discussions about renovating the park in time for its fifteenth
anniversary in 1999. The conservation cost of $90,000 was included in a Park Bond the
county added successfully to the November election ballot in 1999. The country targeted
the ongoing maintenance issue surrounding the park causing the decay, and initiated
several meetings with the crew that took care of all the county parks. Additional training


was held to address Dark Star Park’s special needs, such as noncorrosive treatments for the pools and sculptural elements. Conservation work took longer than anticipated, and was completed in time for a rededication and alignment ceremony on August 1, 2002. The alignment was recalibrated the following year and the asphalt pavement surrounding the spheres recast. Arlington County’s Public Art program updated signage in 2003 for all of its public art collection, and a new placard was placed in Dark Star Park explaining the alignment and the importance of the work to the subsequent growth of the public art program. The Department of Cultural Affairs within the county formalized a Public Art Policy in 2000 and a Public Art Master Plan in 2004, and these documents incorporate best practices for community art projects and commissions as defined by the advocacy organization Americans for the Arts.\textsuperscript{79} The county’s experiences revisiting Dark Star Park helped solidify the process for completing both documents.

The historical idea of Dark Star Park and its role as the catalyst of the Arlington County Public Art Program is something that the Cultural Affairs Department has recently celebrated. The Cultural Affairs Division reframed Dark Star Park as an important historical work in the collection to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary and revalidate its importance in the development of the urban visual arts initiative. The celebration on August 1, 2009 started with an alignment ceremony and moved on to a panel discussion about the beginnings of the park with the artist, Nancy Holt. County administrators revisited the importance of Dark Star Park and how the creation of this collaborative artwork enabled other pieces to take shape. Dark Star Park suddenly was

\textsuperscript{79} See the Public Art Network at \url{www.americansforthearts.org}. Accessed 1/20/2010.
given an infusion of importance because of its role as a catalyst to the rest of the public art program. The public/private collaboration with a government grant program and the process of the works creation became more important than the actual physical space of the work. The process was more successful than the end product. This is juxtaposed to the Air Force Memorial, where the end product was a success because of obstacles encountered in the process. Dark Star Park’s meaning was absent, and for its twentieth anniversary the county reframed the work to give it historical importance related to the rest of the collection.

Impact of the Work

Annual alignment ceremonies took place each year on August 1st, but the county moved onto other more pressing public art projects in the late 1990’s. Dark Star Park is important in two ways: its role as successful community collaboration through a national grant program and its place in the history of the Arlington County Public Art Program. Community planners often cite its existence as evidence that it was a success; a vacant lot was turned into a functioning public sculpture park through an individual’s willingness to submit an application to the National Endowment for the Arts. Arlington County did not have the knowledge to select a nationally renowned artist to transform this dilapidated lot, but the review process provided the expertise to choose Holt and provided some initial funding. The total award from the NEA was minor compared to the final price tag, but this grant was used as leverage by the county to raise additional funds from private
donors, specifically developers such as J.W. Kaempfer, who in turn became an advocate for arts in the region.

According to Angela Adams, Arlington County’s Public Art Administrator, the county traces its success with subsequent public art projects and programs back to this seminal work completed in 1984, and uses it as a starting point for the history of the program in the county. This reframing allows Arlington County to reaffirm its role as an innovator in public art planning and draw attention to a long-forgotten piece of work. Dark Star Park is not a well-known landmark in the city, or even a regular space of activity. It was important through the role it played in establishing a narrative of collaboration and professionalism that enabled the Arlington County program to expand into its current iteration. In all publicity literature about the program, Dark Star Park is cited as the first public art project to incorporate an artist as the landscape designer in the county, and the launching pad for works created in Arlington over the past twenty-five years. With the success of this collaboration, the program gained momentum to expand and grow into a very successful urban art initiative. Since the completion of Dark Star Park in 1984, over fifty additional permanent works have been added to the Arlington landscape, and several more are underway. Holt’s notoriety as a prominent Earth Artist gave credibility to the program, and attracted nationally known artists for subsequent projects. Several works, such as Ned Kahn’s Liquid Pixels (2002) won national awards,

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80 Conversation with Angela Adams, Administrator of Public Art, and Brooks Barnwell, County Art Planner, August 1, 2009.
and a huge expansion in the number of projects underway coincided with a building boom in the Roslyn, Clarendon, and Crystal City neighborhoods.

The ingredients that went into the reception of Dark Star Park are important to note because they show how a successful urban renewal project is interpreted by local and national governments, critics, and arts administrators. The NEA chose Arlington County as a location for one of its Art In Public Places grants in part because it fit the guidelines of the program so well. The park renovated an area of urban blight, and brought the work of nationally known artist Nancy Holt to Arlington County. The close proximity to Washington, DC was helpful to the NEA panel in understanding the site specifics and choosing the appropriate artist. The location also provided the NEA with some oversight during the development of the park and for its dedication; several key NEA staff members were on hand for the dedication ceremony in 1984. Arlington County took a chance by submitting the grant application, and through the community’s acceptance into a prestigious federal art program they leveraged this credibility for future Arlington County projects. The county placed most of the major decisions into the hands of the NEA, such as the choice of artist and funding structure. Critics and academics were quick to laud the park as a masterwork of collaboration, citing Holt’s design of the entire park as far and above the expectations of her as an artist. Art historians were also drawn to Dark Star Park because it was far more accessible than her earlier works such as Sun Tunnels. The NEA endorsement of the project helped critics see the work in a positive light, and provided a ready example of successful grant collaboration. Art administrators within Arlington County used the success and publicity of the completed
project to incubate new projects and as leverage to increase the county’s public art budget. County administrators continued the momentum of *Dark Star Park* to create new pieces by working with private funding sources such as the J.W. Kaempher Corporation. Arts administrators from localities and nonprofit organizations outside Arlington used *Dark Star Park* as a model for other urban communities trying to expand their own cultural and artistic agendas. The success of *Dark Star Park* was easily replicated in other urban communities through funding sources similar to the NEA’s grant program and cooperation between local stakeholders. Success to Arlington County and other localities is defined as the creation of a collaborative project in the community. It is not an aesthetic achievement, but rather a bureaucratic milestone between public and private partners to transform an urban space into a recognizable and usable community location.

The success of *Dark Star Park* was overshadowed by newer and bigger public art projects in the subsequent decades after its creation. The county received applications for bigger projects as the building of urban villages such as Crystal City, Clarendon, and Ballston took shape. County administrators used the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget to add more artwork to areas undergoing recent development, and the building boom from 1995 to the present day has played a key role in the number and quality of artworks placed in the area. Compared to high visibility and award winning projects such as Ned Kahn’s *Liquid Pixels*, *Dark Star Park* is seen as less successful.
CHAPTER FIVE: INTRODUCTION TO THE AIR FORCE MEMORIAL

The United States Air Force Memorial is a prominent fixture in the Arlington skyline and visible from most vantage points in Washington, DC. Three tall silver spires curve slightly upwards from a central axis to form the region’s most abstract and newest military memorial. The memorial is situated on a hill in the southern part of Arlington County, between the Pentagon complex, Arlington Cemetery, and the Navy Annex. The Memorial was unveiled in 2006 with a military flyover and remarks from high-ranking military and government officials. The unveiling was flawless and orchestrated, and did not hint at the prior decade spent in bureaucratic warfare over the location and design of the planned monument. The original plan for the United States Air Force Memorial incited one of the most controversial debates over public land, memorials, and memory that the National Capital Planning Committee, National Park Service, and Commission of Fine Arts had ever seen. A furious argument erupted in Congress, and legal battles were fought between the Air Force Memorial Foundation and two groups created to prevent future construction near the Iwo Jima Memorial in the eastern part of Arlington Cemetery, which was the original location for the Air Force Memorial. When the dedication ceremony took place on October 14, 2006, fourteen years had passed between the start of the memorial project and its dedication. The early obstacles and failures of the first proposed location enabled the final monument to be much more successful as a
model for other military memorial projects and an entity separate from the shadow of Iwo Jima.

**Air Force Memorial Foundation**

In September 1997 the United States Air Force was the only major branch of the military without a memorial or monument in the Washington area. The best-known and iconic military memorial is the United States Marine Corps Memorial, otherwise known as Iwo Jima, which sits upon a hill east of Arlington National Cemetery. The Navy has a plaza dedicated to its service near the National Archives, and the lesser-known Army, Second Division Memorial sits near the Ellipse and the White House. In addition to the branch-specific military monuments, Washington, DC hosts the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, and several other specific monuments to battles and groups. The Women in Military Service Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery broke ground in 1985 to expand the historical story of the soldier and to highlight the contributions of women in military history. The National Capital Planning Commission, a government group that provides guidance for public monuments and buildings in the greater Washington region, claims over one hundred fifty-five memorials in this area. As the capital and seat of government, Washington is a site of collective memory. Many of its memorials are famous tourist destinations; others are statues of lesser known historical figures. Some sites of collective memory include buildings that house documents and artifacts, such as the Library of Congress. Museums with cultural ephemera are adjacent to solemn sites that show the history of the Holocaust or the Declaration of
Independence. With the exception of the National Air and Space Museum’s collection of historical airplanes, there were no depictions of Air Force history or an iconic representation of flight prior to the concept of the Air Force Memorial. On Fort Myer in Arlington, VA, one of the many military bases in the region, the Wright Brothers tested their airplane under the scrutiny of the Army, but this is only noted on a historical plaque.

The idea of a military memorial as a place for veterans to reflect and grieve took hold with the creation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in the 1980’s. This memorial was significantly different than the last major military monument constructed in the region several decades earlier, the Marine Corps War Memorial or Iwo Jima as it is commonly known. Iwo Jima was unveiled next to Arlington Cemetery as a victory monument celebrating the flag-raising during World War II and the Marine Corps as a whole in 1954. This monument became a larger symbol of the Marine Corps over the past five decades, and is now a sacred location for visitors and military rituals. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was created as a place of sacred remembrance of lives lost during the conflict instead of a victory monument in 1982. This monument became a site of pilgrimage for veterans and their families, and provided a place for remembrance and contemplation for visitors. Vietnam was the last major military conflict in recent memory until The Persian Gulf War in 1990-1991, and Americans’ reception of military veterans had changed significantly since the Vietnam War years earlier. The Persian Gulf War was openly criticized, but the returning troops were not subjected to the same backlash that the Vietnam Veterans faced in the 1970’s. The Air Force was a significant part of the Persian Gulf War, and the Air Force wanted a place to both celebrate and
mourn its dead. The Air Force wanted to create a monument to their increasing importance in military conflicts and technological innovation. The 50th anniversary of the incorporation of the Air Force as a separate service branch in September 1997 provided an opportunity for a memorial’s creation, unveiling, and dedication. The creation of Iwo Jima cemented the importance of the Marine Corps to the larger Departments of the Army and Navy, and the Air Force sought to create a sacred space for their recognition as a key member of the Department of Defense.

Creating a memorial within the Washington region is a very complex process. The necessary steps include lobbying Congress for a bill to create a memorial, navigating the Commission of Fine Arts and National Capital Planning Commission for design and site approval, and raising a significant amount of private funds to build the monument. The Air Force Association and the Air Force Sergeants Association were instrumental in creating the Air Force Memorial Foundation in 1992. Each branch of the military has several nonprofit organizations that advocate on behalf of their particular branch. The Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA) is dedicated to the interests of enlisted active duty and reservist Air Force personnel. This group was also responsible for creating the Airmen Memorial Museum in 1988 in Suitland, Maryland near Andrews Air Force Base, home of Air Force One. Endorsement by the AFSA showed that the enlisted members were behind the movement to create a memorial, demonstrating support for the project beyond the high-ranking officials in Washington, DC. The Air Force Association (AFA) is a “…civilian education organization promoting public understanding of aerospace
power and the pivotal role it plays in the security of the nation." In addition to promoting aerospace technology, it provides professional development opportunities through grants, scholarships, and publishes *Air Force Magazine*. Both organizations have retired high-ranking Air Force staff and board members, and were aware of the lack of a memorial dedicated to their branch of the military. Oliver “Ollie” R. Crawford is credited with the birth of the idea for the Air Force Memorial. A decorated World War II fighter pilot, businessman, charter member and then president of the AFA, Crawford had the charisma and determination to work with the AFSA to create an organization to administer the creation of a memorial. Crawford partnered with Chief Master Sergeant James D. Staton, executive director of the AFSA, and General Monroe Hatch, executive director of the AFA and former Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force to choose an executive director for the newly formed Air Force Memorial Foundation (AFMF).

Crawford, Hatch, and Staton knew that the AFMF needed a separate board of trustees and professional staff to distinguish itself from the two Air Force organizations that already existed. Lieutenant General Robert Springer, a retired Air Force officer with thirty-five years of service, was recruited from outside the region. Springer was an outsider to the current activities of the AFA and AFSA, but understood the inner workings of Congress and knew how to deal with senior Air Force leadership from his prior posts in DC and Germany.

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The Air Force Memorial Foundation was incorporated in January 1992 “…to pursue the development of an Air Force Memorial designed to honor the men and women who have served, are serving, or will serve in the United States Air Force and its predecessors, such as the Army Air Corps." The AFMF was granted 501(c)(3) status in August of the same year by the District of Columbia’s Office of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. This allowed the organization to begin the process of creating a memorial and raising funds independent from other military interest groups and the Department of Defense. The AFMF was very specific in the function of the memorial, and cited three main concepts that the memorial would embrace: 1. Visual recognition to honor the Americans who have served and are serving in the Air Force; 2. A visitor and educational facility to depict the heritage and future of the Air Force; and 3. Acknowledgement of the Air Force’s industrial partners and embrace of aerospace technology. Many military memorials cover the first and second goals outlined in the statement, and these concepts are used as a lobbying device for fundraising and acquiring the necessary permissions through Congress and other governmental organizations for the memorial’s creation. This is quite different from the creation of Dark Star Park or other public art projects because the aim of the military memorial is to honor and commemorate the personnel associated with a specific branch or historical battle.

