

The Importance of Memorials

By Kiernan Gallaher

Thomas Jefferson once said, “The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.” This tree of liberty has been threatened over and over again in America’s two hundred fifty year history. Repeatedly, young patriots have been sent to defend that sacred tree. As a result, many heroic American soldiers have perished. In remembrance of these heroes and heroines, many monuments have been erected across the country. For example, the Revolutionary War Statuary in Washington D.C. honors the brave soldiers who died to liberate the thirteen colonies from British tyranny during our War for Independence. Another example is the Gettysburg Memorial located in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. This memorial honors the Union soldiers who died in this massive Civil War battle that took place from July 1 to July 3, 1863. An example of a monument in our community is the Kemper Memorial. The Kemper Memorial honors the soldiers from Larchmont and Mamaroneck who died during World War 2. These monuments continue to be important today because we as Americans must be reminded of the blood that was spilled to grow the tree of liberty.

The Revolutionary war statuary is a collection of fourteen statues placed all around Washington D.C. built to honor those who died in the American Revolution. One of these statues is that of a man by the name of Nathan Hale. Nathan Hale was born in 1755 in Coventry, Connecticut. He enlisted in the Continental Army in July, 1775. During the Battle of Manhattan, George Washington needed a spy to infiltrate enemy lines and report back. Hale was the only one to accept the task. However, during his mission, Hale was captured by the British and convicted of espionage. Hale was hanged the next morning. Hale was one of the thousands of young men who lost their life during America’s struggle for independence. We need to

remember these men for their courage and role they played in growing the tree of liberty. These patriots spilled their blood fighting tyrants so that we may have the basic liberties we have today. Men like Nathan Hale despise those who represent tyranny and hatred. He felt that he must fight for those who represent freedom, not oppression. He was even quoted saying, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." Hale took patriotism to his grave and fought for everything we have today so that his beloved nation could be free. We must honor him, and the brave men and women like him, for the ultimate sacrifice that they made for the greater good. And what better way to do that than to erect a monument to immortalize their ultimate sacrifice.

The Gettysburg Memorial, located in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, is a memorial dedicated to the Union soldiers who gave their lives in one of the deadliest and most significant battles of the Civil War. It took place from July 1 to July 3, 1863. The battle cost the lives of 51,000 men, 23,000 Union soldiers, and 28,000 Confederate soldiers. The battle took place during Robert E. Lee's second invasion of the north. If not for the Union forces stopping Lee in his tracks at Gettysburg, he may have even conquered the North. Nonetheless, it was a triumphant win for the Union, but it came at the horrific price of 23,000 soldiers. Due to this, Abraham Lincoln gave the famous Gettysburg Address on the battlefield solidifying its memorial status. In the address Lincoln stated that, "We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this." To this day, many people still make the patriotic pilgrimage to this battle field to pay their respects to those patriots who died for the cause of freedom for all who live within the borders of the United States, no matter what you look like, who you worship, or what language you speak. The men who sacrificed their lives on that battlefield died to end the evil practice of slavery that had plagued their society for years. That is why Gettysburg Memorial is

still important today. We need to remember patriots whose blood was spilled so that everyone living in America can enjoy the tree of liberty.

The Kemper Memorial, located in Mamaroneck, New York, was erected in memory of Richard Kemper who lived right here in Mamaroneck. The memorial also bears the names of one hundred other men and women who died in our community during World War 2. During World War 2, we fought to liberate Europe and the Pacific from the evil regimes of Hitler's Third Reich and the Japanese Empire. However, in the process thousands of Americans lost their lives fighting these tyrants. They did it in the hopes that all people in the world might live in a world free of oppression and tyranny, and prosper under the gentle leaves of the tree of liberty. Although the Kemper Memorial is the smaller of the three monuments mentioned, that does not diminish its significance. The memorial shows that people who lived just down the street, who were part of this community, died to protect the liberties we share today. People who would have been neighbors or friends, spilled their blood to refresh the tree of liberty. The Kemper Memorial puts a name and a face to the everyday people who fought and died in this extraordinary war. All of these patriots gave their lives so that everyone could go to school, so that everyone could be represented in government, and to protect the idea that every man and woman is created equal. One hundred one men and women from Larchmont and Mamaroneck, New York died for that cause. Therefore, it is only appropriate to remember their sacrifice with a memorial.

Memorials, such as the Revolutionary War Statuary, Gettysburg Memorial, and Kemper Memorial, show our appreciation as American citizens for the brave soldiers and patriots who lost their lives to refresh our tree of liberty. These monuments continue to be important today because we as Americans must be reminded of the blood that was spilled to grow the tree of liberty. If it were not for these fallen heroes, we may not live in the great society we have today.

They spilled their blood for the idea of liberty and justice for all. They spilled their blood for the land of the free, and the home of the brave. In fact we are only the land of the free today because of those who were so brave.

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