

Comparing American and
German Remembrance

MEMORIALS FOR THE FALLEN

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THE STUDENTENSTEIN

The Studentenstein (Student-Stone) is a 22t cube of granite from the Odenwald.¹ Today it is located in the Ringpark in the city of Würzburg close to the Studentenwerk. It was presented to the public in 1927 during the 10th German Student Day. The memorial was originally located close to the Huttenschlösschen.

Not only its location but also the external appearance of the Studentenstein has changed throughout its existence. When the monument was first presented, it initially consisted of a large cube that was placed on four smaller cuboids. On this large cube there was a pyramid roof, the top of which was adorned with a golden eagle. The cube was also decorated with two engravings. On the front was a picture of hands arranged in a semicircle reaching for a sword. On the back there was an inscription dedicated to the fallen students of World War I. It read "Deutschland muß leben, und wenn wir sterben müssen. Die deutsche Studentenschaft ihren Gefallenen" ("Germany must live, and if we must die. The German student body to its fallen"). Under this inscription there was a symbolic German oak² with the years 1914-18.

During the time of National Socialism, the Studentenstein was known as „Langemarkstein“³ and was the location of party rallies. It was also relocated, a swastika was added and the golden eagle was enlarged.



fig. 1: The Studentenstein in its current form.

The Studentenstein owes its current form to a revision by the sculptor Hubertus Pilgrim in the years 1957-59. He removed the four small cuboids, the pyramid roof with eagle, and attached bronze reliefs to the main cube on which he inscribed a new inscription. The new inscription reads "Die Deutsche Studentenschaft im Gedenken an den Tod – das Opfer – das Vorbild" ("The German student body in memory of the death - the sacrifice - the example"). It is intended to symbolize death, mourning and resurrection.⁴ The monument was relocated to its current position in 1967.⁵ The student stone is now also dedicated to the fallen students of the two world wars.



fig. 2: Unveiling of the Studentenstein in 1927.

There is currently no official event to commemorate the fallen students of both world wars that would include this memorial. Beginning in 1982⁶, there seem to be or at least have been a yearly event on the 20th of July where so called "Studentenverbindungen"⁷ (in English: Student's association) hold or held a wreath-laying ceremony, but nowadays public interest and interest among students in the monument is nearly nonexistent.⁸

THE KRIEGERDENKMAL

The Kriegerdenkmal (Warrior-Memorial) is located in the Hussarenwäldchen, also in the Ringpark of the city of Würzburg. It was carved out from Muschelkalk⁹ in 1925-31 by the sculptor Fried Heuler and the government architect Franz Kleinsteuber while 11.300 square meters of the park had to be redesigned.¹⁰ The monument was originally dedicated to the fallen of World War I and was inaugurated on All Saints' Day 1931.

The NSDAP originally rejected the memorial, but later misused it as a so-called "Heroes Memorial". Today, the Kriegerdenkmal is a memorial for the fallen soldiers of the two world wars and the expelled Sudeten Germans. According to Dr. Hans Steidle, the city has tried to make the Kriegerdenkmal "a memorial for peace, too".¹¹

The memorial begins at the Rennweg¹² with four fire bowls on pylons that begin a footpath to the memorial itself. The memorial consists of larger-than-life sculptures of imperial German soldiers carrying a fallen comrade. They are depicted anonymously and appear dull, sad, also heroic, but not martial. The sculptures are placed in the middle of an exedra.

On this exedra there are panels with the names of the fallen soldiers of the city of Würzburg, as well as the inscription "Die Stadt ihren Soehnen" (The city to her sons). Seven crosses with the years 1939-45 were added to the memorial after 1945.¹³ A memorial plaque for the expelled Sudeten Germans was also added.



fig. 3: Sculptures of six imperial German soldiers carrying a fallen comrade.

According to Dr. Steidle the cultural advisory board tried to "undermine pro-nationalist or Nazi ideology that is based on [the] memorial",¹⁴ for example by putting up an explanatory plaque. There is a memorial service at the war memorial every year on Volkstrauertag (people's day of mourning).¹⁵ Representatives of the government, the city and various associations take part in the wreath-laying ceremony. The mayor speaks and representatives of the Catholic and Protestant churches pray together. The Bundeswehr¹⁶ also has four soldiers involved as torchbearers.



fig. 4: The Kriegerdenkmal on the Volkstrauertag.

WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON D.C.

The World War I National Memorial is a planned memorial to commemorate members of the United States Armed Forces during World War I.

