PRESIDENT BUSH UNVEILS KOREAN WAR VETERANS MEMORIAL DESIGN

WASHINGTON, D.C., JUNE 14 -- President George Bush unveiled the winning design of the Korean War Veterans Memorial in the Nation’s Capital today in Flag Day ceremonies in the White House Rose Garden.

The winning design, a striking combination of sculpture, architecture and landscape, is highlighted by 38 statues depicting an infantry platoon moving through Korea. Visitors to the memorial will be able to walk among the military figures toward an area honoring Korean veterans, both living and dead. The winning design is the concept of a team of two men and two women who are faculty members at Penn State University, University Park, Pennsylvania.

This design, selected from 543 entries in a nationwide competition, was conceived and developed by the team of Don Alvaro Leon and John Paul Lucas, both architects and associate professors of architecture at Penn State; Veronica Burns Lucas, designer and assistant professor of landscape architecture; and Eliza Pennypacker Oberholtzer, designer and associate professor of landscape architecture. They will share the $20,000 first prize.

Participating in the White House ceremony with President Bush were General Richard D. Stilwell (U.S. Army, Retired), chairman of the Korean War Veterans Memorial Advisory Board; General Andrew J. Goodpaster, (U.S. Army, Retired), chairman of the American Battle Monuments Commission, and Congressional Medal of Honor Winner General Raymond G. Davis (USMC, Retired), a member of the memorial advisory board who served as Chairman of the Design Jury.
The White House ceremony was also attended by members of Congress, the presidentially-appointed Korean War Veterans Memorial Advisory Board, members of the American Battle Monument Commission and other dignitaries who have supported the establishment of a memorial on the Washington Mall to what some have called "The Forgotten Victory."

The Korean War Veterans Memorial, honoring the 5.7 million Americans who served in the Armed Forces during the Korean Conflict, will be erected in Ash Woods, a grove of trees on the south side of the Reflecting Pool on the Washington Mall. The site is near the Lincoln Memorial and opposite the Vietnam Memorial, completing a balanced triangle with the Lincoln Memorial at the apex.

The purpose of the Korean War Veterans Memorial will be to express, in the words of the design competition guidelines, "the enduring gratitude of the American people to all Americans who took part in that conflict and to project the spirit of service, the willingness to sacrifice, and the dedication to the cause of freedom that characterized all participants."
STATEMENT by the DESIGN TEAM on the KOREAN WAR VETERANS MEMORIAL
for the UNVEILING CEREMONY at the WHITE HOUSE

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The Korean War Veterans Memorial commemorates the men and women, the diverse armed forces, and our U.N. allies, who gave of themselves in the war effort. The Memorial embodies shared knowledge of that conflict, which has often been called The Forgotten War. For many Americans, both during the War and today, the Korean War is a distant circumstance. For those who served or who lost loved ones in service to the War, it is a powerful reality. The intent of this memorial is to record and to unify knowledge of the War, to enlighten the uninformed, and to remind those who already know its truth.

The memorial accomplishes this intent by staging the experience of moving into and through conflict, of release into the embrace of peace, and of reflection upon war. For the visitor, the memorial acts as a theatre of memory. It alludes to experience of the Korean War, and documents aspects of its reality.

Inspiration for the design of the memorial was drawn in part from Korean War veterans' statements of their own war experiences. As one veteran said, "We knew the war through our feet...we walked every inch of that country." Inspiration was also found in the documentary images of the work of David Douglas Duncan and other photojournalists. These sources illustrated the same phenomenon again and again: troops in movement, human formations tracing the Korean landscape; and, more intimately, human faces full of courage, commitment, and hope.

It is our hope that the memorial will communicate the power of these inspirations, and that Korean War veterans, families of veterans, and those who never knew the War will be moved by their experience of this place.

--Veronica Burns Lucas, ASLA, designer and assistant professor of landscape architecture
--Don Alvaro Leon, architect and associate professor of architecture
--John Paul Lucas, AIA, designer and assistant professor of landscape architecture
--Eliza Pennypacker Oberholtzer, ASLA, designer and associate professor of landscape architecture
Design Statement of the Korean War Veterans Memorial
by V. Burns Lucas, D.A. Leon, J.P. Lucas, and E. Pennypacker Oberholtzer

Figures in Formation...Passage...Remembrance. The Korean War Veterans Memorial embodies shared knowledge of the War and expresses the shared gratitude of the American people to the one and one half million American men and women who bravely served in that war. The Memorial stages the experience of moving into and through war, of release from war into the embrace of peace, and of reflection upon war.