Military memorials are important as educational centers for the public and marketing tools for future generations of soldiers. The Navy Memorial houses a visitor

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83 Text is from original incorporation documents, Air Force Memorial Foundation files.
84 Text is from official preliminary AFMF statement, Air Force Memorial Foundation files.
center, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial began plans to expand into a site that housed a visitor and educational facility in the late 1990’s. A recent trend in military memorials includes public education facilities and searchable databases for visitors and family members to connect with their loved one, and to tell the story of a particular place, battle, or branch within the larger frame of American cultural history. The idea of highlighting aerospace technology and embracing industrial partners was a new concept specific to the Air Force Memorial. Washington, DC is home to several major defense contracting firms, and these multi-million dollar businesses would help the AFMF to reach their next goal of raising at least $25 million dollars to finance the project and enable its opening to coincide with the September 1997 anniversary of the Air Force. Newly appointed as a director of the AFMF, General Springer realized that fundraising and significant early financial backing of the memorial was crucial to its continued momentum. He created an eleven member Board of Trustees for the AFMF, and recruited Joseph Coors Junior, a well-known member of the Coors Brewing Company as its Chairman. His father Joseph Coors Senior ran a financial empire based in Golden, Colorado, had political connections with Republicans Strom Thurmond, Ronald Reagan, and created the conservative think tank the Heritage Foundation. His mother, Holly Coors, was a member of the Board of Visitors for the U.S. Air Force Academy and on the board of the Naval Academy. Springer also recruited H. Ross Perot Junior, a former member of the Air National Guard and son of Ross Perot. H. Ross Perot Jr. was the Chairman of the AFMF’s Site and Design Committee, created to oversee the potential locations and architectural designs of the memorial.
Enabling Legislation

The AFMF began to navigate the Commemorative Works Act, a law enacted in 1986 by Congress and then president Ronald Reagan to streamline and regulate the process of creating memorials within the District of Columbia and the federal lands surrounding this area. Compliance with this act includes authorization by Congress for any new monument or memorial, and approval of design site of the proposed structure by two gate keeping government entities: the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission. In addition to this process, if the monument or memorial is on National Park Service land it must be approved by the Secretary of the Interior and if it is on federal property by the Administrator of the General Services Administration. This legislation was introduced in response to several incidents, including the controversy surrounding the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in the 1980’s and the problematic public sculpture *Tilted Arc* by Richard Serra in the Federal Plaza in New York City. The process of the Commemorative Works Act allowed for significant public comment and review of all monuments and memorials, and made the process of creating a new one very difficult and time consuming.

As soon as the AFMF was granted non-profit status it began an aggressive fund-raising campaign and faced the rules outlined by the Commemorative Works Act. In March 1993, Springer addressed the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission, (NCMAC) a government group working in tandem with the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) and National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) under the Commemorative
Works Act. Springer’s presentation on the Air Force Memorial was reviewed by the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission and found to be in compliance with the Commemorative Works Act, and bills were then introduced into Congress. The AFMF had already started lobbying the House and Senate on its behalf to create the memorial in 1992. House Resolution 898 was introduced by Florida Representative Earl Hutto (D) in February 1993 and referred to the Subcommittee on Libraries and Memorials, and Senator Ted Stephens (R) of Alaska introduced Senate Resolution 297 in April 1993.

Springer presented the case for the Air Force Memorial again to the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands, National Parks, and National Forests in the Committee on Energy & Natural Resources on November 3rd, 1993. The House passed the bill on November 16th and it moved to the Senate and was passed on the 20th. The bill became public law when it was passed by the 103rd Congress in November and signed by President William J. Clinton on December 2, 1993. The law authorized the AFMF to create the memorial, and included provisions that it could not be paid for with federal funds. It also authorized the National Park Service to provide land for the memorial.

The bipartisan co-sponsorship of the bill was cited several times in early AFMF documents to show that the memorial was receiving support beyond the conservative Republican members of Congress. Once the law to create the United States Air Force Memorial was enacted, the site plan and design passed into the hands of the National Capital Planning Commission and Commission of Fine Arts and the process to choose the location and architectural design was in full swing. This also began the fundraising campaign for the $25-30 million dollars in private funds needed to create the memorial.
CHAPTER SIX: SITE AND DESIGN

The Air Force Memorial Commission gained initial approval from the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission and Congress in the bill passed to allow for creation of the memorial in 1993, but had several years of work ahead in the site selection and design process. The Commemorative Works Act of 1986 was created to:

“(1) preserve the integrity of the comprehensive design of the L’Enfant and McMillan plans for the Nation’s Capital; (2) to ensure the continued public use and enjoyment of open space in the District of Columbia and its environs, and to encourage the location of commemorative works within the urban fabric of the District of Columbia; (3) to preserve, protect and maintain the limited amount of open space available to residents of, and visitors to, the Nation’s Capital; and (4) to ensure that future commemorative works in areas administered by the National Park Service and the Administrator of General Services in the District of Columbia and its environs - (A) are appropriately designed, constructed, and located; and (B) reflect a consensus of the lasting national significance of the subjects involved.”85

Three federal entities were designated as gatekeepers for all new monuments and memorials: United States Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC), and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). The NCPC is made up of seven members appointed by the President, and has significant aesthetic authority over everything from design of coins at the U.S. Mint to the historic structures in Georgetown. The NCPC was founded in 1924 as the National Capital Park Commission to oversee the open spaces and parklands surrounding

Washington, DC. It took on its current role in 1952 when Congress gave the NCPC authority over historic preservation of sites in addition to natural resources. The NCPC is the largest and most influential of the three organizations and has a staff of almost fifty employees, and its twelve-member commission includes three presidential appointees, two mayoral appointees, and the chairmen of the House and Senate committees with review authority over the District of Columbia. The remaining five positions are the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Interior, Administrator of the General Services Administration (GSA), and the Mayor and Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia. The NCMAC created in 1986 as part of the Commemorative Works Act, consists of members of both the CFA and NCPC. The NCPC has the most power over the review process of monuments and memorials, and authors policy guidance and long-range planning guides for the District of Columbia and its environs. The NCPC does not oversee the building of museums in the region, but does provide guidance for federal office building renovation and new construction.

**Site Selection**

The Commemorative Works Act defines Washington, DC and its environs as the National Capital Region, and includes Fairfax, Loudon, and Price William Counties in Virginia and Montgomery and Price George’s Counties in Maryland in addition to the District of Columbia, Arlington, and Alexandria. The Act designates two main precincts: Area I consists of “works of preeminent historical and lasting significance to the
Nation,”86 and Area II for “works of historical significance.”87 Area I is referred to as the “Monumental Core” and includes the National Mall, White House grounds and the Ellipse, Roosevelt Island, Lady Bird Johnson Park and entrance to Arlington Cemetery, Federal Triangle, Tidal Basin, and the waterfront from the Lincoln Memorial to Georgetown. Area II includes the rest of the District of Columbia’s four quadrant areas, except for the region surrounding the United States Capital that was under the control of the Architect of the Capital. Area I has significantly more restrictions and rules than Area II or the rest of the National Capital Region, but it was and continues to be the most sought after location for commemorative works and structures in the area.

In 1994 the Air Force Memorial Foundation began a study of the available memorial sites in Areas I and II and surveyed eighteen possible memorial locations with assistance of the National Park Service, ranging from Arlington Cemetery and Meridian Hill Park to Anacostia. The AFMF ranked each site on several criteria, including the capacity of the location to accept a building and the overall access and visibility of the site for a memorial. The AFMF selected four sites that were the most advantageous to the memorials’ placement: two were close to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum which would provide high visibility and a thematic tie-in with the surrounding museum, but were quite small. The third location was on a hill overlooking the Navy Annex, but the NCPC stated that this location would not be available until 2015. The fourth site was Arlington Ridge, in Arlington National Cemetery and close to the iconic Iwo Jima

86 Text is from the National Capitol Planning Commission Documents.
87 Ibid.
memorial and Fort Myer where the Wright Brothers tested their Military Flyer in 1909. General Springer and the board of the AFMF selected the Arlington Ridge as their preferred site, and cited two additional factors that made this location perfect for the Air Force Memorial. First, the United States Marine Corps and the United States Army Air Forces worked together to secure the island of Iwo Jima during World War II, and placement of the Air Force Memorial in close proximity to Iwo Jima would be symbolic of this battle. The Air Force was jostling for a position of importance next to Iwo Jima in the sacred space of Arlington Cemetery. Second, the Air Force Memorial would complete the symmetry between the Washington Monument, the Capital, and the Lincoln Memorial as outlined in an early National Park Service design than planned for several memorials to overlook Arlington National Cemetery.

General Springer presented the AFMF’s choice of the Arlington Ridge site to the NCPC, NCMAC, and the CFA in early 1994. The NCMAC approved the Arlington Ridge location on March 24th, but the CFA was torn between one of the sites near the Air and Space Museum and the Arlington Ridge location at their July meeting. John Parsons, chairman of the National Capital Memorial Commission, National Park Service, National Capital Region, presented the Arlington Ridge location on behalf of the AFMF with Springer. Parsons spoke of the original plan for the western part of Arlington Cemetery that included a veteran’s hospital and a major memorial on axis with the Mall, but stated that this plan was never fully realized. Parsons then stated that the Netherlands Carillon and the Iwo Jima Memorial were built off axis, and the Park Service would like to investigate the possibility of placing the Air Force Memorial on a visual axis with the two
existing structures. This alignment was in part to conform to the 1901 McMillan Plan for the National Mall that placed the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument, and Capital on the mall in a 180-degree axis. Two committee members debated the Arlington Ridge and Air and Space sites further, and the decision was postponed until CFA committee members could visit the two locations to judge the site placement in person. The final decision was tabled until the September 1994 meeting, but the AFMA had succeeded in narrowing down the site selection to only two locations, including their preferred site of Arlington Ridge and one location next to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum.

The AFMF then presented their site study to the NCPC, which rejected the Arlington Ridge location and instructed the AFMF to review additional sites for the memorial. The AFMF Site and Design Committee surveyed an additional twelve locations for the memorial and revisited a second location near the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. This location was designated in Area I by the Commemorative Works Act, which would further delay the project. Placement of monuments or memorials in Area I required additional vetting by Congress. This site also required renovations to a plaza and parking lot that would increase the overall project cost. The AFMF did not want to have additional bureaucratic obstacles or increase the cost of the monument, and were drawn to the Arlington Ridge location as the optimal site for the memorial.

While the site selection process was underway, the AFMA Site and Design Committee was also researching architectural firms for the memorial design. Perot, a

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member of the Site and Design Committee of the AFMF Board, held a competition with submissions for a possible memorial design from thirty of the best architectural firms in the United States, and chose eight for in-depth interviews. With visits to each firm, the Site and Design Committee took a step back and looked at the firms themselves and how well their presentation and design philosophy fit the AFMF concept of the proposed memorial. Perot, his employee Isaac Manning, and Springer visited the eight architectural firms across the country and decided to interview five firms further. These five firms were each tasked with a one-hour presentation on their architectural philosophy and past works instead of the design for the proposed Air Force Memorial. Four of the five architectural firms did not understand the request from the AFMF’s Site and Design Committee, and instead gave a glitzy presentation on what the monument would look like if their organization was chosen to create the monument. James Ingo Freed of the firm Pei, Cobb, & Freed presented exactly what Perot, Manning, and Springer were looking for in their overarching concept for the Air Force Memorial: a destination for visitors to Washington, DC and a design that was both simple and elegant, but still expressed awe and respect for the Air Force.\footnote{Walter Boyne, \textit{Soaring to Glory: The Story of the Air Force Memorial}, 2007.} Freed had not worked on a military memorial before, but he did design several monumental buildings within the Washington, DC area and was familiar to and respected by the CFA. His best-known building, the United States Holocaust Museum succeeded as a somber tourist destination and architectural landmark. In addition, J. Carter Brown, then Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, had been hired as an assistant director at the National Gallery of Art to oversee the construction of
the East Wing of this museum in 1978, which was designed by Pei, Cobb, & Freed. The Site and Design Committee chose Freed as the architect to design the Air Force Memorial and began preliminary design work as the Arlington Ridge location was embraced by the AFMF as the optimal site.

General Springer and John Parsons from the Park Service again appealed to the CFA in September 1994 for the Arlington Ridge site. Freed also came to this meeting and presented his initial design concept for the memorial. Prior to this meeting, Freed spent several months traveling with Perot to Air Force bases across the country doing research into a theme for the memorial, and he had settled on the abstract concept of horizontal flight. He stated that the Arlington Ridge location was more suited to this concept with the open space available on the hill, and he was concerned that the buildings surrounding the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum location would box in his concept.90 Commission members had a chance to visit both locations since their July meeting, and Freed’s eloquent description of his concept on the Arlington Ridge site led the CFA to approve it for the Air Force Memorial.

General Springer and the AFMF returned to NCPC to present the additional site surveys and the rational for choosing the Arlington Ridge location in October 1994. They again petitioned for the Arlington Ridge site as the most beneficial to the memorial, submitting additional documentation and enlisting help from the National Park Service. The AFMF again brought along Freed and his associate Peter Aaron to present their recommendations on the six final sites. The architects presented the Arlington Ridge site

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90 CFA and NCPC meeting notes.
as the most promising, with its role as an anchor to the axis of the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument, and U.S. Capital as part of their justification. Freed and Aaron also stressed that the design of the Air Force Memorial would not encroach upon Iwo Jima or distract from this icon. They presented a preliminary design concept that was low to the ground, human in scale, and included the sky as a central theme of the memorial. Aaron also cited the importance of Arlington Ridge’s proximity to Fort Myer as a symbolic anchor for the memorial. The NCPC granted general approval to the Air Force Memorial to allow the National Park Service and the AFMF to create a preliminary concept design and subarea plan exploring the Arlington Ridge location. The NCPC required the AFMF to present their design at a later time for full approval, and stated that if they did not feel the design was viable, they would remove the location from the possible choices.

