

monuments for the times

At Freehold Township, N.J.'s Sept. 11 memorial, workers install the surrounding granite pavers just before last September's official dedication. Note the replication of the mullions – the vertical lines that became the distinctive look of the World Trade Center towers in New York. (Photo courtesy Joseph Uras Monuments)

By Emerson Schwartzkopf

In today's uncertain times, monuments can provide a link to the past, and help draw some inspiration ... and direction.

In the past few years, a number of monuments appeared that implore all of us to reflect on some somber times in U.S. history. Using granite and not necessarily in the standard block and plaque setting these installations memorialize a set of events; one that seems too terrible to ever forget, and another that plenty of people find hard to remember.

SEPT. 11, 2001: FREEHOLD TOWNSHIP, N.J.

In one sense, making a memorial for something so horrible and so recent shouldn't be difficult. The terrorist destruction of the World Trade Center towers in New York became the most-documented event in history, besides the millions viewing the disaster in the New York area, more than seven of ten U.S. citizens saw that day's news coverage.

That notoriety, however, may be one of the biggest obstacles in channeling the enormity of Sept. 11 into a lasting memorial. At the WTC site in downtown Manhattan, the cleared excavation will likely remain for years, as there's no agreement whatsoever on a permanent memorial. For now, visitors face some temporary information panels and a tall, gray steel fence.

Other memorials around the country take different shapes, such as the 1/172-scale Alabama-white-marble replicas of the WTC towers created by **New Mexico Travertine Inc.** in Belen, N.M. The replicas, in a Belen memorial

park, stand beside a portion of a WTC steel beam and a shovel used in fighting fires from the Pentagon attack on Sept. 11.

Other memorials are located in more than 10 sites at facilities of **Raytheon Corp.** The installations commemorate four Raytheon employees who died as passengers on American Airlines Flight 11 when terrorists slammed the plane into the WTC's Tower 1.

In communities surrounding the New York area people struggled with their need to note the tragedy of Sept. 11, but also honor the memory of neighbors and friends lost in the catastrophe. One of the first to go into action was Freehold Township, an area in northern New Jersey

"A lot of the local towns started calling me up with different ideas," says Joseph Uras of **Joseph Uras Monuments** in Middletown, N.J. "In Freehold, they had the idea of a memorial with the Pentagon walls going around it, and the World Trade Center towers on top of it."

The final design, Uras says, took "a lot of meetings, and a lot of back and forth with different changes," but the result, after a half-year of consulting and fabrication, is the town's memorial, dedicated last Sept. 10.

To represent the Pentagon, Uras says the memorial uses five pieces of Gem Mist granite arranged in the pentagonal shape of the U.S. Defense Department headquarters in Arlington, Va. to shape a 5'-high foundation. Each side holds a different inscription; the front is "September 11,

The Philadelphia-area soldiers killed in the Korean War are listed on triangular Academy Black granite columns, with a different column for each year from 1950-1953. (Photo courtesy Cold Spring Granite Co.)

2001,” and the other four each note the flight numbers of the planes crashed into the WTC, the Pentagon, and near Shanksville, Pa.

On top of that foundation, a round piece of Gem Mist granite represents the WTC site – Ground Zero – with 50 gilded gold stars. That serves as the base for two 2’ x 2’ black granite towers, each reaching a height of 9’11”.

Flamed granite pavers surround the memorial, each measuring roughly 2’ X 2’.

The fabrication of the towers by Barre, Vt.-based **Rock of Ages Corp.** involved some detailed sandblasting and shaping. To get the distinctive vertical lines of the WTC towers, John Rose, director of manufacturing and customer service for Rock of Ages in Graniteville, Vt., says the company used a skinfrost technique to blow the polish off for a fine, delicate look. Each corner of the granite columns is also beveled, replicating the design of building architect Minoru Yamasaki.

“It’s a striking effect with the black granite towers,” says Rose. “It’s sandblasted, but you still get the reflection of everything around it.”

