



## **FACT SHEET**

### **What is the San Francisco Veterans Memorial Project?**

The San Francisco Veterans Memorial Project will fulfill the mission and original 1920's vision for the San Francisco War Memorial Complex, with the design and installation of a Veterans Memorial in the Memorial Court, situated between the War Memorial Opera House and Veterans Building.

A collaborative effort, the San Francisco Veterans Memorial Project is uniting the San Francisco War Memorial Board of Trustees, veterans groups, and the San Francisco Arts Commission, and has inspired the participation of the San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Symphony and San Francisco Ballet.

The Veterans Memorial Steering Committee is co-chaired by Secretary George P. Shultz and Secretary William J. Perry.

### **Project Mission:**

To honor the extraordinary dedication, commitment and sacrifices of our nation's military veterans. The Veterans Memorial Project will keep a 75-year old promise and provide a long overdue tribute, acknowledging the heroism, valor and sacrifice of our armed services.

### **Background of the War Memorial Complex:**

In April 1918, twelve years after the City lost its major entertainment venues in the 1906 earthquake, a group of prominent San Franciscans met to consider construction of a hall for the performing arts. World War I ended that same year, fueling a growing demand throughout the nation for memorials commemorating war heroes. The two movements found a common cause in a grand proposal, The San Francisco War Memorial Complex, which would house both arts organizations and veterans groups, creating a living memorial to honor the sacrifices made by our veterans.

The final design chosen for the War Memorial Complex was for twin buildings equal in scale, separated by a courtyard. The architects chosen were Arthur Brown, Jr., and G. Albert Lansburgh, who had achieved recognition for theater design.

Construction of the War Memorial Complex commenced in January 1931 and was completed in October 1932.

### **Background of the Memorial Court:**

The Memorial Court, situated between the War Memorial Opera House and Veterans Building, was designed by San Francisco landscape architect Thomas D. Church, and was completed in 1936. Church's original design for the Memorial Court intended a memorial to our nation's veterans in the inlaid octagonal area, but this element was never realized. Over the years there have been several attempts to build a memorial and complete the Memorial Court, but financial challenges and apathy deterred these plans to fulfill this promise to our nation's veterans.

The oral history of the War Memorial Complex notes that soils from World War I battlefields were interred within the octagonal area of the Memorial Court at the time of the Complex's construction.



Docents and veterans relay a similar ceremony interring soils from World War II battlefields took place subsequent to the signing of the United Nations Charter in the Veterans Building in 1945.

In 1988, veterans' groups held a ceremony interring additional soils from battlefields in the Memorial Court. Nations contributing soils in this 1988 ceremony included:

Austria	Egypt	Guam	Philippines
Belgium	England	Italy	Thailand
Cambodia	France	Laos	Vietnam
China	Germany	Nicaragua	

Soils from Korea, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Kuwait and are forthcoming.

#### **Nationwide Design Competition for the Veterans Memorial:**

A nationwide design competition for the San Francisco Veterans Memorial is being conducted by the San Francisco Arts Commission. The Arts Commission will coordinate the commissioning of an artist team, consisting of an artist and licensed design professionals, to develop a proposal for a Veterans Memorial to be installed in the Memorial Court to include (but not be limited to):

- ♦ An artwork that will pay tribute to military veterans who have fought for our country.
- ♦ A bronze plaque or other appropriate marker at the entrance to the Memorial Court about the designation of the Memorial Court as a memorial to veterans.
- ♦ Creation of a serene setting where visitors can pause and reflect.
- ♦ Appropriate lighting elements.
- ♦ The Project will be designed and constructed as a "green project" to conserve energy and water.

#### **Project Schedule:**

April 26, 2010	Project Kick-Off and launch of fundraising campaign
May 11, 2010	Arts Commission issuance of "Request for Qualifications" to potential artist candidates
September 2010	Selection of three finalist teams who will each develop proposals
November 2010	Announcement of three Design Team Finalists
Spring 2011	Public display of finalists' completed proposals
June 2011	Final design selection
Fall 2011 – mid 2013	Project construction and installation
November 2013	Formal Dedication of the San Francisco Veterans Memorial

#### **Project Cost and Funding:**

The total cost of administering and constructing the San Francisco Veterans Memorial Project is estimated at \$2.5 million, which includes an endowment to support the Memorial's ongoing maintenance and upkeep. The Veterans Memorial Project will be implemented with private, contributed funds.