General Springer realized that the upcoming meeting with the NCPC in April was his last chance to secure the location that the AFMF had adopted as the right location for their memorial. With help from Parsons at the National Park Service and consulting architect Isaac Manning, he pulled together an extensive presentation for the April 6th meeting to the NCPC. This included detailed notes and a matrix for each of the eighteen sites the NCPC asked the AFMA to review, and a substantive rationale for choosing the Arlington Ridge location. The Maryland Avenue site across from the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum was given a significant amount of attention. The obstacles of additional legislation in Congress and higher cost for adjacent utilities made the AFMF frame this space as an unfavorable place for the memorial. Manning mentioned the seven
year window of the original memorial legislation, and stated that the additional hurdles needed for Area I approval under the Commemorative Works Act for this site would pose an unnecessary burden on the AFMF and the approving entities of the NCMAC, CFA and the NCPC. Springer and Manning asked the Chairman of the NCPC, Harvey B. Gantt, to reconsider the Arlington Ridge location. Parson added that the National Park Service endorsed the Arlington Ridge site, and would work with the AFMF to make sure the proposed memorial would fit be appropriate in size and scope for this location. Parsons also stated that the Arlington Ridge site is already a location for memorials, and this space would give the NCPC the best option for imagining the design and placement for the Air Force Memorial.

The outcome of the meeting hinged on several factors. Chairman Gantt motioned for the site selection to be tabled further pending a visit to the Arlington Ridge location. Another commission member noted how well the Women in Military Service Memorial fit into the existing Arlington Cemetery landscape, and was confident the Air Force Memorial could be placed into the proximity of the Netherlands Carillion and Marine Corps War Memorial. Springer appealed to the committee for a decision at the current meeting, citing the cost and expense necessary to design a memorial for a specific location and stated that the AFMF could not afford to have Freed design something for the Arlington Ridge location that would be discarded if the site was disqualified in the future. The rest of the committee was swayed by the tight restrictions the National Park Service held on the design of the Arlington Ridge site, and the final site approval was finally granted on May 4, 1995 by the NCPC. The site approval was still just the
beginning; the CFA and NCPC were still required to approve the final design of the memorial within the parameters of both National Park Service and NCPC restrictions.

**Freed’s Design**

Over the next few months, Freed continued to research and refine his concept for the Arlington Ridge site. Of the dozen surveyed locations for the proposed memorial, this was the architect’s favorite for several reasons, including the close proximity to Iwo Jima and the Netherlands Carillon. These two tourist attractions and nearby metro stops in Rosslyn and Arlington Cemetery would ensure excellent public access and visibility for the future memorial. The site’s extensive green space on a hill overlooking Georgetown and Foggy Bottom would enable the architect to further develop his concept of capturing air as the main theme of the work. Freed was encouraged but bound by restrictions enacted in the April 1995 meeting with the NCPC that finally approved the Arlington Ridge site. The main condition for the Arlington Ridge location was a fifty-foot height restriction in a two-acre spot. The Air Force Memorial was also not allowed to obstruct the view of the Mall, detract from the Netherlands Carillon or Iwo Jima. Additionally, the future memorial would have to use the existing roadways, provide off-site parking, and could not interfere with any mature trees in the area. Freed’s research of Air Force buildings, aircraft, and symbols led him to the design concept of a star. A five-pointed star is the insignia on all U.S. aircraft since the early 1990’s and the symbol on several military medals and insignia. Freed’s final proposed concept design was an open five-pointed star symbol fifty feet high and one-hundred feet across at the base, resting
atop five tapered fins. From directly above, the star shape was clear. The shape was abstract from the visitor’s viewpoint on the ground. Below the open star structure, an exhibit and educational facility was proposed in about 20,000 feet of space. The star structure was to be made from grey metal anchored with industrial riveting reminiscent of airplanes, and perched on a granite base. Freed captured the air theme that he associated with the Air Force through the open space within the star structure. The visitor would be able to stand within this structure and have a five-sided pentagon frame their view of the sky. The memorial design was extremely abstract, so a smaller companion sculpture of four Honor Guard figures was also proposed for the space.

Freed’s final design concept was lauded by the CFA and architectural critics. J. Carter Brown, chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, called it “Absolutely brilliant!”91 Washington Post architecture critic Benjamin Forgey remarked that the Memorial “…will be a once a pleasant and an uplifting place, a moving monument both from afar and close up. It sounds a fresh note in memorial design. Grieving will be done here. But so, too, will be dreaming.”92 The Memorial design sailed through the necessary design approvals in compliance with the Commemorative Works Act: it was approved by the CFA on February 15, 1996 and the NCPC on March 7, 1996. After these bodies approved it, the National Park Service required a detailed subarea plan that studied the traffic and human impact of the proposed memorial.

Freed’s design was not as popular outside the CFA and NCPC. It was referred to as a lug nut, a launch pad, and a flowerpot in various letters to the editor published in the

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Air Force Times. A larger editorial in the Air Force Times by Robert Dorr called it an eyesore and claimed that the design did not do justice to the men and women who have served in this branch of the military. A retired Air Force Colonel called it an insult: “To place such an emotionless sculpture on the same hillside with the inspiring and heroic Iwo Jima memorial is little more than an insult to the gallant airmen that also served with distinction and valor.” Inevitably the memorial design was compared to the Marine Corp’s Iwo Jima, and the abstract space was not popular outside the AFMF. Members of the AFMA did not object to Freed’s design concept; he was able to work within the site restrictions of Arlington Ridge and heavily impressed the CFA, especially Chairman J. Carter Brown. The AFMF did not question Freed’s rationale for his design or the abstract theme; Freed was very well liked within the AFMF and this group also did not feel that they knew enough about architecture or design to question a practicing architect of his stature.

After the gatekeepers of the Commemorative Works Act approved the design, the AFMF began extensive fundraising for the memorial. The AFMF had to raise $25 million dollars before the National Park Service would issue a building permit and the project could break ground. The AFMF began to mobilize the chairman of its Board, Joe Coors Jr., and sought one or two significant donations to begin the process. The first was a $200,000 donation from former astronaut Major General Bill Anders in October 1996,

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93 Jessica Cornett, *Creation of the Air Force Memorial: Analysis of Changing Meanings Reflected Through and Shaped by a Cultural Symbol*, 2005
followed by a $1.6 million donation from General & Mrs. Ira C. Eaker Estate in honor of General Eaker’s service in World War II. In early 1997, the AFMF secured a major corporate donation from Lockheed Martin that would eventually grow to more than five million dollars upon the memorial’s opening. Lockheed Martin’s support added financial and corporate credibility to the project. As fundraising was underway, new problems began surfacing related to the memorial design and Arlington Ridge location. The AFMF assumed that it had cleared the hurdles of the Commemorative Works Act and that its next challenge was raising enough money to break ground by the 50th anniversary of the Air Force in 1997. They were mistaken. The biggest obstacles were just starting to appear, and a battle over turf and prestige between Iwo Jima and the Marine Corps completely changed the Air Force Memorial project.
CHAPTER SEVEN: THE BATTLE OF ARLINGTON RIDGE

The first opposition to the Air Force Memorial was launched by the NCPC and CFA who worried about the proximity of the Iwo Jima Memorial to the proposed Air Force monument, and these fears were assuaged when Freed was chosen as the memorial’s architect and the AFMF was given guidelines from the National Park Service to build the design. The AFMF and Freed worked within these design restrictions to gain acceptance for the monument. The design was approved in early 1996, and subsequent publicity for the new monument grew as the AFMF sought to reach its fundraising goal of $25-30 million dollars. The initial backlash to the abstract design from within the ranks of the Air Force began in 1996 and grew within the Air Force Community. The AFMF countered the objection to Freed’s abstract design through press releases and information related to the proposed visitor and educational center housed under the main memorial structure. Freed’s stature as an architect also helped keep the opposition to the monument design in check with the AFMF and higher-ranking Air Force officials.

In the midst of the AFMF’s fundraising and design publicity another group was mobilizing to prevent the memorial’s placement next to Iwo Jima and permanently close off Arlington Ridge to any other planned monuments in the future. Friends of Iwo Jima, a group of neighborhood residents, began to fight the placement of the Air Force Memorial in close proximity to Iwo Jima in 1997. Concurrently, Congressman Gerald B.
H. Solomon, a Republican from New York, introduced a bill that would prohibit any structure from being built in the proximity of Iwo Jima in July 1997. The Senate soon followed with legislation introduced by Pat Roberts of Kansas. Both Roberts and Solomon were former Marines and had received letters from other Marine veterans about their opposition to the placement of the Air Force Memorial near Iwo Jima. The bill gained momentum in Congress as Friends of Iwo Jima also mobilized support for the legislation. The AFMF fought back, but two legal cases were underway after the ground was broken at the Arlington Ridge site. These cases questioned the procedures of the Commemorative Works Act and claimed that the AFMF did not fully comply with the act. Interestingly, when the Arlington Ridge site was first chosen, General Springer of the AFMF met and briefed senior Marine Corps leaders and the U.S. Marine Corps Historical Foundation in February 1994 during the site selection process and later in July 1996 after the initial design concept was approved. The AFMF claimed that no objections were raised at either of these times to the placement and design of the memorial. Another interesting event was the publicity surrounding a remark that J. Carter Brown, then Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, made during the vetting process for the Air Force Memorial design. Brown referred to the figurative sculpture of the Iwo Jima Memorial as kitsch in a meeting of the CFA. This derogatory comment caused a lot of controversy and contributed to the uprising against the Air Force Memorial location on Arlington Ridge by senior Marine Corps leadership.

General Springer first met with the Friends of Iwo Jima in July 1997 when he realized that this group’s sole purpose was to oppose any other monument in proximity to
the Marine Corps War Memorial. Spokesperson Clayton Depue stated that the proposed
Air Force Memorial was a “violation to sacred ground.”

This group was also worried about the increase in traffic and noise that would be a part of the construction, and about permanent visual changes to the landscape once the memorial was complete. The next month, Solomon introduced House Resolution 2313 into Congress, “[a] bill to prohibit the construction of any monument, memorial, or other structure at the site of the Iwo Jima Memorial in Arlington, VA.”

Democrats Paul F. McHale of Pennsylvania, Thomas J. Manton of New York, and Republican Mark Sanford of South Carolina cosponsored the bill. Solomon was chairman of the House Rules Committee and a Marine veteran known for his fierce loyalty to the Corps. He was also one of the House members on the original legislation in 1993 that created the memorial, and claimed that he still fully supported an Air Force monument, but not anywhere near Iwo Jima.

Solomon claimed that he was notified by Friends of Iwo Jima, a group from a neighborhood adjacent to Iwo Jima that was worried about crowding and congestion in the neighborhood. After he introduced the bill July 30, 1997, Solomon sent letters to J. Carter Brown at the CFA, Chairman Harvey B. Gantt of the NCPC, and Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Department of the Interior in addition to senior leadership at the AFMF and the Commandant of the Marine Corps General Charles Krulak. Solomon also notified his colleagues in the Senate of the legislation, specifically Pat Roberts (R-Kansas), John Warner (R-Virginia), and Chuck Robb (D-Virginia), all former Marines.

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Springer responded to Solomon in a letter stating that he and the AFMF had respected the Iwo Jima Memorial space from the beginning and mentioned that he had briefed Marine Corps senior leadership and the Marine Historical Foundation in the prior two years. He also noted the large amount of money already spent for the site-specific architectural design at Arlington Ridge. Robert Stanton, Director of the National Park Service, responded on behalf of Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbit and cited the Commemorative Works Act and the steps the AFMF had taken to comply with this law to ensure that the proposed monument did not encroach on Iwo Jima’s space. Stanton also reminded Solomon that a comprehensive evaluation of the environmental impact of the memorial was underway and subject to approval by CFA, NCMC, and the Secretary of the Interior. General Springer issued a press release on August 14th in response to press coverage in the Washington Post the prior week of the Congressional actions to block the Air Force project. Springer’s press release described the steps the AFMF had taken over the previous four years, and reinforced that the proposed memorial was “over 500 feet away” from the current Marine Corps War Memorial. Ironically, Friends of Iwo Jima used the same distance as a rallying cry, stating that the memorial and planned Air Force visitor’s center were “only 500 feet away” from the sacred Iwo Jima statue. Springer’s press release also mentioned the historic Wright Brother’s flight near the proposed location, and that the AFMA had already raised $12.5 million dollars donated money based on the location and design. An editorial in the Washington Post in August 1997 cited the disruption the construction would cause to Marine Corps events that took place regularly at Iwo Jima, including the summer parades and annual Marine Corps
Marathon. The editorial called for moving the Air Force Memorial to a more appropriate site, such as near the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum on the National Mall.

In the next months the debate over the Arlington Ridge site became more heated with the AFMF testifying before the Senate Subcommittee on Parks, Historic Preservation, and Recreation on September 11\textsuperscript{th} and the planned groundbreaking ceremony of September 18\textsuperscript{th}. General Springer began mobilizing support in Congress in early September, and spoke before the Subcommittee to address the fact that he had notified senior Marine Corps leadership on the AFMF’s interest in the Arlington Ridge location years before. Also present at the subcommittee hearings was then Executive Director of the Air Force Association General John A. Shaud. Shaud served on the AFMF’s Site and Design committee before becoming executive director of the AFA. Congressman Solomon and Edward Grandis, a representative of Friends of Iwo Jima testified against the AFMF. Springer addressed Solomon’s testimony that the process of the Commemorative Works Act was flawed by outlining all of the steps the AFMF had taken for approval from the NCMAC, CFA, NCPC, and Department of the Interior. Solomon then offered to sponsor legislation that would transfer the site of the Air Force Memorial to Fort Myer and reimburse the AFMF up to one million dollars to cover the cost of the design process. Springer stated that the AFMF would continue with the proposed groundbreaking the following week. While construction work was not slated to begin for several months pending the environmental study of the location, the AFMF wanted to forge ahead. The project was already significantly behind the proposed schedule, but the symbolic gesture of the groundbreaking ceremony was important. Two
days before the groundbreaking, Friends of Iwo Jima and Congressman Solomon filed a restraining order against the groundbreaking ceremony. A U.S. District Judge denied the motion, stating that the plaintiffs, Solomon and Friends of Iwo Jima, would not suffer irrevocable harm if the groundbreaking went forward, but the AFMF would not be able to recoup the symbolic meaning of the ceremony because it was meant to coincide with the Air Force Anniversary. Solomon and Friends of Iwo Jima saw the groundbreaking ceremony as a way for the AFMF to gain momentum to secure Arlington Ridge and as a fundraising and publicity event.