Rock of Ages handled all of the fabrication work, including sandblasting the other inscriptions, except for the finishing of the 50 gold starts. A Vermont sign company applied sizing and gold leaf in a two-step process.

Each tower, Rose says, weighs 7,000 lbs. The pieces that shape the Pentagon foundation, meanwhile, weigh in at 14,000 lbs. each. “We’ve done quite a few individual monuments concerning Sept. 11,” he says, “but this is the largest one of these types we’ve done for the attacks.”

Uras says a larger project is in the works for Middletown Township in New Jersey, honoring 36 people from the area who perished in the WTC attack. Preliminary plans call for the faces to be etched on the sides of granite replicas of the WTC towers, along with faces representing the firefighters, police officers and other personnel who died in rescue attempts on Sept. 11.

While the Freehold memorial is predominately granite, there’s also a part of it that’s unseen but just as stirring. Buried in the foundation, under the tall black granite replicas, are actual fragments from the wreckage of the WTC.

KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL, PHILADELPHIA

While Freehold’s Sept. 11 monument appeared within a year of the event being commemorated, the Korean War Memorial at Philadelphia’s Penn Landing literally took decades to evolve.

U.S. servicemen fought at the forefront of United Nations troops in the early 1950s in what became a protracted and deadly stalemate with North Korean and Chinese forces. When the war ended with less than a victory Korea remained divided into two countries the prevailing attitude was to essentially ignore and forget it.

In the early 1990s, plans began to pull together for a Korean memorial in Philadelphia, but moved slowly because of a lack of funding.

“The Korean War people involved with the monument didn’t have a lot of money,” says Frank Vitetta, chairman of the VITETTA architectural/engineering firm that designed the Philadelphia memorial. The fundraising for the \$675,000 project took close to a decade, but Vitetta remained involved for an investment that’s more than monetary.

“I served in Korea right after the war,” he says. “I certainly have a personal involvement in this, and it was exciting for me to do, having been there myself.”

The monument’s main purpose – to honor to 608 servicemen from the five-county Philadelphia metropolitan area who died in the Korean conflict – proved to be a time-consuming process, as well as the selection of photographs and information to be etched on stone.

“We went through a process, looking at several hundred photographs, text and captions,” says Tony Clifford, the VITETTA project architect for the memorial. “We went through them over and over again to boil it down to an essential set.”

The memorial evolved into a set of six Academy Black granite walls, each 15’ high and varying in length from 4’



Coordinators for the Philadelphia monument selected 24 photos to be etched on the surrounding granite walls, contributing to a chronological history of the Korean War. (Photo courtesy Cold Spring Granite Co.)



At last summer’s dedication of the Philadelphia Korean War Memorial, veterans and family survivors quickly related to the monument. Some traced the names of the dead with pencil rubbings, just like at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington. (Photo courtesy VITETTA)

The Philadelphia memorial also includes etched replicas of decorations awarded to Korean War veterans, such as this medal from the United Nations.

to 15'. Inside the 20' X 20' perimeter of the walls are four 2' X 2' X 15' columns, also in Academy Black granite; each carries a list of the fallen servicemen from a particular year, from 1950-1953. Etched at the top of each column is a large replica of the Purple Heart, the U.S. military decoration designated for soldiers wounded or killed in combat.

All of the walls are tapered from 2' widths at the base to 1' at the top. The columns are actually triangular, tapering to a flat face with the Purple Heart etchings.

Vitetta says the firm chose Academy Black because "we didn't want a granite with a bunch of large flecks in it. It was fairly even across the panel, and it was a good background for all the etched text in the background."

Vitetta notes the reproduction of the 24 photos throughout the structure plays a key part in the memorial's theme, since "the purpose wasn't just to create a monument, but also a museum that tells the story of the war." One wall, for example, portrays phases of war battles; the granite pavers underfoot are arranged in a map of Korea, showing the battle locations.

