

# THE VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL CARILLON: VIRGINIA'S WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL

MEMORIALIZING THE PAST, EDUCATING THE FUTURE

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# VIRGINIA'S CARILLON:

A MISSION UNFULFILLED

The United States entered the First World War in the spring of 1917, three years into the conflict. More than 100,000 Virginians became part of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) sent to Europe to fight with the Allied Powers. 3,700 of those Virginians died. They did not get to witness the homecoming parades nor hear the bands play Irving Berlin's "Goodbye, France." Nor have the names of these 3,700 Virginians been memorialized by the Commonwealth. For over 90 years, that promise has gone unfulfilled. Since Virginia's World War I Carillon was dedicated on October 15 1932, an obvious and stark absence has remained - the names of those 3,700 Virginians who died to make the world "safe for democracy." The restoration of the Virginia War Memorial Carillon, led by the Department of General Services, presents a tremendous opportunity to complete the effort initiated nearly a century ago - to properly honor Virginia's WWI fallen. This has been accomplished for the nearly 12,000 Virginians lost in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and the Global War on Terror at the Virginia War Memorial on Belvidere. There, Virginia has created the premier state-level War Memorial in the nation, complete with the Shrine of Memory, the Paul and Phyllis Galanti Education Center, and the C. Kenneth Wright Pavilion. The time has come to give Virginia what it has been missing for more than a century- a memorial that enshrines the names of those who were lost in WWI and an interpretive center to honor their memory and educate the public about Virginia's role in the Great War.

Our vision is to restore the Carillon to its former glory and for its bells to once again sound both the somber notes of memory and uplifting sounds of freedom.



THE VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL CARILLON:  
VIRGINIA'S WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL  
RICHMOND, VA  
JUNE 1, 2023



# 1918

## The Virginia War Memorial Carillon: Virginia's World War I Memorial

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

One week after the Armistice of 11 November of 1918 that ended World War I the citizens of Virginia started a campaign to erect a memorial to the Virginians who had lost their lives during the war. This was a very public campaign

with individuals submitting letters to the local newspapers outlining ideas and concepts. During this period of history there was a popular movement for memorials to serve a functional purpose. Over several years, groups of interested citizens championed many ideas, including a Triumphal Arch, a public library, and a bridge across the James River. The public library plan gained significant attention by some Richmonders, for at this time there was not a public library in Richmond. The thought was not only would a library honor the past but would be a fitting intellectual legacy. In 1922 the General Assembly named the War Memorial Commission as the primary body to bring the dream of the Memorial to its completion and resolve the many ideas into one solid plan.



Image to left courtesy of the Richmond Times- Dispatch;  
Image above courtesy of the Virginia War Memorial.



The War Memorial Commission proceeded to hold a competition but the selected design was not popular with the many citizens who favored a carillon-type memorial. The Virginia Citizen's Carillon Committee was formed, and Virginians raised the additional \$75,000 needed to purchase the bells. The Richmond Times-Dispatch's editors declared that "no other State has built such a memorial to its warriors as this will be." Public support for the carillon concept grew and ultimately was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. The site was selected on the crest of the hill at Byrd Park and the City of Richmond gave three acres of its property to the Commonwealth.

Completed in 1932, the Carillon stands approximately 240 feet tall and houses a 4,026-square foot gallery hall on the main level, a rotunda, plaza, and bell tower. It was designed by the nationally prominent Ralph Adams Cram of the Boston firm Cram and Ferguson. The architect designed the building in the Georgian Revival style composed of a limestone plinth, which housed a museum, and a grand bell tower. The structure is a Virginia Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