The press continued to publicize what was soon coined “The Battle of Arlington Ridge” and heated editorials sprung up from both sides of the debate. A Washington Post op-ed piece published in September 1997 by AFA president Doyle Larson chronicled the history of the Marine Corps War Memorial forty years before and cited similar claims about the Iwo Jima statue’s placement on Arlington Ridge. He stated that in the beginning stages of the Iwo Jima memorial’s site selection, Hains Point and Arlington Ridge were the two choices offered to the Marine Corps Historical Foundation. The Foundation initially selected Hains Point, but this location was rejected by the precursor to the NCPC and the Marine Corps then favored Arlington Ridge. Prior to the construction of Iwo Jima, neighbors of the Arlington Ridge location were concerned about the loss of green space and the increase in traffic and congestion the Iwo Jima Memorial would bring to their neighborhood. Larson ended his essay by stating how beloved Iwo Jima is now, and the importance of trusting the process of the

Commemorative Works Act and environmental impact study. Larson’s statement inferred that the new Air Force Memorial would soon be as loved and revered as Iwo Jima.

**Congressional Intervention**

The battle continued in Congress. Springer testified again before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands in October with General Shaud and J. Carter Brown from the Commission of Fine Arts. Springer reiterated the process that the AFMF had undergone and how the Foundation notified senior Marine Corps officials and the Historical Society of the Marine Corps. Springer included the design parameters that were negotiated with the National Park Service and the NCPC on the Arlington Ridge site. Shaud echoed Springer’s testimony and stressed that the AFA and AFMF did not want to dishonor the Marine Corps War Memorial on Arlington Ridge, but in fact wanted to complement this iconic structure by locating the Air Force Memorial down the hill from Iwo Jima. Brown noted that Congress was encouraging “internecine squabbling” and interrupting the due process of the Commemorative Works Act. Interestingly, Brown also cited his father’s role as the first Secretary of Defense in unifying the military through the creation of the Department of Defense in 1947. Unfortunately Springer, Brown, and Shaud did not sway the Senate Subcommittee enough with their testimony. Pat Roberts, a Republican from Kansas, introduced Senate Resolution 1284, a companion bill to Solomon’s to prohibit any structure from being placed near the Iwo Jima Memorial. Conrad Burns of Montana, John H. Chafee of Rhode Island, Bob Smith of
New Hampshire, and Jim Jeffords of Vermont, all Republicans, cosponsored the Senate bill.

The press continued to capitalize on the feud between the two branches of the military, and articles ran in papers across the country with headlines such as “Grunts versus Flyboys” and “Leathernecks Ready to Fight for Turf.” An extensive letter writing campaign heated up as both the AFMF and Friends of Iwo Jima urged citizens to write their elected officials in favor or opposing the Air Force Memorial project. The AFMF also expanded its staff to deal with the opposition to the memorial and hired Major General Chuck Link as the Executive Vice President and Colonel Peter Lindquist as the Vice President of Operations. Link’s role was to oversee the proposed visitor’s center and mobilize additional funds for the project. Lindquist, a retired officer who had worked with General Springer in the past, and Link began responding to the letters and articles about the memorial’s placement near Iwo Jima.

James Webb Jr., a decorated Marine veteran and former Secretary of the Navy, published a scathing op-ed in the Washington Post on November 5th entitled “Wrong Place for the Air Force Memorial.” He began by stating his overall support for a memorial to the Air Force, citing his father’s service as an Air Force officer and recent burial at Arlington National Cemetery. Webb claimed that the memorial was not the proper use of public land, and stated “…to put it simply, the proposed Air Force Memorial is embarrassing, not inspiring.”

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Memorial would pollute Arlington Ridge, forever changing its context.” Springer immediately wrote a letter and editorial for publication to the Washington Post that noted Webb’s inaccuracies about the proposed design. Springer also wrote about the history of the Marine Corps Memorial on Arlington Ridge and noted that it was the second location for Iwo Jima; the first site was not approved and the Arlington Ridge location was originally denied for Iwo Jima by the precursor of the NCPC. Unfortunately, several papers ran Webb’s November 5th op-ed, but they did not publish Springer’s response. The Post did publish Springer’s statements on November 8th, and several letters to the editor that disagreed with Webb’s essay. The press battle continued for several months, with local papers describing the dispute as a war between the branches of the military over a sacred piece of land. Webb and Springer both saw the site as sacred, but each side had different interpretations of how their memorial was sacred. The Webb, the sacred hill next to Iwo Jima was not a place for an education center about the Air Force. The AFMF continued with fundraising, drawing some funds from the heightened controversy and selected a firm to create preliminary designs for the education center under the memorial. The National Park Service also continued the memorial process on the Arlington Ridge tract with a public comment meeting for the subarea plan held for public comment.

The battle over Arlington Ridge escalated in Congress with Gerald Solomon introducing a second bill on February 11, 1998 to prevent construction of the Air Force Memorial on Arlington Ridge. This bill contained a $1.5 million dollar appropriation for

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site-specific expenses incurred by the AFMF for design development on the Arlington Ridge site. Friends of Iwo Jima and Congressman Solomon had a preliminary injunction to prevent the location, construction, or erecting of an Air Force Memorial in Iwo Jima Park when the temporary restraining order was filed the previous September. The AFMF hired the law firm Patton Boggs, L.L.P. in 1997 to guide the foundation through the legal obstacles against the memorial and gain to advice on counteracting the bills introduced into the House and Senate. Patton Boggs set up a legislative action plan that targeted members of the Air Force Caucus and other Senators or Representatives with ties to the Air Force. The AFMF intensified their letter writing campaign of AFA and AFSA members to Congress in support of the Air Force Memorial and its location.

In early 1998, another incident emerged that would further anger Marines and weaken the credibility of the Commission of Fine Arts. Friends of Two Jima requested transcripts of the CFA and NCPC meetings that approved the site location for the Air Force Memorial, and came across a quote by J. Carter Brown that referred to the Iwo Jima sculpture on Arlington Ridge as “kitsch” in a September 1994 meeting. Nearly four years later this sparked a small media war between Solomon and Brown. The Old Breed news, a Marine publication located in Northern Virginia, headlined Brown’s comment about the Iwo Jima sculpture and stressed his embrace of the proposed Air Force Memorial abstract design. This further incensed Friends of Iwo Jima, Solomon, and another group created to “save” Iwo Jima Park, the Iwo Jima Preservation Foundation. Solomon and Tim Hutchinson, a Republican Senator from Arkansas, openly called for Brown to step down as CFA Chairman. Brown retorted that he was being a
pawn in a larger turf war over the Air Force Memorial’s location, and claimed that his comment was taken out of context. Brown issued a statement that he was not defaming the Marines and that in fact his remark was a misinterpretation. He wrote formal letters to Solomon, Hutchinson, and the press describing his awe of the Marine Corps and noting his father John Nicholas Brown’s service in the Navy and position as the first Secretary of Defense. The media frenzy over J. Carter Brown’s comment fueled even more letter writing to members of the House and Senate in opposition to the Air Force Memorial.

The injunction filed on September 17th by Solomon and Friends of Iwo Jima claimed that the Commemorative Works Act was not properly followed when the Air Force Memorial Foundation sought to build the memorial on Arlington Ridge. Two major factors were singled out as flaws in the process: the first was that the proposed Air Force Memorial was not in fact a commemorative object or work because it would contain an educational facility and visitor center. The second issue was with the actual review process, and specifically claimed that the initial decision on the Arlington Ridge site was rejected in October 1994 and then reversed in 1995, which went against the rules of such meetings. The first claim was easy to negate: the commemorative nature of the site was evident, especially in the preliminary memorial design. In addition, several major memorials include interactive components and visitor centers, most recently the Women in Military Service Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery and the Navy Memorial near the National Archives in Washington, DC. The second allegation had some weight. Edward Grandis, a former member of the National Capital Planning Committee claimed that Commission members were pressured into approving the
memorial plan at the May 1995 meeting and the vote process fell outside of the accepted parameters of the Commemorative Works Act. Grandis stated in an affidavit that committee member Jack Finberg, who represented the General Services Administration, was coerced into approving the Arlington Ridge site. Finberg claimed that Grandis’s remarks were false and that the committee reviewed and approved the Arlington Ridge site based on several stipulations that were added by the National Park Service to the proposed Arlington Ridge memorial design. This issue was chronicled in the Washington Times and brought additional media attention to the fight over the Arlington Ridge location. The real reason the vote to approve the location was changed included five new Committee members; a significant change to the twelve-member NCPC took place from the prior vote on this location in October 1994 to the approval for the Arlington Ridge site in May 1995. Once the allegations surrounding the coercion of committee members were put to rest, the larger implications of the Commemorative Works Acts came under scrutiny by the Congressional involvement of Solomon and Robert’s pending legislation. The Commemorative Works Act was a tool for creating memorials and monuments within the District of Columbia and its environs without specific oversight by Congress, and the legislation introduced to ban any additional construction surrounding Iwo Jima violated the autonomy and due process guaranteed by the procedures established within this Act. If Congress stepped in and became an arbiter over the Arlington Ridge location, this would set a precedent that Congress would then have the authority to override the Commemorative Works Act in the future. The CFA and NCPC felt that their power as gate-keeping agencies was diminished through
Congressional involvement over the Arlington Ridge site. The AFMF officially stated that Congressional interference was a violation of the due process of the Commemorative Works Act and an unfair imposition. CFA Chairman J. Carter Brown wrote a letter to the Congressional Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands stating his support for the Air Force Memorial and the dangerous precedent that Congressional involvement would set.

**Final Decisions**

On June 15, 1998 the civil suit filed against the Air Force Memorial Foundation by Friends of Iwo Jima and Representative Solomon was dismissed in a summary judgment. Friends of Iwo Jima and Solomon filed an appeal two weeks later, and the AFMF continued on with their plans for the Arlington Ridge location. In October the 105th Congress adjourned and the initial legislation filled by Solomon and Roberts expired. The AFMF was also required to complete an environmental assessment of the Arlington Ridge site, and this was undertaken while appeal of the civil suit was underway. As required, the environmental assessment was compiled and then presented, with a public comment option open for forty-five days to March 22, 1999. A provision of the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act, the National Park Service was required to address all written comments prior to the implementation of the proposed action. A formal public comment meeting on February 17, 1999 included statements by Marine Corps leaders that claimed that the Arlington Ridge site was selected through improper procedures by the CFA and NCPC. Friends of Iwo Jima also claimed that they were
concerned about crowding in their neighborhood and destruction of green space and mature trees. A second meting was held in early March to accommodate the rest of the speakers, both against and for the proposed Air Force Memorial. In this meeting, the Congressional Air Force Caucus was angered by statements by the Marine Corps that claimed all of Arlington Ridge as part of the Iwo Jima Memorial, and The National Park Service denied this claim by showing that Arlington Ridge was originally planned as a site of several memorials and a possible veterans hospital.

As a heated debate surrounding the environmental impact of the memorial on Arlington Ridge site was underway, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit delivered a ruling on Friends of Iwo Jima et al v. NCPC, CFA, and AFMF upheld the lower court’s ruling that the Commemorative Works Act was followed in the site selection of the Arlington Ridge location. The court ruled in favor of the defendants and found that the claim by Friends of Iwo Jima and Solomon had no support in the proceeding records of the NCMC, CFA, and NCPC. The court stated the Friends of Iwo Jima and Solomon were never involved in any of the meetings the CFA and NCPC had in 1994 and 1995 for the Air Force Memorial Foundation site selection to voice their opposition to the Arlington Ridge location, even though adequate notice was provided for comment. Additionally, Chief Judge Wilkinson said:

“It is not clear to us what the best site for the Air Force Memorial would be. It is clear, however, that this decision has been exhaustedly debated by the agencies and commissions charged by Congress with this task. Notwithstanding plaintiffs’ protestations, the Act clearly applied to the
sitting process at issue here, and any procedural errors are, when viewed against the backdrop of this extended process, plainly harmless.”

The civil action against the AFMF was formally over. The expiration of Solomon and Robert’s legislation and the approval of the environmental assessment cleared the way for the memorial to begin the official design approval and construction on Arlington Ridge.

The legislation enacted in 1993 to create the Air Force Memorial stated that adequate funds and building permits had to be in hand by December 2000. This deadline was fast approaching, and the AFMF was behind on having enough cash on hand to secure the building permits. Congress recognized that the delay in fundraising efforts was from the litigation, and much of the money raised by the Foundation was instead spent on legal fees over the site controversy. Congress voted unanimously in September and October 2000 to extend the Foundation’s enabling legislation for five years to 2005. With the new extension, the Air Force Memorial was cleared to develop in James Ingo Freed’s star-shaped design on Arlington Ridge next to Iwo Jima.

