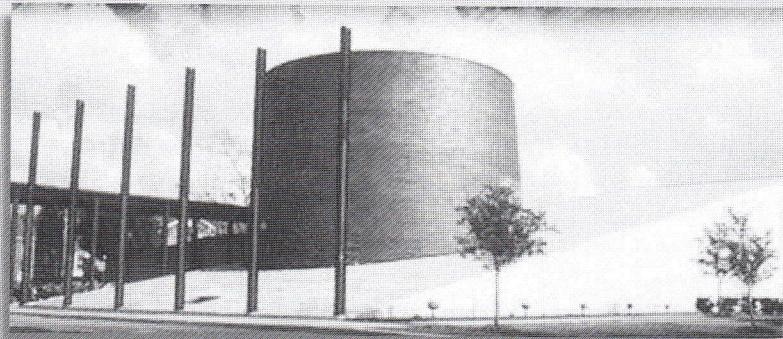


Public Memorials, *Private Memories*

By Jenna Berger and Leigh Cutler

Throughout the city, Houstonians have special places they can go to remember those they lost in World War II. For many, a public memorial gives them a sense of comfort and healing. For others, it serves as a substitute because they cannot travel to the grave of a loved one. From the Museum District to Katy to Bellaire, war memorials provide a place of solace and remembrance to those whose family members and friends are no longer with us.

Holocaust Museum Houston



FOLLOWING THE END of World War II, hundreds of Holocaust survivors came to Houston to start new lives. Many came with no money, no knowledge of the English language, and no family. Many had lost their entire families during the Nazi genocide, but had no place to mourn their loss. In 1996, Holocaust Museum Houston opened its doors in the Museum District, after years of hard work by Holocaust survivors and community members. In addition to the museum's role as a space to teach the lessons of the Holocaust, it also serves as a place of remembrance for Houstonians who lost loved ones during the genocide. Survivors now have a public space to reflect on their private memories.

EVERY MEMORIAL DAY, crowds gather together at Bear Creek Park to remember the sacrifices of Harris County residents in the wars of the past century. The Harris County War Memorial was dedicated to honor those who lost their lives fight-



Harris County War Memorial

ing for this country. The idea for the memorial was driven by former Harris County Commissioner Bob Eckels and was sponsored by the Herbert D. Dunlavy Veterans of Foreign Wars Post and the Gold Star Mothers American Legion.

Engraved on a portion of the Texas red granite memorial are Eckels' own words: "This monument dedicated May 27, 1985, to honor those who lie silent that we may enjoy in abundance the privileges and responsibilities of freedom." Surrounded by a sea of tall green trees, a central pillar topped with a bronze eagle lists the wars the memorial represents—WWI, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. On each side, a long, narrow rectangular wall is engraved with the names of those Harris County residents who lost their lives fighting for this country. In the center of the plaza is an American flag and a smaller pillar that states, "In Honor and In Memory of Those Known Only to God."

THE BELLAIRE MONUMENT was first dedicated on July 4, 1975 and rededicated on Veteran's Day, November 11, 1976. It was a project of the Heritage Committee of the Bellaire



Bellaire War Monument

Bicentennial Commission to honor thirteen Bellaire residents who lost their lives in wars and conflicts. These dates were to reflect the start and finish of the American Revolution Bicentennial celebration.

On July 4, 1975, several hundred spectators attended the dedication in Paseo Park on Bellaire Boulevard. The Veterans of Foreign Wars District IV conducted the dedication, which ended with the Rifle Squad firing three volleys followed by "Taps." The Bayou City Unit of the Civil Air Patrol, Texas Wing, was also on hand to present the colors with Boy Scout Troupe 709 from Spring Branch. The event culminated with the firing of three rounds from a 150-year old muzzle-loading brass cannon. The dedication ceremony was a community-wide event, embraced by Houstonians of all ages.

The Texan, April 2, 1975; July 9, 1975; and November 11, 1976.