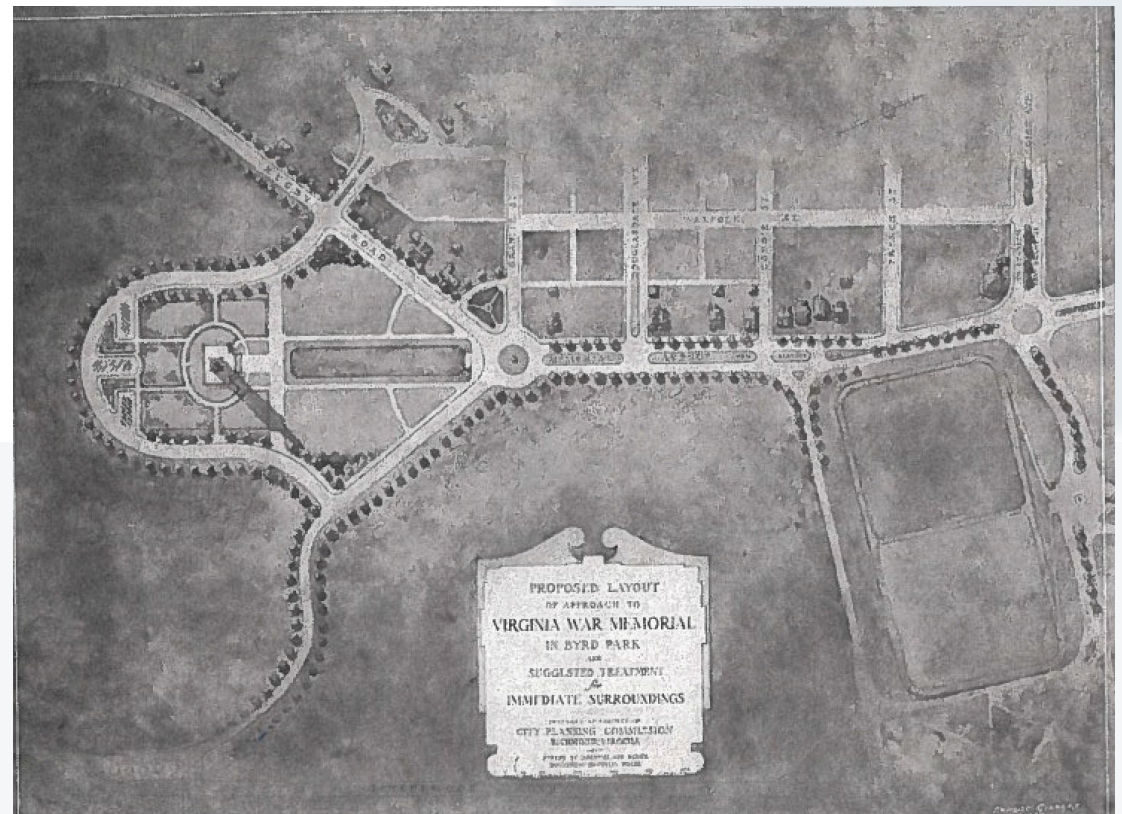


Image to top left: courtesy of the Department of Historic Resources;  
Image to left: American Troops Advancing - US Army Art Collection (public access);  
Image above courtesy of the Department of Veteran Services.

“At the time of the Carillon’s dedication on October 16, 1932, A. Judson Evans wrote of the dedication ceremony “Virginia’s Carillon, a singing tower visualized by orators as a source of perpetual music in perpetual honor of men who died with a song in their hearts, ...””

--Richmond Times- Dispatch



Clockwise:

A photo of the 1984 Restoration of the Carillon’s ground floor, the then home of the dedicated museum. Image supplied by the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

A traditional lady’s uniform from WWI.

The Gold Star Mother’s Flag and emblem. Their star can also be seen in the courtyard in front of the Carillon. The group is still active today.



The Carillon was not completed as originally designed due to budgetary compromises implemented during the Great Depression. The walls of the tower’s second floor were intended to feature plaques with the names of Virginia’s war dead, but these were not installed, and the planned reflecting pool to the north was not built. However, in the 1930s the terraces, plaza, and landscaping were installed by WPA workers and local organizations. The Gold Star Mothers played a vocal and important part in shaping the Carillon, and in the 1940s a large gold star made of terrazzo was laid into the floor of the entry plaza paying tribute to the mothers of the fallen.