CHAPTER EIGHT: RELOCATION AND REDESIGN

The legal obstacles to breaking ground on the Arlington Ridge site had been cleared once the legislation was defeated, and the memorial could move forward. Major fundraising was underway to obtain the rest of the money needed before the National Park Service could issue building permits. Bills blocking construction in Congress had expired. The neighborhood group Friends of Iwo Jima held up the environmental assessment, but the memorial was on track for work to begin in 2000 for completion in 2002. Even so, the Air Force Memorial encountered problems that completely altered the location and design. Significant leadership changes took place in the government and AFMF. Second, several parties were apprehensive about continuing with the proposed construction. The Arlington site was cleared to move forward, but the friction between the AFMF, Marine Corps, and neighborhood residents would continue once construction was underway and the memorial was complete. Third, the events of September 11th changed how citizens and the armed forces viewed commemorative spaces within the Washington region and brought about a spirit of cooperation between all branches of the military. These changes altered the Air Force Memorial and transformed it from the contested star-shaped design on Arlington Ridge to three silver arcs on a hill above the Pentagon and Arlington Cemetery.
New Leadership and Location

General Charles Link, President of the Air Force Memorial Foundation, who had dealt with the legal obstacles the memorial had encountered, was asked to take an active duty position within the Air Force in June of 2000, and Major General Edward F. Grillo USAF (Ret.) replaced him. The Commandant of the Marine Corps was also new; General James L. Jones took his post in July 1999. Representative Gerald Solomon, who had fought the construction of an Air Force Memorial on Arlington Ridge, ended his term in the House in 1999. There was also a significant change in the White House with President George W. Bush succeeding President Bill Clinton in 2000.

The AFMF felt significant strain in 1999 when the lawsuits brought against the Arlington Ridge location were finally dismissed. While the Foundation originally anticipated completing the memorial in 1997 the date was pushed back to 2000, and again to 2002. The Foundation had spent a significant amount of money on legal bills and lobbying, and changed leadership and expanded their full-time staff to deal with the political and legal challenges over the past three years. Members of the House and Senate felt strongly for or against the Air Force Memorial location on Arlington Ridge and the AFMF knew that they might encounter more battles over the final design in the future. The National Park Service, CFA, and NCPC were also weary from the fight over the Air Force Memorial’s placement and knew that their authority as gatekeepers of new memorials and monuments in the Washington environs were under scrutiny from Congress. Senator John Warner of Virginia took over chairmanship of the Senate Committee on Armed Services in January 1999. He had already served five terms in the
Senate, was Secretary of the Navy, and a veteran of both the Navy and Marine Corps. In addition to his military connections, Warner was born and raised in the Washington region. He was aware of the friction over the Air Force Memorial, and contacted General Link in the fall of 1998 to discuss alternative sites for the memorial, specifically a location next to the Navy Annex in South Arlington overlooking the Pentagon. The Navy Annex site was originally part of the site selection process in 1994, but the location was owned by the Department of Defense and the NCPC stated it would not be available until 2015. Warner asked Link to meet with him at Henderson Hall next to the Navy Annex and sought Link’s opinion about the alternative location. Link stated that it was a desirable site, but thought it was out of the running for the Air Force Memorial. The National Park Service did not own it and one of the Navy Annex buildings would have to be destroyed for the memorial to fit onto the site. Link also said that the design process up to this point was tailored for the Arlington Ridge location and the parameters placed upon this space by the Park Service. Warner took Link’s comments under consideration and told him that he would see about the availability of the Navy Annex land. Link brought this to the board of the AFMF, and all of the Board Members except Board President Joe Coors, Jr. were receptive to the possibility of a new site for the memorial if it would expedite construction and completion. Coors eventually resigned from the Board of the AFMF when the foundation decided to move forward and build the memorial on the Navy Annex site in 2002 instead of the original location.

The Navy Annex location had some significant problems. In the early meetings of the foundation, two board members actually preferred the Navy Annex location to the
Arlington Ridge site because they felt it would provide the Air Force Memorial with a prominent location in the Washington skyline on the hill overlooking the Pentagon. Once it was deemed unavailable in the 1994 NCPC meetings the two board members endorsed the Arlington Ridge site. Link began investigating the alternative location at the Navy Annex when the legislation against Arlington Ridge was still underway. After his initial meeting with Senator Warner in October 1998, he wrote letters to the Department of Defense, Arlington National Cemetery, and Arlington County inquiring about the long-term plan for the Navy Annex site. The Navy Annex buildings were constructed after World War II and originally planned as a storage site for records and temporary office relocations. The buildings have stood for much longer than their anticipated life, and plans for their demolition were often discussed to expand Arlington National Cemetery to move their offices to neighboring Fort Myers, Henderson Hall, or the Pentagon. In late 1998, Link was aware of the military’s interest in expanding Arlington Cemetery onto the Navy Annex site and the inclusion of a military museum in this transfer on the Navy Annex land. He wrote to Senator Chuck Robb of Virginia as well as to the three agencies that controlled the Navy Annex and surrounding land. The AFMF also received a letter from the Iwo Jima Preservation Committee that endorsed moving the Air Force Memorial to the Navy Annex site the same fall. In the Senate, Warner began to draft a bill that would make part of the Navy Annex land available to the AFMF and keep the Arlington Ridge location if the Navy Annex site was deemed unsuitable for a memorial. Grillo, who replaced Link at the helm of the AFMF in June 2000, was looking for a compromise and quick way to construct the memorial. Warner’s legislation was expanded and the
Department of Defense endorsed the move in October 2000. The AFMF was open to this idea, but still clung to the original Arlington Ridge location for their Air Force Memorial.

The AFMF and its trustees were still moving forward with the Arlington Ridge site but were open to the idea of the Navy Annex location as an alternative location. The Foundation was still fully committed to the Arlington Ridge location, even though the AFMF would continue the controversies with Friends of Iwo Jima and the Marine Corps. The design was site specific, and a significant amount of time and money had been invested in the architectural planning for the memorial. Funds had been solicited based on Freed’s design on the Arlington Ridge location. Finally, the AFMF had spent a lot of time, funds, and energy defending their claim to the Arlington Ridge site. After several years of legislation and court battles, the space on Arlington Ridge was cleared for the Foundation to start the final design, environmental assessment hearings, and eventual construction. Fundraising and design modification was still underway, but the overall progress of the memorial had slowed down considerably from its early momentum. The final design concept was 60% complete in 2000, and had to be approved by the CFA and NCPC. Both agencies were hesitant to work with the AFMF after the legal battles over Arlington Ridge, and anticipated more legislation as the design was finalized and the National Park Service presented their full environmental assessment of the site. All three federal agencies were concerned that additional legal involvement from Congress over the Arlington Ridge site would render the Commemorative Works Act invalid and eliminate their roles as gatekeepers in this process. The National Park Service was especially hesitant to work with the AFMF since the environmental assessment and
approval of the final memorial design required a public hearing. They feared significant 
protest over the location near Iwo Jima and several days of testimony from groups who 
opposed their environmental assessment.

On September 11, 2001 things changed. The terrorist attack on the Pentagon 
brought the armed forces together and the department of Defense soon sent military 
troops to Afghanistan and Iraq. The country was unified in its support for all troops that 
were sent abroad to fight. A spirit of cooperation between the services, combined with 
the need for a military memorial to mourn the dead, influenced the AFMF and its Board 
to change the location of the proposed Air Force Memorial from Arlington Ridge to the 
Navy Annex location.

The Board of the Air Force Memorial Foundation met in October 2001, just a few 
weeks after the attack, to assess the overall progress of the memorial and to weigh the 
two locations. The Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Michael E. Ryan, aware of 
the conflict between the AFMF and the Marine Corps over the memorial site, asked the 
Foundation to look into using the alternative location at the Navy Annex. At this point 
Ryan, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, the Congress, and the Department of 
Defense all wanted the conflict over Arlington Ridge to be settled by moving the location 
to the Navy Annex. The AFMF was still heavily invested in Arlington Ridge, but the 
Board of Trustees and staff realized that they needed to change the site or face the 
possibility that an Air Force Memorial next to Iwo Jima would create a significant rift 
between the services and ostracize the federal entities that served as gatekeepers of the 
commemorative works act. Senator John Warner had begun legislation a year earlier to
expedite the demolition of one of the Navy Annex buildings to make room for the Air Force Memorial, with a clause that the Arlington Ridge location would be held as a backup space. Now this legislation was moving through Congress and was planned as an amendment to the Defense Authorization Bill set to go before President Bush in December 2001. The AFMF was concerned about the cost of additional legislation for the Arlington Ridge site, additional time for the full approval process through the National Park Service and the NCPC, and the possibility that the five-year extension to the original legislation would pass before building was complete. The AFMF felt that another extension to the original legislation that created the Air Force Memorial would not be possible. The AFMF was also very concerned about the political repercussions of going against the wishes of the DOD, Congress, and senior military leadership to build on the Arlington Ridge site. In speaking to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Joe Coors, Jr., a fellow board member stated:

“Mr. Chairman, I would suggest if the legislation passes and this Board does not accept the Navy Annex site, the first thing we need to do is go out and get a dog. Because that is the only friend we are going to have in this town.”

The Foundation realized that the best option was to accept the Navy Annex site, and requiring a clause in the legislation to keep Arlington Ridge as an alternate location. After the significant battle over one location, the AFMF knew that having an alternative was necessary, and if the Navy Annex was not viable they would be able to go back to the original design and site showing that they has tried their best for a relocation. Joe

102 Cornett, p.49.
Coors Jr. did not want to move the location of the proposed memorial to the Navy Annex, and after pressure from Foundation staff and the rest of the Board Members to change the site, he resigned. Ross Perot Jr. took his place as Chairman and enthusiastically embraced the new location. Perot was on the original Site and Design committee and a member of the Board since the initial formation of the AFMF. Perot was also very successful in the real estate business, which helped him understand the complexities of the new location and subsequent steps the AFMF needed to undertake to construct and complete the memorial in a short amount of time.

On December 28th, President George W. Bush signed the Defense Authorization Bill that included three acres of land for the Air Force Memorial on the Navy Annex site on a hill overlooking the Pentagon. The bill called for destruction of Building 2 Wing 8 of the Navy Annex complex to make room for the memorial. Ironically this building was just rehabilitated to house Pentagon offices that were undergoing renovation, but the political harmony between the armed forces was seen as a more important issue than the economic cost of destroying a newly expanded structure. The bill also had two key clauses about the Navy Annex site: the first was that the Department of Defense had sole authority in the site selection and design approval of the Air Force Memorial. This meant that the Commemorative Works Act did not apply to the new location of the Air Force Memorial, and that the AFMF did not have to undergo a lengthy approval. The bill also said that the rest of the Navy Annex buildings were to be demolished no later than 2010, and this opened up the space to the possible expansion of Arlington National Cemetery. The AFMF envisioned their memorial as a key location in Arlington Cemetery in the
future if it was expanded, with Iwo Jima as the other significant military memorial on the opposite end of this space. Tentative talks were underway with the cemetery and the Department of Defense to expand its borders, and this could position the memorial on the eastern edge of the space. Arlington County and the Pentagon bordered the Navy Annex, but it also backed up against Arlington National Cemetery. The Cemetery was quickly filling up, and negotiations were underway to use the rest of the Navy Annex buildings as land to expand the cemetery. The age and number of World War II veterans as well as the new conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq necessitated more space than what the current Arlington Cemetery grounds could provide.

The Navy Annex location was part of an area known as Columbia Pike that Arlington County had proposed as a revitalized urban village. Planning for the revitalization of Columbia Pike included expanded business, transportation services, and significant building initiatives less than a mile from the Navy Annex. In addition, this location was near a historic site that once housed Freedman’s Village, a historic African-American enclave formed in 1863 when slaves in the District of Columbia were emancipated. Arlington County was exploring the idea of an African-American museum or monument near the Navy Annex to commemorate Freedman’s Village. An expanded Arlington Cemetery and revitalized Columbia Pike with the addition of other tourist destinations made the Navy Annex a very attractive location for the Air Force Memorial, and significantly more attractive to the AFMF than in the initial site selection meetings of 1994 and 1995.
Soaring Spires

The next major hurdle of the new location was the design. James Ingo Freed had been working on the final iteration of the design for the Arlington Ridge site, and had been involved with the Memorial and AFMF for several years. The Navy Annex site was completely different from Arlington Ridge, and did not have the design restrictions on height and size. The AFMF and its Board wanted a new design for the new location, but they were hesitant to stop Freed’s work. Freed was deeply involved with the memorial and had given several years to researching and designing his concept. In addition, he was in declining health and suffering from Parkinson’s disease. The AFMF claims that the hardest part about moving the proposed location to the Navy Annex site was telling Freed that his design would not be part of the new location. Grillo, Lindquist, and Perot delivered this news to the architect and the Board again sought the help of Isaac Manning, an architectural consultant who helped with the first design competition. Three architectural firms were asked to submit concept drawings and statements for presentations to the AFMF in April 2002. Manning selected two firms from California, one from Massachusetts, and a local satellite school of the Virginia Tech Architecture program that required designs as part of a class assignment for the memorial. Freed was also asked to submit a new design for the Navy Annex site as a courtesy. The AFMF and Board did not believe that Freed could create a new design without referencing the Arlington Ridge star concept, and thought his frail health would prevent him from fully working on a suitable design alternative. During the design presentation to the board on April 3rd, Freed surprised everyone with his concept for the new Navy Annex location.
Freed had been constrained by height restrictions on the Arlington Ridge site, but he created a simple and streamlined design with three spires reaching upwards of 330 feet at the highest point in the Arlington sky. The AFMF felt that the historical momentum after the September 11th attacks required a soaring and patriotic monument to the Air Force, and the prospectus for the memorial’s design stated that the Foundation sought something that was grand, soaring, and inspirational. The Foundation and Board unanimously selected Freed’s design on the spot at the April presentation, even though they had planned to deliberate and announce their design selection the next day.

Freed’s design had one central motif: three soaring silver arcs that captured the feeling of flight. He envisioned the Air Force Memorial as a signature Washington landmark that could be seen from several vantage points in the city. He was inspired by the maneuvers of the Air Force Thunderbirds and his design incorporated the contrails and flight path of the aircrafts. His concept was unanimously approved, but the engineering specifics took several months to complete. The first problem was the proposed height of the spires in Freed’s design; his model had three arcs and the tallest was 330 feet above the base of the Navy Annex hill. The proximity to Reagan National Airport was a worry and the Federal Aviation Administration negotiated with Freed to a final design compromise of a maximum spire height of 270 feet with a warning light for passing aircraft.