Cold Spring Granite Co. of Cold Spring, Minn., supplied the stone and fabricated all the text and photo etching for the memorial. Original plans called for the entire monu-



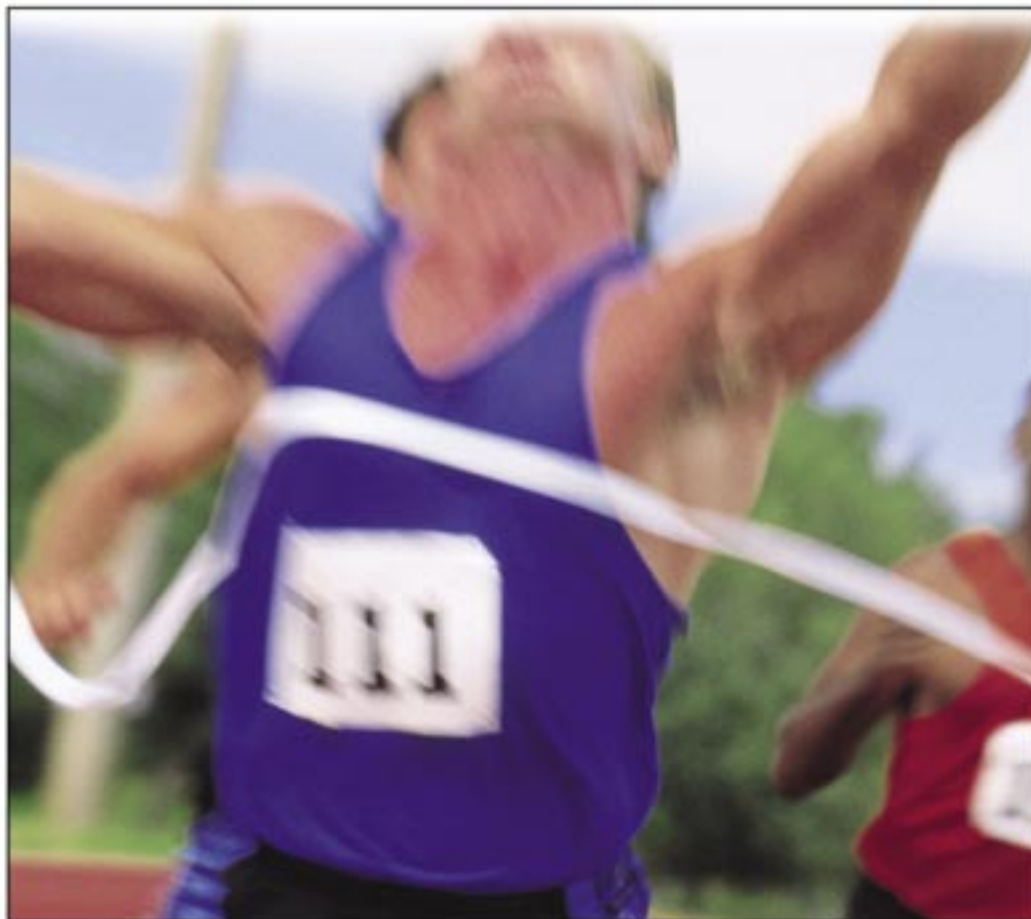
ment to be solid granite; to save costs, the design changed to use 1 1/4" panels. **JJ White**, a Philadelphia construction firm, provided poured-concrete bases, and stone fabricator/installer **James Molyneaux Co.** of Edgemont, Pa., handled the installation.

The panels are attached with a split-tail anchorage, says Jim Molyneaux, with shanks made locally for the firm. "They have longer lengths than the ones from Cold Spring," he says, "and they support more stone."

While the memorial received its official dedication last June, it's also a work in progress. Some of the walls are blank by design, and more photos and text will be added in the future; Molyneaux notes that he'll be sandblasting some additional 1/2"-high lettering this spring, using a thin "onion-skin" mask provided by Cold Spring.

The dedication last summer, incidentally, also brought a scene reminiscent of the response at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington; Korean veterans and family survivors traced names from the columns.

"It was surprising to me," Vitetta says. "I never thought about it that way when we designed it, but people wanted to touch it and rub the names onto a piece of paper. For them, it was something natural to do." ■



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