The first impetus for a national memorial for the First World War arose during efforts to erect a memorial for those who died in the Second World War in the late 1980s.¹⁷ However, it remains an idea for now.

In the fall of the year 2000, Jan Scruggs, Chief Executive Officer of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, proposed that the District of Columbia War Memorial be made a memorial to all veterans of the First World War. However, this project failed.¹⁸

In 2008, Ted Poe¹⁹ passed a law to create a national memorial for the First World War, the Frank Buckles World War I Memorial Act, named after the veteran Frank Buckles, whose criticism that there was no national memorial for the participants of the First World War gave Ted Poe the impetus to campaign for it in the first place.²⁰

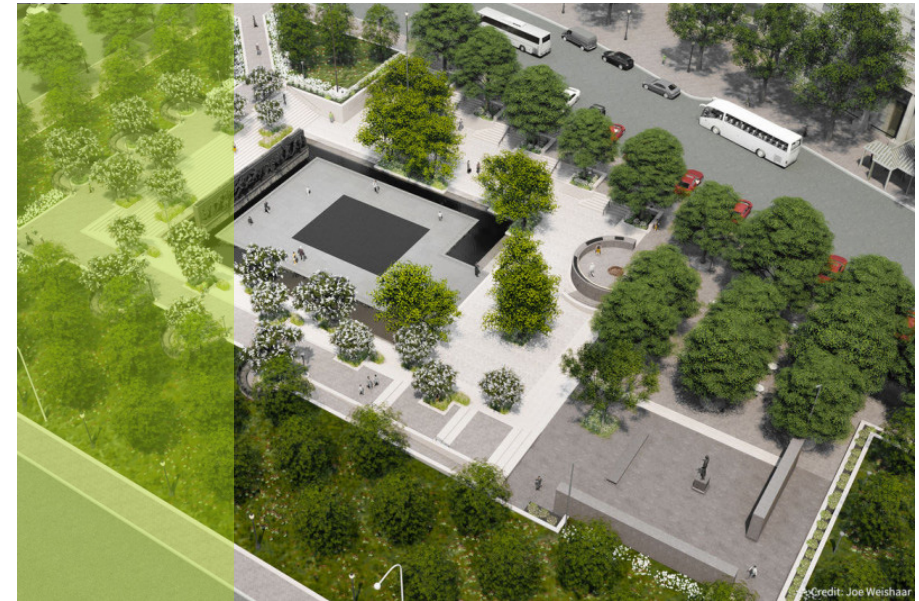


fig. 5: The new World War I Memorial replaces Pershing Park.
Courtesy GWWO Architects.

This law gave the American Battle Monuments Commission the power to either take over the District of Columbia War Memorial or build a new one on the same site. Since then, funds have been raised for the project and the World War I Centennial Commission was established in 2011.²¹ The idea of taking over the Columbia War Memorial has since been abandoned, because the citizens of the District of Columbia didn't want their local memorial to be transformed into a national one. Thus Pershing Park and the space at the National Mall became one of the alternatives for the construction of a completely new monument.²²

The World War I Memorial Foundation preferred the place at the National Mall at first, but there was no more room for the new memorial near the mall and time was running out. So the commission was finally allowed to build the memorial in Pershing Park. In January 2016, the design by Joseph Weishaar, a 25-year-old architect from the University of Arkansas, was declared the winner of a tender.²³

Officially, construction began on November 9th, 2017, but the actual work began only after the plans had been revised in 2019. The project is expected to be completed in November 2021.²⁴ Sabin Howard was chosen to build 38 figures for a bronze relief. The subject of the relief, titled *A Soldier's Journey*, is intended to show the story of a US soldier who, beginning with his departure from his family, witnesses the events of the First World War. Due to the fact that these figures will have to be made by hand in countless hours, the completion of the relief is expected for autumn 2023 or spring 2024. Thus, the monument was not completely finished for its opening in April 2021.²⁵ Only the modification of the park and the erection of the memorial stones were completed.

