

OPERATION ADVANCE:

PRESERVING OUR FUTURE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

THE NEXT CHAPTER FOR WISCONSIN'S
ICONIC LAKEFRONT WAR MEMORIAL CENTER

HELP US FINISH THE MISSION.

PRIMARY MISSION: PRESERVATION FUND AND VIETNAM MEMORIAL RESTORATION

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Progress Towards Our $14 Million Goal

The War Memorial Center

In 1951, General Douglas MacArthur said this about the War Memorial Center— "It will be a fitting tribute to the valor and sacrifice of the American soldier, whose glory will be an imperishable reminder to all mankind of those deeds which preserved our liberties on the battlefields of the world." In that spirit, the War Memorial Center was dedicated on Veterans Day 1957 and has proudly honored the service and sacrifices of our Veterans for 67 years.

The monumental and inspiring building on Milwaukee's lakefront is a testament to our city and state's commitment to honoring our fallen Veterans from the Civil War to the present. It is a dynamic hub of commemoration, education, and support. WMC works to strengthen the connection between past, present, and future generations. WMC brings history to life and gives Veterans the opportunity to share their stories of service and sacrifice. WMC keeps these stories alive and relevant through in-person and media presentations, traveling exhibits, tours and events, and other programs.

The success of Operation Advance Preserving Our Future will enable the War Memorial Center to meet immediate critical financial challenges and continue to be one of Wisconsin's most prominent and important places of peace for our Veterans and visitors. A future campaign initiative will address enhanced visitor experiences through new exhibits and memorials, and provide education and Veterans services programs.

> *"The purpose of architecture is to shelter and enhance man's lives on earth and to fulfill his belief in the nobility of his existence.—Eero Saarinen*

WELCOME HOME.

The War Memorial Center was dedicated as a promise. For nearly 70 years, the Eero Saarinen–designed building that houses the War Memorial Center has stood as a historic and architectural landmark on Milwaukee's lakefront. Now, it needs us.

SACRED GROUND.

The War Memorial Center is more than a building. It is sacred ground. Open to the public without admission fees, the War Memorial Center welcomes all who come to reflect, l earn, grieve, and give thanks. But time is relentless. Weather, aging infrastructure, and long-term maintenance needs now threaten the very spaces entrusted to our care. If we do not act, deterioration will continue — and sacred places of remembrance will slowly fade. We cannot let that happen.

A CAMPAIGN TO PRESERVE A PROMISE.

To protect this historic landmark and the memorials under our stewardship, we have launched Operation Advance: Preserving Our Future — a $14 million campaign to establish a permanent Preservation Fund and restore the Southeastern Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial. **Thanks to extraordinary early leadership support, we are closing in on our fundraising goal. Now, we invite the broader community to help us complete this vital effort.**

CAMPAIGN FUNDS WILL:

- Establish a dedicated Preservation Fund to support long-term building care and memorial stewardship
- Fully restore the Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- Ensure ongoing maintenance so these sacred spaces remain dignified and accessible
- Safeguard this landmark for generations to come

This campaign is about more than maintenance and repairs—it's about keeping a promise.



The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, dedicated in 1991.

Vietnam Memorial Restoration

WELCOME HOME.

For many of the 2.7 million American men and women who served in Vietnam, the welcome home they deserved never came. Rather than returning to flag-waving crowds and parades, many quietly resumed their lives, carrying with them the experiences and sacrifices of war. More than 57,000 Wisconsin men and women served in Vietnam, answering their nation's call to duty. Over time, our country has come to better understand and recognize their service, sacrifice, and courage.

Originally dedicated in 1991, the Southeastern Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial was made possible through the generosity and determination of local business leaders and the Vietnam Veteran community. For 35 years, the Memorial has provided a meaningful place for Veterans, families, and visitors to remember and honor those who served. Its 2,946 commemorative bricks stand as lasting tributes to the men and women whose service and sacrifice must never be forgotten.

After decades of exposure to the elements, the Memorial required significant restoration, including deteriorating concrete footings and memorial bricks. Recognizing the importance of preserving this sacred space, the War Memorial Center undertook a comprehensive restoration to ensure the Memorial remains a lasting tribute for future generations.

Now completed, the restoration represents an important milestone in the War Memorial Center's commitment to preserving the legacy of Wisconsin's Veterans.

More than a restoration of bricks and concrete, this project is a renewed promise to Vietnam Veterans and their families: Your service is honored. Your sacrifice is remembered. Your legacy will endure.

"I am contacting you regarding our extremely disappointing visit to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Milwaukee. I cannot begin to tell you how disappointingly heartbroken and embarrassed we all were to see the dilapidated, rundown, disrespectful condition that Memorial was in. We took my dad, a Vietnam Veteran, to see his brick "one last time," and he was so saddened when he saw the condition of his brick!

My dad has terminal cancer and will probably never see the brick again honoring him and his service, but I want to know we can promise him it will be there in good condition again and that his service will never be forgotten for generations to come. Can you PLEASE help us get this Memorial Site restored?"

—Brenda Love shared the story of her father, Phillip A. Love, and his visit in 2024, underscoring the urgency of restoring the Memorial



Dedicated in October 1991, the Vietnam Memorial is a simple yet powerful outdoor gathering space in Veterans Park.

- Three Wausau Red Granite columns represent Veterans killed in action and those who returned home.
- Five granite benches symbolize the five military branches.
- Eleven granite posts mark each officially recognized year of the Vietnam War.
- 2,946 bricks purchased by people who chose to recognize individual Veterans form a circle of respect. The inner circle is reserved for Vietnam Veterans while the outer circle honors Veterans who served in other wars.

Weather and time have caused deterioration and fading of the brick engraving and other features of the Memorial. The Memorial also requires regular maintenance and care to keep the space properly groomed and accessible. WMC will restore and enhance the existing Memorial and provide for regular annual maintenance.



The War Memorial Center is a hub for Veteran activities. We work to ensure Veterans know their service is honored and appreciated by providing resources, community events, and a place of remembrance for their sacrifices.



JOIN US IN PRESERVING OUR FUTURE. HELP US HONOR THE PAST, SAFEGUARD THE PRESENT, AND BUILD A LEGACY FOR THE FUTURE.

WMC is committed to acknowledging all who have served our country. WMC is also committed to extending a helping hand through strong partnerships to assist Veterans in addressing mental health and suicide prevention.

Two new permanent installations honor Wisconsin service members through the Medal of Honor exhibit and the powerful new POW/MIA and Hanoi Hilton Prison Cell exhibits. These exhibits offer the opportunity to learn and also to grieve. Here we can express our gratitude. Here is a safe and accepting place to lay our memories down.

The War Memorial Center is more than a building; it is a living tribute to the men and women who have served our nation. As we face this pivotal moment, your support can make all the difference. Stand with us to:

- Preserve this iconic landmark
- Honor our Veterans with dignity and respect
- Ensure their stories continue to inspire future

Together, we can fulfill our vision and ensure the War Memorial Center remains a place of peace, remembrance, and gratitude for all.

War Memorial Center

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