The engineering specifications and landscaping plan were much more complex. As the design concept was explored, Freed and the AFMF hired Olin Partnership as the landscape designer. This firm, located in Philadelphia, had worked on several urban
design and cultural projects, and was an expert in public spaces and gardens, especially in
the Washington region. Olin designed the landscape of the National Gallery of Art’s
Sculpture Garden from 1993-1999 and concurrently completed the Washington
Monument grounds from 2001-2005 while designing the public green spaces surrounding
the Air Force Memorial. Olin’s work had also won several awards for sustainability and
green design. Freed then selected Ove Arup & Partners (Arup) in New York City as the
engineering firm to take his design concept to construction. This group had recently
completed the Millennial Bridge in London and had a history of integrating structural
design with new materials in aesthetically innovative global projects ranging from the
Sidney Opera House to the Pompidou Center over the past thirty years.

With the two main partner firms chosen, Freed and Arup started selecting the
materials and conducting structural tests for the spires. Freed wanted the spires to be as
thin and tall as possible, and chose external structural pieces that fit together on the
outside surface like the exterior of an aircraft. Each spire was triangular, with a stainless
steel skin over a concrete interior that was anchored into a base. The concrete base
balanced the higher, open triangular steel structure that tapered into a point at the top of
each spire. The gradual upward curve of each spire presented a unique engineering
problem of weight, bending, and axial stresses. The top of each spire literally pulled the
entire column down and tested the integrity of the three-inch thick stainless steel exterior.
With the added environmental stressors of ground movement and wind shear, balancing
each spire against internal and external forces posed significant problems. Arup
conducted computer simulations to arrive at a way to counterbalance the curved weight
of each spire and deflect wind sway speed and ground shifts around the memorial. The solution became one of the most interesting facts about the memorial: each spire has several lead balls inside of the lower concrete shell that act as dampers to offset the weight of wind sway speed and reduce the movement of the spire. The largest of the three spires has six balls, the medium spire has four, and the smallest spire has three. The largest of the lead orbs weigh nearly 1,600 pounds each. Once the engineering issues of how to support and stabilize the three spires were solved, Freed began to formulate a podium base for the spires with Olin concurrently creating the social and environmental spaces of the memorial. David A. Rubin, one of Olin’s Principals, described his firm’s role in the Memorial creation as constructing a place for social interaction that includes a space for reflection and connections between people and ideals.103 Freed designed a triangular base several feet off the ground to allow the spires enough depth to balance their height and weight. Within this base is a five-pointed star design similar to the first design that Freed had envisioned at the Arlington Ridge site. As in that original design, the star shape is subtle and only visible from directly overhead the memorial.

Freed’s three spires were the centerpiece and main component of the memorial, but several smaller design motifs were also included in the Air Force Memorial site. One was a holdover from the Arlington Ridge location: The Honor Guard cluster of four figures was the only part that the AFMF wanted to keep from the original design. The Honor Guard is a grouping of four Air Force persons who are present at ceremonial events and military funerals. As stated on the USAF website, “The mission of the USAF
Honor Guard is to **REPRESENT** Airmen to the American Public and the World.”

The AFMF Board and staff thought that the abstract sculpture still needed a figurative element to compliment the spires, and this was not an unusual pairing for a military memorial. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is an abstract slash of granite, but two groupings of figurative sculptures were added in 1984 and 1993, partially in response to the controversy over Maya Lin’s abstract design. Colonel Pete Lindquist, Vice President of Operations for the AFMF, was tasked specifically to locate a sculptor to produce a life-size bronze replica of the four-person Honor Guard formation. Initially Lindquist was interested in Frederick Hart, who designed The Three Soldiers part of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in addition to several other Washington, DC pieces. Lindquist held several visits with Hart to discuss the design, but fell ill and recommended Zenos Frudakis to complete the work. After reviewing Frudakis’s portfolio, the AFMF selected the younger artist to create an Honor Guard formation of included three men: one Caucasian, one African-American, and one Hispanic. The fourth figure was to be a Caucasian woman. The diversity of the four Honor Guard figures was intended to reflect the diversity of the Air Force, and this was an important concept the AFMF wanted to convey.

Although the AFMF did not have to seek final approval from the NCPC and CFA, Freed’s design for the new Navy Annex location was endorsed by both governing agencies, but the Honor Guard statue was a contested part of the overall memorial space. In March 2003 the Commission of Fine Arts unanimously approved Freed’s initial

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concept design, and reviewed the final design schema in April 2004. On the final proposal the Commission stated that the memorial’s design was so strong that it did not need any figurative additions, and adding an Honor Guard sculpture “…would actually detract from the dignity of the rest of the Memorial’s features.” Frudakis, Lindquist, and the AFMF felt very strongly that the Honor Guard sculpture should be included to complement the main abstract component of the memorial. The CFA approved the final design in April of 2004 with recommendations about removing or minimizing the Honor Guard Statue. A similar process took place with the NCPC. Initial design plans were approved in March of 2003, and a final design review had several recommended changes, including complete removal of the Honor Guard statue. The NCPC stated that the Honor Guard was incompatible with the memorial’s striking contemporary design, and may interfere with ceremonial activities that would take place in the space. They also recommended that the flashing red light planned for the highest spire of 270 feet should be replaced with another notification system. With the stated stipulations on the Honor Guard, the NCPC approved the final design and construction plans of the Air Force Memorial for the Navy Annex site in August 2004.

The AFMF and Department of Defense were required to complete a major environmental assessment for the Navy Annex site that looked at how the memorial would affect the socio-economic, cultural, transportation, and physical resources of the surrounding area. Highways and federal buildings bordered the Navy Annex site; therefore local residents were not in close proximity to the memorial and could not raise

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105 CFA notes.  
106 NCPC notes.
concerns as the Friends of Iwo Jima in the Rosslyn neighborhood did several years before. In contrast, the Navy Annex building was an eyesore off a state road, and the nearby Columbia Pike residents of Arlington County favored transforming one end of this unappealing box-like structure into an open memorial with green space. Parking and entry into the memorial were the most pressing concerns of the environmental assessment, and a Navy Annex lot across the street easily served as a parking area and main entry point into the memorial’s grounds. A historical preservation consultant was also brought in to the discussion because the Navy Annex Buildings were over sixty years old, but the buildings were not listed on the Register of Historic Places or deemed an important historic site. Findings of no significant impact were officially designed on the Navy Annex site for the Air Force Memorial.

A formal groundbreaking ceremony took place on September 15, 2004. The overall cost for the project had increased to $31 million, but fundraising continued at a rapid pace once a truce was reached over the location and the new Navy Annex site was selected. The patriotic feelings felt by many American citizens after September 11th also aided the AFMF in its fundraising goals. Construction on the site began by first demolishing Wing 8 of the Navy Annex structure and grading the land for proper drainage and utility specifications in October 2004. The AFMF met their goal of completing groundbreaking before the December 2005 deadline, and major foundation work continued for several months. Earlier in 2005 the Department of Defense officially turned the site over to the AFMF and now the Foundation had full control over the entire space. Retaining walls and slab foundations were in place by January 2006, and
landscaping of the hill and grounds began that spring. Each spire had several pieces constructed and fitted off-site and plans included adding each one in several pieces on the site. All in all, fifteen pieces completed the three spires, and the first section was installed on February 10, 2006. The subsequent fourteen sections were stacked one by one over the spring and summer, with the last section placed on the top of the tallest spire on September 22, 2006 to officially complete the construction.

**Dedication and Reviews**

Memorial dedication was held the following month on October 14, 2006. It was a grand ceremony with remarks by then President George W. Bush, Air Force Chief of Staff General Michael Moseley, and other high ranking military and government officials. A press preview a week earlier took place in pouring rain, but on the day of the memorial nearly 50,000 people came to see the unveiling under perfectly blue skies. It was a bittersweet unveiling for General Lindquist and the rest of the AFMF staff and board; architect James Ingo Freed, who had contributed fifteen years of history with the AFMF died before this project was completed.

The response to the new Air Force Memorial was overwhelmingly positive. Much of the press about the unveiling and dedication ceremony focused on the struggle of the AFMF to build a memorial for fifteen years, and lauded the AFMF for their perseverance after the fight over the contested Arlington Ridge location. Hundreds of veterans from World War II, Vietnam, and more recent conflicts attended the dedication and many shared their stories with the press and each other. The ceremony received
mention in newspapers across the country. Critics were also universally positive about the work: the Washington Post had focused on the innovative engineering system of the ball in box dampers in an article earlier that summer; architecture critic Benjamin Forgey called the initial design exhilarating when it was first unveiled to the public in 2003, and culture critic Philip Kennicott stated that “…the Air Force jumps into first place for having the most distinctive service memorial in the Washington area.” He praised the soaring spire design, but criticized the Honor Guard as a “…poorly conceived, badly executed and oversize bronze statue of four figures holding flags, which feels a little bit like a 35-cent plastic bride-and-groom stuck on a $500 wedding cake.” Perot, countering criticism of the Honor Guard, claimed that this grouping of four figures provides photo opportunities for visitors that aren’t possible in the tall spire design. As with the first design for the Arlington Ridge location, architecture and culture critics were drawn to the three-spire grouping and embraced the added impact this will have on the landscape of Washington and Arlington. The bureaucratic success of the memorial was due to placating all stakeholders, and adding the figurative element to the abstract design was a necessary step. Critics lauded the overall design, and objected to the figures. Military administrators required this human element to offset to the larger abstract work and provide a marketing tool for visitors.

The small amount of criticism over the memorial was focused on the representational sculpture of the Honor Guard. This part of the larger complex was an

110 Ibid.
easy target for culture critics since it was the most contested part of the new design and echoed the issues surrounding the Vietnam Veterans Memorial twenty years earlier. The abstract design of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was criticized, and two groupings of figurative sculpture were placed near the memorial to placate concerns that the abstract design was not appropriate enough for a military monument. With the design of the Air Force Memorial, the foundation intentionally placed a figurative grouping to humanize the tall abstract spires of Freed’s design and provide a photo op for visitors. After the battle over the Arlington Ridge location, the AFMF was very cautious to make sure any potential controversy was ameliorated before it became a significant issue. The overwhelmingly positive response to the memorial was in part because the AFMF persevered through the obstacles of congressional intervention and conceded to a new location by letting the Marines keep Arlington Ridge. The AFMF found their own place in the Washington memorial landscape and worked cooperatively with the Department of Defense and John Warner in accepting the new site. The memorial’s design and placement were easily pushed through gate-keeping agencies when the new location was no longer a contested space.

The continued success of the Air Force Memorial is due to the ongoing activities that take place at this location; it is a popular site for military retirement ceremonies, concerts, speeches, and has even been used as the ceremonial location for a wedding. The Air Force Band performs twice a week in the summer and fall, and three weddings have taken place in this location overlooking the Washington skyline. These activities are important because they show that this important commemorative space is active and
constantly needed as a setting for military rituals. Unlike the military memorials on the National Mall, the Air Force Association oversees this space instead of the National Park Service. The location for the memorial is on Department of Defense land and does not fall under the support of the National Park Service for its upkeep and operations. After the unveiling and dedication of the site, the Air Force Memorial Association was absorbed into the Air Force Association. The Air Force Memorial Association did not need to remain a separate non-profit from the military interest groups after it was completed, and the Air Force Association handles the upkeep and maintenance of the site. The Air Force Memorial Association operates in a small office space on the memorial to schedules events, oversee daily operations, and conduct tours. Colonel Pete Lindquist is tasked with the day-to-day operations and publicity for the memorial. At this time, it has received over a hundred thousand visitors, is a popular Tourmobile Stop, and even has its own cell phone audio and mp3 tours. The three spires are easily recognizable landmarks of the Washington skyline. The prudent planning and marketing developed through the trials of the first memorial design and site have served the administrators of the Air Force Memorial well in promoting the monument and playing down its troubled past.

The southern part of Arlington County faces more changes as the military and civilian landscapes continually shift. The current plan for Arlington Cemetery expansion includes demolishing the rest of the Navy Annex buildings by 2013 and expanding the cemetery to the edge of the Air Force Memorial. Columbia Pike, the road curving down the hill from the Air Force Memorial to the Pentagon Memorial will be straightened and
allow for more green urban space between the two sites where now there is only highway. Arlington County and the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization, a neighborhood advocacy group for new projects in this region of the county, are working with the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority to create a streetcar trolley project to replace the bus system currently in place running from the Pentagon Metro station out toward Fairfax, VA. The proposed streetcar system will include a station dedicated to the Air Force and Pentagon Memorials midway between the two sites. The streetcar project is still under consideration. The Air Force Memorial’s location is a catalyst for additional development in this part of the county, and the two memorials have worked together to draw tourists from Rosslyn and the northern part of Arlington Cemetery to this new area of commemoration.

The United States Air Force Memorial is a successful cultural object in several ways, and its initial failure made it a much stronger memorial space. The Air Force originally desired a memorial to recognize their branch of service, and navigated the Commemorative Works Act to properly choose a location and design. The first location was at the edge of Arlington National Cemetery in close proximity to the Marine Corps War Memorial, and a fierce debate took place over this contested space. Eventually a new location was chosen on a hill overlooking the other side of Arlington Cemetery and the Pentagon, in part to avoid prolonged tensions with the Marine Corps even after the lawsuit over the original site was settled in the Air Force Memorial’s favor. The initial failure of the project improved the memorial’s location, design, and the cooperation between Department of Defense entities in the final iteration of the memorial. The
AFMF acquiesced to the Marine Corps in the turf fight over Arlington Ridge, and they were richly rewarded for this surrender. The Navy Annex hill provides a far better location than the first iteration of the memorial. This location does not compete with the sacred space of Iwo Jima or the Netherlands Carillon, and consecrated a special place for the Air Force.
Columbia Pike continues to evolve; the Air Force Memorial is now one of two memorials in this region with the opening of the Pentagon Memorial on September 11, 2008. The Pentagon Memorial was created on the site where American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Shortly after the events of the September 11th terrorist attack in Virginia, families of the victims and survivors of the attacks began planning to commemorate the event. The development timelines of the two memorials are vastly different. While the Air Force Memorial took fourteen years from the initial concept to dedication, the Pentagon Memorial took only six years. The Pentagon Memorial did not encounter the same types of obstacles and achieved an easy consensus in the design, location, and overall acceptance of the memorial. The process of the Pentagon Memorial was quite different than the Air Force Memorial or Dark Star Park. Arlington County created an administrative space, the Air Force Memorial created a commemorative space, and the events of the Pentagon attack designated this location a sacred space. The Pentagon Memorial benefitted from the actual location of the event, and this sacred land was the only choice for the memorial’s placement.