In the center of the park there now is a large rectangular water basin, on one side of which the relief will be placed. It will then be accessible through a kind of footbridge. The relief will also be a waterfall, the water of which pours into the basin. Since the back of the relief is already finished, it is already possible to get a little foretaste of what this waterfall should look like. The whole park is framed by a chain of light poles that were placed behind the green spaces on the sidewalk around the park. The grounds are accessible from all sides. The statue of General Pershing was integrated in the new memorial.



fig. 6: Trees in the vicinity of the Studentenstein, see fig. 1

THE LIBERTY MEMORIAL IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

The Liberty Memorial in Kansas City is a WWI memorial and museum in Kansas City. It arose from a campaign to build a war memorial at the end of 1919 shortly after the end of WWI. Its architect was Harold van Buren Magonigle, who won the national competition with his design in the style of Egyptian historicism. It was built from 1921-1926. Further renovation work took place from 1995 to 2006, and in 2004 the memorial was declared a national museum and should receive a WWI museum. In 2006, it was also given the status of a National Historic Landmark. Therefore, extensive expansion work took place in the basement of the memorial, which should house the museum and space was created for the state-of-the-art museum that was built at the same time. The Liberty Memorial, previously a federal memorial of the state Missouri, was elevated to a national memorial in 2014 by congress.²⁶

In the center of the complex is the Liberty Tower, which is over 200 feet high, on top of which a flame of inspiration is ignited at night by steam and light effects. So-called guardian spirits were also attached to the top to symbolically watch over the memorial. To the east of the extensive complex is the Memorial Hall as part of the War Museum, the entrance of which is adorned by two sphinxes in the Assyrian style. In addition to French paintings depicting WWI, it houses, among other things, bronze tablets of 441 fallen citizens of Kansas City. To the west is the Exhibit Hall, which was the main museum from 1926-1994.

Nowadays it is still part of the Memorial, but the traveling exhibitions are now also arranged here. In 1935, a frieze of colossal proportions was added to the northern outer wall, which displays the end of the war and the beginning of a new era of peace. In addition to the figures on the frieze, there are depictions of a sword with the Stars and Stripes on it, which is supposed to represent the defense force of the USA. The inscription on the large frieze reads: "These have dared bear the torches of sacrifice and service: Their bodies return to dust, but their work liveth for evermore. Let us strive on to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."²⁷



fig. 7: The National WWI Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, October 2014.

In the north of the complex, the Dedication Wall has also been erected in 1921 with the bronze busts of five of the highest ranking allied military personnel, such as General Foch from France or General Pershing from the USA. In addition to the main gallery, which houses the war museum after the expansion of 2006, there are now various smaller galleries, such as the state-of-the-art Wylie Gallery, which was completed in 2018.²⁸

COMPARING THE MEMORIALS FOR THE FALLEN

The memorials in Würzburg were originally dedicated to the fallen sons of the city and the fallen students of World War I, the fallen of World War II war were later added, as well as the Sudeten Germans in case of the Kriegerdenkmal. The American memorials are dedicated purely to the fallen and the veterans of the 1st World War and both are, unlike the Studentenstein and Kriegerdenkmal, national memorials, though the Liberty Memorial was a state memorial until 2014.

An interesting difference is the time the memorials were built. The Studentenstein was presented to the public in 1927, the Kriegerdenkmal in 1931, and the Liberty Memorial in 1926. Yet the National World War I Memorial in Washington was only opened in 2021. The wish to preserve the memory of this war seems to be prevalent enough in American society too warrant such a construction, which is no small expense.