When the Virginia War Memorial Carillon was dedicated, a ground floor museum housed donated photographs, posters, uniforms, flags, weapons, and other artifacts from World War I. This was an important part of the educational mission of the Carillon. The newspaper articles from the time reference visitors viewing the museum on dedication day - Saturday, October 15, 1932. One local article proclaimed “thousands view exhibits shown in war museum” and “soldiers to find permanent place in beautiful Carillon Museum.” The newspaper went on to describe some of the many artifacts on display including very personal items that were bullet-scarred from combat on the Western Front. Items on display included the unit flag from United States Base Hospital No. 45 (Medical College of Virginia Unit), which was commanded by Dr. Stuart McGuire, then-dean of the Medical College of Virginia, American and French war posters, a German war lantern, and a uniform worn by Major General Adelbert Cronkhite, the commander of the 80th “Blue Ridge” Division.

Sadly, the Carillon fell into disrepair and could not continue to house the artifacts and continue to operate as a museum. The artifacts were moved from the Carillon in 1964 and are now in the collection of the Virginia War Museum in Newport News.



Photos from the Base Hospital No. 45 (McGuire Unit) and 80th Infantry Division. Images provided by the Library of Virginia.

Originally the bell tower held 66 bronze bells of varying sizes cast by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough, England. The bells were intended to ring out patriotic tunes familiar to those whom the structure memorialized, and be played by a carillonneur. The carillonneur plays the carillon from the clavier chamber, which is located below the bells in a room at the top of the interior spiral steps. At the time of construction, the Commonwealth designated a fund to have the carillon played.

In the 1970s the bells were recast reducing the number to 53 bells. Although the bells have not been played for many years, they will be restored and ready to be played again. John Taylor & Co. will continue to be involved with the story of the Carillon and has been engaged to refurbish the historic bells.



# 2016

## CARILLON RESTORATION AND RENOVATIONS

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

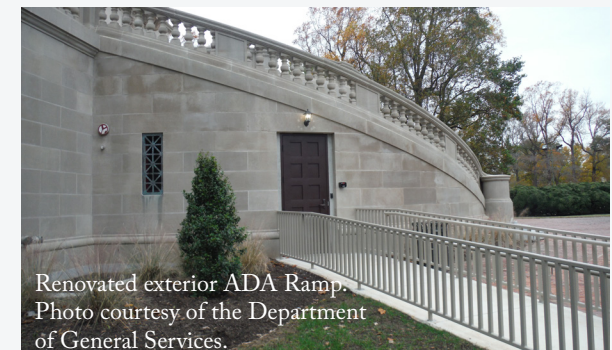
Several renovations have been undertaken over the years to ensure that the Carillon remains sound. In 2016 the Commonwealth of Virginia funded a multi-phased restoration project based on the Virginia War Memorial Carillon Tower Condition Assessment Report. Phase 1 included substantial maintenance repairs, a replacement elevator, and work to make the Carillon ADA compliant; while Phase 2, which is ongoing, encompasses restoration of the bells, a new roof, and extensive work on both interior and exterior spaces in Phase 2. Phase 3, yet to be funded, will include the elements needed to restore the memorial to its original purpose and glory, including adding the names of Virginians who died in World War I and creating interior displays and education spaces. The Commonwealth authorized funds to commence the restoration of the Carillon in 2017, and Phase 2 will be completed in 2024. If funded, Phase 3 will be completed in time for a November 11, 2025 grand reopening. At that time, the Carillon will be ready to fulfill its original purpose of memorializing the fallen Virginians of WWI and educating future generations.



Exterior repairs.  
Photo courtesy of the Department  
of General Services.

### Phase 1A- Maintenance Repairs

- Complete cleaning of building exterior
- New ADA Ramp
- Replacement of non-historic exterior lighting.
- Plaster repair and repainting
- Terrazzo floors – uncovered and refurbished
- Replacement of all existing lighting for LED Lamps
- Window repairs and repainting
- Stone masonry repointing



Renovated exterior ADA Ramp.  
Photo courtesy of the Department  
of General Services.