Jim Laychak, whose brother David was killed while working in the Pentagon, spearheaded the Pentagon Memorial Foundation and began raising money shortly after the wreckage of the event was cleared away. The Foundation was made up of survivors,
family member of victims, and Pentagon administrators and tasked with commemorating
the victims of the attack. This organization looked into several locations for the proposed
memorial, and decided that the site of impact was the most appropriate and powerful
place for the memorial. The Pentagon donated two acres of land adjacent to the impact
site. Since the Department of Defense owned the land instead of the National Park
Service, some of the necessary steps of creating a memorial in the Washington region
were bypassed and the memorial was completed at a record pace. Congress authorized
the Pentagon to build the memorial in 2002 and a dedication ceremony was held on the
anniversary of the attack six years later in 2008. A group of people working together to
build a memorial to the victims of the attack was able to bring the project to a quick
completion with few, if any stumbling blocks along the way. This was unlike the
trajectory of the Air Force Memorial and most other monument projects in the region
because the process was not mired in bureaucratic arguing or competition between
military branches. The location did not involve any turf wars since all stakeholders
agreed upon the sacred status of the location and the need to commemorate the victims.
The site selection process under the Commemorative Works Act was moot, since the
location was already decided upon and the land donated by the Department of Defense.
Laychak began fundraising in 2002, soliciting donations from individuals and
corporations to offset the cost since the entire project was mandated by Congress to be
funded by private donations.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers launched a design competition in July 2002
and received 1,126 submissions from across the globe. The Pentagon Memorial
Foundation selected a jury of survivors, family members of the victims, military personnel, and design professionals. Unlike the Commission of Fine Arts and National Capital Planning Commission, this jury was not solely made up of architects, design professionals, and public artists. The eleven member jury included Laychak; Harold Brown, former secretary of defense; Wendy Chamberlain, member of the Pentagon Victims Family Steering Committee; Melvin Laird, former secretary of defense; and Carolyn Shelton, wife of former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army General Hugh Shelton. Art and design professionals on the jury included Shelia Levrant deBretteville, public artist; Walter Hood, chairman of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of California, Berkley; Mary Miss, artist; Karen Van Lengren, dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia; Roger Martin, landscape architect; Gregg Pasquarelli, architect; and was chaired by Terence Riley, chief curator of design and architecture at the Museum of Modern Art. Two days of review winnowed the applications down to 130, and eventually six finalists. The jury was looking for design submissions that provided a space for quite contemplation, and wanted to stay away from concrete representations of airplanes or military insignia. The jury saw the future memorial site as a location of mourning and remembrance. Half of those killed in the attack were not directly linked to the military or the Pentagon, and the ages of the victims ranged from three to seventy-one.\footnote{Allen Freeman, “Light Touch,” \textit{Landscape Architecture}, 2003.} The six finalists were then brought to Washington in October 2002 to see the site, speak with Pentagon officials to learn about security restrictions of the space, and present their design concepts to the survivors and
victim’s families. The finalists then left with a small fee to prepare their final designs for presentation in Washington the following February. The jury took into consideration the ease of maintenance of the proposed memorial, long-term durability, and the physical sense of the space to visitors. The jury also compared the original submissions to the final designs after the meeting in Washington the previous October. The eleven-member jury reached a quick consensus and chose “Light Benches” by Julie Beckman and Keith Kaseman of New York City over the other five finalists.

The winning design consisted of 184 Light Benches, one for each victim, placed in a park and oriented in the direction that the airplane struck the Pentagon. The benches, later called Memorial Units, were cantilevered stainless steel structures that rose up from the ground as if they were taking flight. Under each of the benches were small water pools that reflected light off of the stainless steel during the day and small lights illuminated the benches at night. The intended effect was a moving, shimmering light for each of the victims killed. The entire memorial was circled by a sloping wall that provided a buffer against traffic on a highway that runs adjacent to the site. Beckman and Kaseman’s final design submission included specific revisions to the layout and orientation of the benches from their first iteration in the original call for proposals. This change was to the benches; those representing victims on the flight would face the Pentagon, while benches representing victims in the Pentagon would face outward. The benches were also arranged by age of each of the victims, creating a round shape in the center showing that most of the dead were in their thirties and forties. The entry point included five benches set apart from the main grouping, representing the youngest
victims who were three, seven, and eight. The far end tapered to represent the eldest, a 71 year old. Beckman and Kaseman’s design was abstract and intended as a quiet place to reflect and grieve. They were also adamant that the memorial should not provide a specific interpretation for visitors. In relation to this, Kaseman stated: “This is a place where people are invited to sit and think but one that does not tell them what to think. The 9/11 attack was an attack on free thought, so our response should be on the opposite end of the spectrum in honoring and respecting the people who died.”

A press conference from the Pentagon announced the winning design on March 3, 2003 and fundraising accelerated to reach the estimated $22 million needed for construction. Another $10 million was estimated for an endowment to provide upkeep and operating fees for the memorial. Jim Layton started fundraising in earnest to raise the necessary money to begin groundbreaking and fabrication. He first approached Anheuser-Busch and obtained one million dollars, a sizable sum to start the process. Donations from AT&T, the National Geographic Society, Verizon, the Philip L. Graham Fund of the Washington Post, and Wall-Mart soon followed. Local governments gave funds, including the State of Maryland, Commonwealth of Virginia, Fairfax County and the government of Taiwan contributed. Defense contracting firms Accenture, BAE Systems, BearingPoint, Boeing, Cisco Systems, Northrop Grumman, and Raytheon contributed substantial sums as well. The Forest Service donated $250,000 through its non-profit partner, American Forests, to provide trees and landscaping for the site.

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Members of victim’s families pulled together to organize fundraisers in their communities for the Pentagon Memorial Fund, and this raised a significant amount through individual donations by private citizens.

After the Light Benches design was unanimously approved and the Pentagon Memorial Fund had enough cash in hand, requests for proposals went out to engineering companies to compete for the memorial’s construction. Three firms were finalists, selected by PENREN, the public-private venture partnership that oversaw all construction projects on the Pentagon reservation. Contracts were awarded to Balfour Beatty Construction of Fairfax, VA for landscape architecture and design, and Lee + Papa Associates of Washington, DC (now Centex Lee) as the architect for the memorial. Jointly these two firms began to research foundries that had the ability to cast metal within tight tolerance parameters to produce the memorial benches. These Memorial Units were the most problematic of the entire project design. Beckman and Kaseman envisioned gleaming stainless steel arcs cantilevered from the ground. The engineering of these units was complex and eventually twenty-eight contractors and consultants were used to complete the 184 benches. Beckman and Kaseman used computer models to develop the bench structure over several months and eventually changed the proposed shape and weight from an original fourteen-foot model of 5,000 pounds to a new iteration of 1,100 pounds. Bids were made for the new lighter Memorial Units, and MetalTek International foundry in Pevely, MO, thirty miles south of Saint Louis, was selected.

MetalTek was known for making machinery parts for undersea oil exploration, mining, and food processing at industrial sites, not memorials or public art. Prototyping
the benches took several tries and the material used was changed from all stainless steel to a base of concrete with a stainless steel top. The base of each Memorial Unit contained a fountain and needed to support the weight of the steel bench. The treatment to render the benches rust and corrosion-proof failed, twisting and warping the all-metal structures. MetalTek worked with an engineering firm in Illinois to develop the concrete steel hybrid, and eventually cast all 184 benches in their facility. Family members were invited to Pevely, MO to watch their loved-one’s bench be cast for the memorial site. The last benches cast were for two of the youngest victims, sisters Dana and Zoe Falkenberg, ages three and eight when they died on Flight 77. After the benches were completed at the MetalTek foundry, they were shipped to different facilities around the country for polishing and engraving. The mold created by MetalTek was so precise that if the benches were off by a quarter of an inch, they would have to be recast. The mold and instructions for recasting are housed in an undisclosed air-conditioned facility owned by the Department of Defense in the event any of the benches would need to be recreated.¹¹³ While the prototyping of the benches was underway, preparations to the memorial site began.

Groundbreaking took place on June 15, 2006, and crews from contractor Centex Lee soon cleared and excavated the wreckage on the site. The mechanics of the water pools below the Memorial Units required some additional plumbing to ensure that sanitation and insect control would not be a problem in the standing water. A simple pumping system was installed that drew the water below ground to remove debris and

prevent insects from inhabiting the standing pools. The mechanics of the water filtration system were integrated with underground utilities and a storm water management system for the park. Illuminating the Memorial Units at night also proved to be a challenge. The Lighting Research Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York began conducting tests to measure the ambient light from adjacent parking lots, roadways, and buildings and find the most efficient source for illuminating each Memorial Unit.

Security and parking at the proposed memorial were two items that had specific restrictions, and the final design had to adapt to these specifications in the construction phase of the site. Since the Pentagon Memorial was directly adjacent to the building, security was a concern. The Pentagon Memorial Fund, Beckman, and Kaseman tried to balance the security concerns of the location with the openness and accessibility of the planned design. The designers and victim’s families envisioned a memorial that would be open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week like all other memorials and monuments within Washington, DC. Initially Pentagon officials wanted the park to close at 10:00 pm each night, but this was changed to incorporate twenty-four hour access at the request of the families.

Parking and mass transportation provided other logistical and security issues. Parking was planned for a lot adjacent to the Pentagon City Mall, a half-mile away. This was also the distance of the Pentagon Metro station on the Blue and Yellow lines of the Washington region transit system. Handicapped spaces directly adjacent to the site were added later to increase disabled access, but regular parking was still limited to a location off-site. Bike and jogging paths near the site leading to The National Mall and the Navy...
Annex and Air Force Memorial were improved to integrate the memorial site into this network. Lighting levels were kept low at night, which raised concern about the security and safety of the site in the evenings and overnight. A compromise was reached by enclosing the memorial space within a perimeter fence that had one entry and exit point for all visitors. Tour buses could not park or idle at the site as they did at other memorials in the region. With the utilities infrastructure complete, installation of the benches was the next step. The units were delivered to the memorial site in July 2008 and Centex Lee began the final installation of the benches to the grid plan designed by Beckman and Kaseman in time for the memorial’s unveiling on the anniversary of the attack in 2008.

A dedication ceremony was planned for the morning of September 11, 2008 with remarks by then-president George W. Bush, several high-ranking military officials, and performances by military and civilian musical groups. After the opening ceremony, victim’s families were allowed into the Pentagon Memorial to experience the space without the public. Military honor guards systematically removed a cloak covering each bench to reveal the engraved name of each victim on their particular Memorial Unit. Reactions from the families were very positive, especially since they were involved in several key design and fabrication steps of the memorial process and its location. In speaking of the new memorial, Jim Laychak stated, “This is something to be uplifted about, a place people can find peace and healing.”114 His impression of the memorial focused on the families of the victims and survivors of the event and their interaction

with the space. Philip Kennicott of the Washington Post called the design of the benches
elegant and praised the memorial for focusing on the victims instead of making a larger
political statement. He also saw the organizing principle of age for the Memorial Units
as democratic and symbolic:

“The natural predisposition to protect the very young and the elderly
makes this layout emotionally powerful. The swelling of the two-acre
park to accommodate the many victims who were in the prime of their life
gives another emotional jolt. Except for the orientation of the benches, the
victims are not categorized. It is both ordered and random at the same
time.”115

The unveiling and reception of the memorial were very positive. With two other
memorials still in development for the other September 11th locations, the Pentagon
Memorial was the only permanent space completed to commemorate the victims of all
three attacks. The memorial attracts over two million tourists a year, and has become one
of the most popular sites to visit in the Washington area despite its location off the
regular memorial route. With the Air Force Memorial close by, the southern part of
Arlington County, VA has changed from a cluster of highways to the location of
Washington’s newest memorials.

The Pentagon Memorial was able to capitalize on several issues to complete the
project in an amazingly short amount of time. The memorial committee did not have to
choose a location; the events of September 11th chose the site. The Pentagon Memorial
did not have to navigate the Commemorative Works Act, and the Army Corps of
Engineers handled the design competition. The design competition went very smoothly,

and this is due to three factors: the sheer number of entries, the diversity of the jury, and concepts the jury knew they did not want to see in the memorial design. The tragic events of September 11th and the quick call for design proposals soon after helped with the sheer volume and diversity of entries. The design jury included survivors and victim’s family members in addition to architecture and design professionals, and this was important in reaching a compromise over the type of commemorative structures that were chosen. The jury already knew what they were not looking for before the competition started; they did not want any representation of airplanes or military insignia. They were predisposed to favor an abstract design without military or government symbols. There was very little dissent, if any, in the design competition. The urgency to create a memorial in a timely manner to commemorate the victims took precedence over haggling over design specifications. Fabrication and construction was expedited for planned commemorative events that were held after the attack on the location, and the willingness of government and private industries to work together with minimal government bureaucracy. This process was extremely similar to the development of the Oklahoma City Memorial a few years earlier. Both memorials were created with involvement of survivors and victim’s families and each design included sculptural objects representing a singular person killed in the event. The timeline between the event, design, and dedication for each memorial was also quite fast.