fig. 8: Detail of the Kriegerdenkmal, see fig. 3

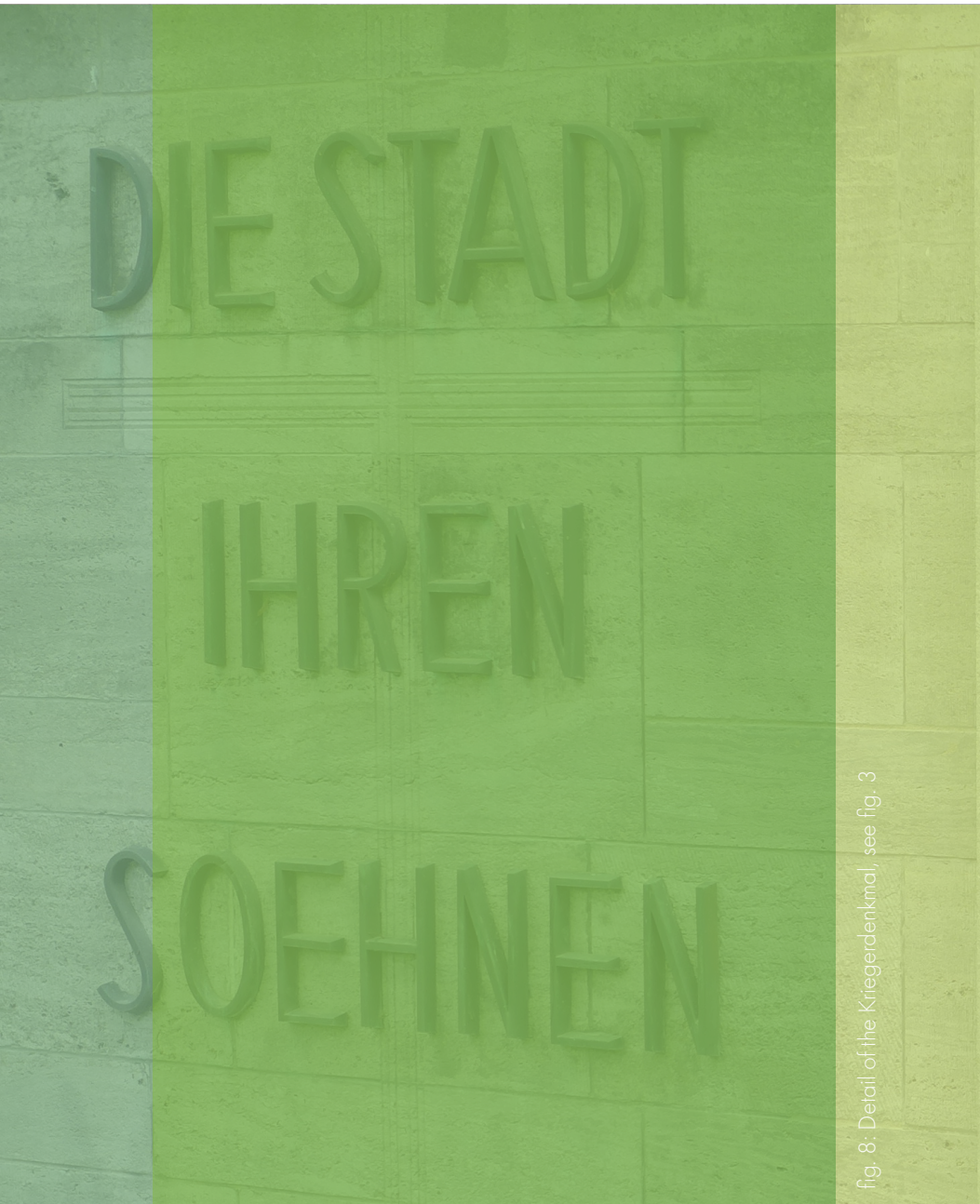


fig. 8: Detail of the Kriegerdenkmal, see fig. 3

There are also striking differences in their outward appearance. The Studentenstein is a rather small granite cube with bronze reliefs attached to it. The Kriegerdenkmal is much bigger and consists of the group of statues made of shell-bearing limestone, the crosses, pylons, and the exedra. The National World War I Memorial is a whole park that has been remade a memorial, including a water basin, waterfall, relief and the statue of General Pershing. The memorial in Kansas is on a whole new level. It consists of the Liberty tower standing at about 270 feet, a frieze, two sphinxes, and multiple additional Egyptian style buildings housing, among other things, a museum. With the addition of a Dedication Wall with the bronze busts of five of the highest ranking allied military personnel it seems to be the most political of the four memorials. Of course the memorials were not always the way they are today. All of them have undergone changes. The Studentenstein underwent changes by the Nazis when they added a swastika to it and enlarged the eagle on top of it, and when it was reworked in 1957-59 where everything but the base cube was removed and the bronze reliefs were added. The Kriegerdenkmal underwent fewer changes. The seven crosses with the years 1939-45 and the plaque for the Sudeten Germans were added. In their history, the German monuments underwent three phases one could say. The first phase was the democratic Weimar Republic where many veterans were still around. The second phase was Nazi Germany, where the monuments were misused to further the Nazi agenda. The third and current phase is the Federal Republic of Germany where the monuments were rededicated to the fallen of both World Wars and reinterpreted as memorials for peace.

In case of the American Monuments, there have of course been no reworks of the monuments due to radical regime change. The changes that affected the memorial in Kansas became necessary due to the quality of the construction and security concerns in the 1980s and from 1995-2006. The Liberty Memorial also had a new building added to it in 2014. The National World War I Memorial in Washington has not undergone changes as of July 2021. The bronze figures are to be installed in the future.