The Memorial is an attempt to reconcile often conflicting levels of awareness relative to war and to resolve manifestly oppositional issues of war: issues of self and of nation, awareness of immediacy and of timelessness, questions of meaning of the Korean War and of all other wars. The concept of the Memorial is founded upon the dualities and paradoxes of war and truth.

These ideas contribute to an historical understanding of the Korean conflict, often called The Forgotten War. For many, both during the War and today, the Korean War was an antiseptic unknown, a distant circumstance. For those who served in the War, or who lost loved ones in service to the War, it was a powerful reality. The intent of the Memorial is to record and to unify knowledge of the War, to enlighten the uninformed and to remind those who already know its truth.

Inspiration for the Memorial design came from diverse but kindred sources: from both highly personal recordings of the war experience, and philosophical references to the sacrifices of war. Moving accounts by Korean War veterans were drawn from private interviews. One veteran, in describing his experience of the War said, "We knew the war through our feet ... we walked every inch of the country." Powerful imagery from the photo-journalistic work of David Douglas Duncan and others illustrated the same phenomenon again and again: troops in movement, human formations tracing the Korean landscape; and, more intimately, human faces full of courage, commitment and hope. Philosophical inquiries about the nature of war and of human courage, which also inspired the design, are epitomized by a master work of the great French sculptor, Auguste Rodin: "The Burghers of Calais." As the poet Rilke has interpreted the work, it is an allegorical representation of the act of a small group of noble citizens who sacrificed themselves in spirit and body to save the innocent. These several sources demanded the presence, the form and the placement of figures, established the choreography of the passage, and determined the poignancy of the veil of remembrance.

The Memorial is experienced first within the symbolic surrounds of our nation's capital. Within this context, it is both a unique expression of a significant event in the nation's history, and a critical piece in the overall composition of Washington, D.C. - it creates closure for the cruciform pattern of memorials organized around L'Enfant's main axis: the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and, now, the Korean War Veterans Memorial.

The next level of experience occurs within the site of the Mall. From a distance, one sees the Memorial as an elusive, dream-like presence of ghostly figures moving across a remote landscape. On approach, one enters from the west into an open plaza. The plaza is edged by a dogwood bosque and marked at its center by a white marble square. Within the square a red granite line originates and extends east to a distant horizon and the American flag, symbol of freedom and peace. The figures are now seen as solid, dense, powerful; they form rank along the line.

The inscription in the marble square establishes the confrontational nature of the Memorial. The war, that "tract of time [June 20, 1950 to July 27, 1953] when the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known" is measured by the red line. Following the time line forward, walking with the thirty-eight figures, one enters into an experiential duality. The visitor is observer, in the act of commemoration, and is simultaneously at one with the figures, the 39th presence.

Passage ascends through a landscape symbolic of war: water rushes around the feet of the figures, hostile planes of barberry slope toward tortuously clipped plane trees. One is flanked by figures whose faces are alert with caution and strong with resolve. The time line, continuing through the relentless environment, is trained on the horizon and the flag beyond.

Upward movement concludes at a second white marble square. This square is blank and the adjacent water, still; both mark a silent moment of reflection and end the time of war.

At this high, quiet place one is on the horizon, poised symbolically within the duality of war and peace. Passage releases into the ceremonial gathering space below, a metaphor of home. Smooth water flanks the red line as it descends and terminates at the final white marble square which bears an inscription celebrating peace.

The experience of remembrance is choreographed as a turn. Looking back, one faces a wall, a veil of memory. Faintly, figures appear again, as if behind the wall...images recalled from the past to honor all acts of service in the war. Within this vertical field the Memorial is named and dedicated, completing the ritual journey of commemoration.

Departure from the Korean War Veterans Memorial evokes a final awareness and symbolizes postscript to the journey. The path arcs away from the marble square and flag that mark the conclusion of a war fought in search of peace. In reflection upon the memory of that War, one returns to the point of entry and to the marble square marking beginning. The cycle of the ongoing struggle for world peace continues.