### Phase 1B- Elevator Replacement

- Replacement of 86-year old elevator to comply with current codes
- Install new Fire Alarm systems
- Install new Security systems

### Phase 2- Bells

- Restore bells and associated equipment
- Structural steel support replacement and repairs

### Roofing

- Removal of prior roofing materials and decks prep for new roofing materials
- Repairs to 7,900 square foot second floor plaza level deck waterproofing and pavers
- Removal of prior roofing at belfry and upper tower levels, and deck prep for new roofing
- Replacement of metal dome roofing to visually replicate the existing roofing

### Building Repairs

- Rehabilitation of existing systems and finishes, including replacement of HVAC systems
- Replacement of restroom fixtures and finishes
- Exterior and interior stone and masonry repairs
- Repair of limited areas of concrete structure
- Cleaning of limited areas of brick masonry, historic decorative interior, limestone walls and floors, historic ornamental plaster
- Refurbishment of historic lighting fixtures
- Repairs and recoating of the interior cast iron spiral stairs

### Plaza Deck

- Replacement of all plaza deck brick pavers
- Replacement of adjacent walkways and ADA ramps between traffic circles (complete)



In honor of the 100 anniversary in 2018 on Armistice Day.  
Image courtesy of the Department of General Services.

2025

MEMORIALIZING THE PAST;  
EDUCATING THE FUTURE



It has been over 90 years since the dedication of the Virginia War Memorial Carillon. Over that time there have been other military conflicts, but the sacrifices of the Virginians who served in the Great War have not been forgotten. As in the illustration by Fred Seibel capturing the imagery described by the Virginians of the time “Lest We Forget” captures the intent of the Virginia War Memorial Commission and the vision of Virginia’s citizen. We of this generation should also not forget the generation that over 90 years ago gave their lives in service. Today our mission is clear: honor the 3,700 Virginians who died in World War I by building displays on the first floor of the Carillon that honor the service of all Virginians in the Great War, creating education spaces to help future generations of Virginians learn about the service and sacrifice of all Virginians who served in World War I, and honoring the fallen by etching their names in stone outside the Carillon, so that they may be viewed by all.



# CONNECTING VIRGINIA TO...



Above photo supplied by Library of Virginia's "True Sons of Freedom" exhibit.



Doughboy hat of VA's 80th Division  
Photo supplied by Department of Veteran Services.



Photo courtesy of Virginia War Memorial.



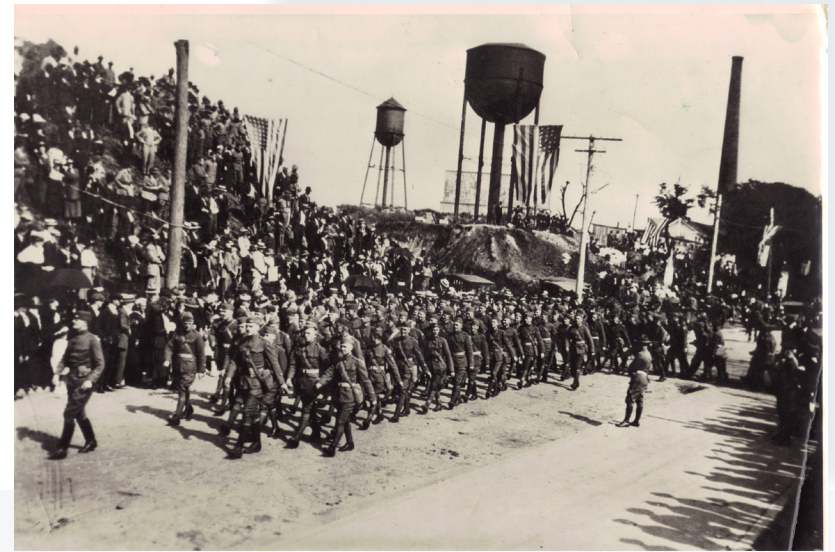
Image above supplied by Department of Veteran Services.



Photo supplied by Department of Veteran Services.



For more than two decades, the Virginia War Memorial on Belvidere has been using exhibits, displays, artifacts, and education programming to honor veterans and preserve their stories for future generations. At the Virginia War Memorial Carillon, a layered experience of period photographs, uniforms, weapons, music, and artwork will combine with world class programs to connect visitors to the people and events of over a century ago, and to make good on Virginia's promise to never forget the impact of World War I or those who fought to defend freedom.



Doughboys marching in Norfolk, Virginia.  
Photo supplied by Department of Veteran Services.



Victory Arch in Newport News, Virginia.  
Photo supplied by Department of Veteran Services.



...ITS GREAT WAR PAST.