Lastly to the public's opinion regarding the memorials. A survey of 40 random citizens was conducted on June 12th in Würzburg. The participants were aged 20-68 and the ratio of male and female participants was about equal. Interestingly, there was no noticeable difference in the participant's answers that could be linked to age or gender. The Studentenstein was known to 50% of the participants and given a rating²⁹ of 4.15, the best rating being 5 and the worst being 1. 85% of participants found the Studentenstein's existence as a monument good and deemed it contemporary. The Kriegerdenkmal was known to 80% of participants and received an average rating of 4.40. Once again 85% found the Kriegerdenkmal's existence good and deemed it contemporary. The Studentenstein was criticized for being too small and lacking an eye-catcher by two participants, while both monuments were criticized by four participants for being outdated and not contemporary anymore.

The memorial in Washington was criticized due to it replacing Pershing-Park that had been a place for the community before being rededicated. The Liberty Memorial faced little criticism in its existence. But it was vandalized ahead of the 2020 election. Someone had sprayed "Don't vote" on parts of it.

IMAGE CREDITS

- fig. 1: Raphael Spatz.
- fig. 2: <https://schreibdasauf.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Studentenstein-Enth%C3%BCllung-im-Juli-1927-1024x775.jpg> (24.07.21).
- fig. 3: Raphael Spatz.
- fig. 4: The Kriegerdenkmal on the Volkstrauertag. https://wuerzburgwiki.de/w/images/4/47/Kriegerdenkmal_Volkstrauertag.jpg (24.07.21).
- fig. 5: The new World War I Memorial replaces Pershing Park. Courtesy GWWO Architects: https://ggwash.org/images/made/images/posts/_resized/header_800_533_90.jpg (31.07.21).
- fig. 6: Raphael Spatz
- fig. 7: The National WWI Museum and Memorial in Kansas: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:National_World_War_I_Museum_and_Memorial_aerial.jpg (31.07.21).
- fig. 8+9: Raphael Spatz



NOTES

¹ Schellakowsky, Johannes: Studentische Erinnerungskultur im Wandel. Der Würzburger Studentenstein vom nationalen Monument zum Mahnmal des Friedens in Tempora mutantur et nos? Festschrift für Walter M. Brod, hrsg. von Mettenleiter, Andreas, Pfaffenhofen 2007, S. 311-319, S. 313.

² The oak is the traditional tree of Germany.

³ The First Battle of Ypres is known in German as "Erste Flandernschlacht" (First battle of Flanders) or "Langemarck", named after the Municipality Langemark-Poelkapelle which is located in the Arrondissement of Ypres.

⁴ Schellakowsky, Johannes: Studentische Erinnerungskultur im Wandel. Der Würzburger Studentenstein vom nationalen Monument zum Mahnmal des Friedens in Tempora mutantur et nos? Festschrift für Walter M. Brod, hrsg. von Mettenleiter, Andreas, Pfaffenhofen 2007, S. 311-319, S. 317.

⁵ Bartholomäus, Christine: Die Ringparkanlagen in Kallfelz, Hatto (Hrsg.): Gärten und Grünanlagen in Würzburg. Ihre Entwicklung und Bedeutung. Eine Ausstellung des Staatsarchivs Würzburg und des Stadtarchivs Würzburg, München 1990, S. 211-250, S. 245.

⁶ Schellakowsky, Johannes: Studentische Erinnerungskultur im Wandel. Der Würzburger Studentenstein vom nationalen Monument zum Mahnmal des Friedens in Tempora mutantur et nos? Festschrift für Walter M. Brod, hrsg. von Mettenleiter, Andreas, Pfaffenhofen 2007, S. 311-319, S. 318.

⁷ A Studentenverbindung is a type of Student's association that is unique to Germany, Austria, Switzerland and formerly German speaking areas or areas with a German minority. The Studentenverbindungen in their current form exist since the early 19th century but earlier versions go back to the Middle Ages. They are accused of promoting a hierarchical world view and being right wing.

⁸ Schellakowsky, Johannes: Studentische Erinnerungskultur im Wandel. Der Würzburger Studentenstein vom nationalen Monument zum Mahnmal des Friedens in Tempora mutantur et nos? Festschrift für Walter M. Brod, hrsg. von Mettenleiter, Andreas, Pfaffenhofen 2007, S. 311-319, S. 312.

⁹ Shell-bearing limestone.

¹⁰ Bartholomäus, Christine: Die Ringparkanlagen in Kallfelz, Hatto (Hrsg.): Gärten und Grünanlagen in Würzburg. Ihre Entwicklung und Bedeutung. Eine Ausstellung des Staatsarchivs Würzburg und des Stadtarchivs Würzburg, München 1990, S. 211-250, S. 236.