The audience of the Pentagon Memorial was twofold: first victim’s families, and then the government and rest of the general public, again echoing Oklahoma City. This two-tiered hierarchy was important in how the Pentagon Memorial Foundation,
government agencies, public, and press made decisions about the memorial. If there were significant objections to the memorial design and location from the general public or government agencies, they were not as important as the acceptance of the memorial by its primary audience, the families of the victims of the attack and survivors. The survivors and families were given more power in memorial decisions because they were considered the chief audience of the memorial. In the dedication ceremony, family members were first given entry to the memorial, and this acknowledged their role as the primary commemorative group. They had reached a consensus for the memorial, with some guidance from design professionals, but their choices were honored and respected because of their relationship to the memorial. This was so different than the Air Force Memorial’s trajectory. The stakeholders of the Air Force Memorial were several types of organizations that all held an equal share in the expectations of the final monument: the AFMF, Congress, DoD, NCPC, CFA, and other military groups. These groups all saw the memorial in a different manner. The AFMF saw the memorial as final acceptance of their branch of the military and a coronation of the sacrifices of individuals and the collective group. Congress used the Air Force Memorial as a cause to fight over and a carrot to reward certain special interest groups. The CPC and NCPC viewed the memorial as an object that each organization could control to validate their importance as cultural gate-keepers. And finally, the Marine Corps viewed the Air Force Memorial as an invader that took away from their own sacred space.
The importance and success of *Dark Star Park* and the Air Force Memorial as urban spaces has fluctuated throughout their histories. The memorial now occupies a prominent place in the Washington skyline, but *Dark Star Park* is largely forgotten apart from a small group of people who regularly traverse the office buildings that overlook the park. The memorial is a gathering spot for commemorating the history of the Air Force and the sacrifices of its men and women. It is also a site for celebration and community experiences: weekly concerts, retirement ceremonies, and weddings regularly take place on the Navy Annex hill. It is an educational space for visitors and a repository of historical information. A database registry with information on active and retired Air Force personnel, coupled with interactive kiosks provides a timeline of this branch of service for visitors. *Dark Star Park* is a civic monument to a partnership that is only important in bureaucratic history. This park is largely forgotten outside of the annual alignment ceremony each year on August 1\textsuperscript{st}. It is not a destination for a specific community, an educational resource, or recruiting tool. It does not provide historical information to families or the public interested in military history. *Dark Star Park* was framed as the start of a successful program, but this is the extent of its impact on the larger urban sphere. The Pentagon Memorial is a destination for visitors wishing to experience the sacred space of events surrounding September 11\textsuperscript{th}. It is also a site for
families and survivors of a terrorist attack, and a space for contemplation and mourning. It is not a space for celebratory events or a place to learn about military or cultural history, like the Air Force Memorial. In contrast, it is the site where history has already taken place, unlike most other military monuments in Washington, DC. The acts of September 11th and the decision to make the site a park consecrated the Pentagon Memorial, while the Air Force Memorial Foundation’s struggle to erect a monument consecrated this site. The story behind each location is important, but of the three sites the Air Force Memorial infused the narrative of its creation into the final space. The Pentagon Memorial’s history came from a single action, while the Air Force Memorial’s history is an in depth narrative that tells the story of several military monuments. In contrast, Dark Star Park is really just a story about the start of the Arlington County Public Art Program, and the physical site is secondary.

The agents of the Air Force Memorial and Marine Corps War Memorial fought a battle over the contested space between the two branches, but the two military sites are extremely similar. Both are commemorative spaces for a specific branch of the military in prominent locations on separate edges of Arlington Cemetery. Visitors to both memorials see their commemorative space as sacred and dedicated specifically to their branch of service, and this was one of the reasons the opposition to the Arlington Ridge site was so high. Senior Marine Corps leadership opposed an Air Force Memorial next to the site because it violated their consecrated space. The Air Force Memorial Foundation did not view the Iwo Jima Memorial in the same manner, and thought the two memorials could coexist side by side.
The Iwo Jima location was such a sacred space to current and former Marines that placing another memorial in the same location negated its sanctity. Kolenic explored this concept in his essay about the Pentagon Memorial, stating that sacred memorial spaces have their meaning shaped by governmental or authoritative entities. He argues that if the government or Department of Defense prescribed how a memorial is experienced, individual interpretation is not possible. This is true in my analysis of the Pentagon and Air Force Memorials. The governing agency of the Pentagon Memorial Foundation selected a design based on what they did not want to see represented: military insignia or airplanes. The design chosen for the site was abstract. The Air Force Memorial had a similar experience; the memorial foundation wanted a design that was about flight and captured the essence of flight. An abstract design was also selected for the Air Force Memorial, but the foundation pushed for representational statues of the Honor Guard in addition to the modern memorial design. Kolenic’s argument that governmental agencies shape how the public experiences the memorial is true here because the Air Force Memorial Foundation wanted a human image next to the abstract spire design, and anticipated the public would be drawn to the figurative grouping for photo opportunities. The foundation wanted to control the memorial experience for the visitors, and outlined this in their goals established before the memorial’s creation. The Pentagon Memorial design was far more abstract, and this memorial foundation saw the minimalist design as a space for healing and reflection instead of a backdrop for photographs because the consecration of the site was already part of the national consciousness. The benches, or memorial units, were singular symbolic objects designated for each victim. The
Pentagon Memorial Foundation did not have the same agenda as the Air Force Memorial Foundation to control the visitor experience and shape the public’s interpretation of their space because of the sacred history surrounding the site.

Both the Air Force Memorial and the Pentagon Memorial are consecrated ground, but the two memorial sites were consecrated in very different ways. The Pentagon Memorial was consecrated through an act of terrorism and the decision to transform it into a park. The Air Force Memorial Foundation consecrated the site in their struggle to create a memorial in the first place. The Air Force Memorial is not a sanctified space because of terrorism, but a location of symbolic patriotism and military might. The location of the memorial was not dependent upon tragic events, but rather a turf war that was fought over competing interests of two branches of the military. It is an active commemorative space, consecrated by its history and the ongoing events that take place on the memorial grounds. Weddings, retirement ceremonies, and reunions all take place on this site. Historical information is collected and stored in electronic databases available to visitors. The three spires can be seen from vantage points all over the city as part of Washington’s monumental landscape. All of these actions re-designate the memorial as a symbol for Air Force and military sacrifice. In contrast, the Pentagon Memorial does not have to re-perform its consecration because of its originating events.

In contrast, Dark Star Park was never consecrated. It was an important starting point for the history of the public art program in the county, but this narrative is still ongoing as more work is commissioned. The physical space of Dark Star Park is an afterthought and the process of collaboration between the county, NEA, and artist is the
actual product. This collaboration created a prototype that the county replicated in subsequent works, and later public art pieces were far more successful than *Dark Star Park*.

These three urban landscapes are a location for civic, commemorative, and sacred activities. The Pentagon Memorial is very sacred space. Transforming the space from a site of mass murder to a sacred memorial park was completed quickly to ensure that the place was part of a larger historical narrative in American history. The Pentagon Memorial is an example of Linenthal’s concept of transformation of ordinary places and things to sacred artifacts that become embedded in the cultural landscape of American history. The Pentagon Memorial is now a reminder of painful events felt across the county and the world on September 11th, and visitors to this site seek to stand in the location where history has taken place. It has a very distinct role to play as a memorial. Sturken states that cultural memory incorporates images and objects from popular culture and mass media, and her ideas can also be applied to the Pentagon Memorial. Images of the burning edge of the military complex were broadcast and seen by millions of people and became part of their personal histories. Visitors to the Pentagon Memorial have a connection to this space through mass media and seek to experience the sacred by visiting a location marked as important through historical events. This memorial site also illustrates Sturken’s idea that personal memories can be subsumed into the larger historical discourse. In contrast, the Air Force Memorial’s meaning is much more open-ended. It must symbolize military might, valor, sacrifice, and patriotism without a signifying event.
The expectations of stakeholders for all three urban places were quite different. In 1978, Arlington County was trying to solve the problem of vacant urban space surrounding the forthcoming Metro transit station in Rosslyn. Several options existed for this lot, but the county took a chance and applied to the NEA for a grant to create a park and add public sculpture. County administrations did not have any expectations based on prior works of art, and never received a grant for this type of development. The NEA chose the artist for the county, and the county trusted the judgment of the NEA on this decision. The expectations for the project were low, and it was highly successful because Holt thought beyond just the sculpture she would create for the park. As an artist, Holt was also given very wide creative license and did not have to vet her design in the same manner that the AFMF did within the restrictions of the Commemorative Works Act. *Dark Star Park* was one of several thousand Art in Public Places grants given by the NEA in the 1970’s, and the audience for this work was regional.

In contrast, the Air Force Memorial had very different expectations. Because it was a memorial to commemorate a specific branch of the military, it was already competing with Iwo Jima in concept and as an iconic structure. The AFMF sought to place it within the same sacred space, and this caused an uproar from several groups that saw their Iwo Jima memorial as more important than the yet to be built Air Force Memorial. The environment of Washington as a repository for the country’s sacred memorials and monuments was another factor. The Air Force Memorial had to show worthiness to be included with the rest of the national memorials in the region, and jump through several hoops that the Commission of Fine Arts, National Capital Planning
Commission, and National Park Service established to vet such important cultural objects. The expectations for the Air Force Memorial were incredibly high. The specific group that it was commemorating included thousands of active duty and retired military, and these individuals contributed money for its creation. Aerospace technology companies also gave large sums of money to be included as benefactors of this cultural symbol. The architect chosen for the memorial had created another important Washington landmark, the United States Holocaust Museum, and this added additional pressure that the Air Force Memorial had to measure up to its contemporaries. The expectations were so high that the initial failure was not unexpected. The utter failure of the Arlington Ridge site enabled the memorial foundation to start over and reach a higher level of success than originally anticipated, in part by subverting the rules of the Commemorative Works Act and aligning with powerful congressional leaders that had originally opposed the memorial. The AFMF also worked collaboratively with these organizations, which was different to their singular approach for the first site.

The moment the plane crashed into the Pentagon, this site was transformed into a sacred place. Two options were possible for this location: returning the damaged section of the Pentagon building to its previous iteration and placing the memorial in another space, or transforming a lot adjacent to the impact site into a sacred space to commemorate the victims and sanctify the event that took place. The easy choice was to use the land adjacent to the Pentagon. It was forever altered by the events of September 11th and would be a location to tell the story of the county’s response to these acts. The creation of the memorial was quick and achieved consensus rather quickly on the site and
design. The gate-keeping agencies surrounding the creation of new monuments or memorials did not matter because an event initiated the process. In many ways the creation of the Pentagon Memorial echoes Young’s concept of the counter-monument, a space that challenges the traditional interpretation of the memorial and has varied interpretations. It is not a commemorative location shaped by a government entity in the same manner as the Air Force Memorial or an example of a successful bureaucratic partnership that enabled civic success like Dark Star Park. Instead, it is a reaction to a tragic event that was felt across the nation. The design of the memorial was not intended to spread a specific authoritarian message like the military monuments to the Marine Corps or World War II. The space of the tragedy was marked in the landscape and the public is invited to make their own judgment on the events and history of the site. This type of truly sanctified space is only created through tragedy, and the idea of a memorial does not exist before the events that incite its creation. The framing of such spaces as sites of mourning and contemplation is common, and this is seen in the transformation of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City and the planned World Trade Center Memorial in New York City. It is also similar to the transformation of the sites of the Holocaust in Europe to places for remembrance of the victims and sites for reflection of the issues that caused such events to take place. As a counterpoint, the history of the Air Force Memorial is a much more interesting narrative about the evolution of a memorial because it shows how divergent interests fight over consecrated ground.

My work is a small segment in the much larger scholarly field of memory, commemoration, and history. Over the past thirty years, this field has emerged as an
important interdisciplinary way to look at social space, public grief, and memorialization. It is an important part of understanding how societies and nations create their pasts, understand the present, and set their agendas for future conversations. Arlington County is a small municipality but has an important part in the larger memorial landscape of Washington. It is also a unique community with a different identity than the District of Columbia. Other locations across the county have become arbiters of public sentiment about contested space. Plans to build an Islamic community center\textsuperscript{116} near the ground zero site in New York City created a controversy about sacred space, religious expression, and community. The so called “ground zero mosque” is only one example of the fierce attachment to sacred sites by divergent groups. The controversy near ground zero has subsided, but future debates are sure to continue as new memorials, museums, and commemorative sites are consecrated across the country.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{116} This community center has often been referred to as a mosque in the media, but it is actually not just a site for religious worship. For a detailed analysis of the lower Manhattan WTC site and proposed adjacent Islamic center, see \url{http://nymag.com/news/features/67635/}. Accessed 4/7/2011.
Figure 1: Dark Star Park, aerial view.

Image courtesy ARTstor
Figure 2: Dark Star Park, main section.

Image courtesy ARTstor
Figure 3: Dark Star Park, eastern section.

Image courtesy ARTstor
Figure 4: Dark Star Park, view overlooking park.

Image courtesy ARTstor
Figure 5: Original site plan for the Air Force Memorial, Arlington Ridge location.

Image courtesy the Air Force Memorial Foundation
Figure 6: Model of the original design for the Air Force Memorial, Arlington Ridge location.

Image courtesy the Air Force Memorial Foundation
Figure 7: Aerial plan of the Navy Annex Land Exchange.

Image courtesy Arlington County
Figure 8: Completed Air Force Memorial, Navy Annex location.

Image courtesy Wikimedia Commons
Figure 9: Air Force Memorial Spires and Honor Guard.

Image courtesy Wikimedia Commons
Figure 10: Honor Guard statue illuminated at night.

Image courtesy Wikimedia Commons
Figure 11: The Pentagon Memorial.

Image courtesy the Department of Defense
Figure 12: Rendering of the Pentagon Memorial.

Image Courtesy Wikimedia Commons
Figure 13: Rendering of Light Benches Memorial Units.

Image courtesy Kaseman Beckman Advanced Strategies (KBAS)
Figure 14: Projected Expansion of Arlington Cemetery, including the Air Force Memorial, Pentagon, and Washington Monument.

Image courtesy Pei, Cobb, Freed & Partners
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