¹¹ Vgl. Spatz, Raphael: Interview mit Dr. Hans Steidle vom 18.06.2021.

¹² This is the name of a street.

¹³ Weigand, Katharina: Kriegerdenkmäler im Wandel in Körner, Hans-Michael; Weigand, Katharina; Tremel, Manfred (Hrsg.): Denkmäler in Bayern (Hefte zur bayerischen Geschichte und Kultur Band 19), Augsburg 1997, S. 25-28, S. 26.

¹⁴ Vgl. Spatz, Raphael: Interview mit Dr. Hans Steidle vom 18.06.2021.

¹⁵ Volkstrauertag is the day two Sundays before the first day of Advent.

¹⁶ The armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany.

¹⁷ Siehe: Patterson, Thom (u.a.): WWII Memorial Dedication to Salute Heroes, CNN. May 28, 2004, (Link unter: <http://edition.cnn.com/2004/TRAVEL/05/27/WWII.memorial/>, [zuletzt aufgerufen 31.07.21]).

¹⁸ Scruggs, Jan: Wars and Remembrance, in: The Washington Post, (August 13, 2000), (Link nicht mehr auffindbar, [zuletzt aufgerufen 28.07.21]).

¹⁹ Former member of Congress.

²⁰ Siehe: Bowman, Bridget: The Great War Memorial's Great Journey, Roll Call (January 8, 2015), Retrieved July 20th, 2015, (Link unter: <https://www.rollcall.com/2015/01/08/the-great-war-memorials-great-journey/>, [zuletzt aufgerufen 31.07.21]) and Howell, Tom Jr.: Congressman Propose Site for National WWI Memorial, in: The Washington Times (September 9, 2012), Retrieved July 18, 2015, (Link unter: <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/sep/9/dc-wwi-memorial-will-be-left-alone/> [zuletzt aufgerufen 31.07.21]).

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²² (folg.) Committee on Natural Resources: Frank Buckles World War I Memorial Act, Washington December 12, 2012, pp.5-7, (Link unter: <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-report/112th-congress/house-report/701/1?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22H.Rept.+112-701%22%5D%7D&s=4&r=184>, [zuletzt aufgerufen 31.07.21]), Bowman, Bridget: The Great War Memorial's Great Journey, Roll Call (January 8, 2015), Retrieved July 20th, 2015, (Link unter: <https://www.rollcall.com/2015/01/08/the-great-war-memorials-great-journey/>, [zuletzt aufgerufen 31.07.21]), and Schwab, Nikki: World War I Memorial Gets a Take Two, U.S. News & World Report (August 13, 2014), Retrieved July 20, 2015, (Link unter: <https://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/washington-whispers/2014/08/13/world-war-i-memorial-gets-a-take-two>, [zuletzt aufgerufen 31.07.21]).

²³ Rosenfield, Karissa: Open Call: US Launches Competition for National World War I Memorial, in: Architecture Daily (May 21, 2015), Retrieved July 20, 2015, (Link unter: <https://www.archdaily.com/633693/open-call-us-launches-competition-for-national-world-war-i-memorial>, [zuletzt aufgerufen 31.07.21]), Kennicott, Philip: World War one Centennial Commission moves forward cautiously, in: The Washington Post (January 26 2016), Retrieved Oktober 18., 2016, (Link unter: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2016/01/26/world-war-one-centennial-commission-moves-forward-cautiously/>, [zuletzt aufgerufen 31.07.21]), McGlone, Peggy: % finalists picked for World War I memorial in the District, in: The Washington Post (August 19, 2015), Retrieved August 20, 2015, (Link unter: https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/5-finalist-picked-for-world-war-i-memorial-in-the-district/2015/08/19/fd0deea-469c-11e5-8ab4-c73967a143d3_story.html, [zuletzt aufgerufen 31.07.21]) and McGlone, Peggy: World War I Centennial Commission picks final design, in The Washington Post (January 26, 2016), (Link unter: https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/world-war-i-centennial-commission-picks-final-design-for-memorial/2016/01/26/d7700f06-c456-11e5-8965-0607e0e265ce_story.html, [zuletzt aufgerufen 31.07.21]).

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²⁶ Website of the National WWI Museum and Memorial, (Link unter: <https://www.theworldwar.org/explore/museum-and-memorial/elements-museum-and-memorial>) [zuletzt aufgerufen 05.08.21]).

²⁷ Vgl. Ebd.

²⁸ Ebd.

²⁹ Participants of the survey were asked to rate the monuments regarding their overall impression.