



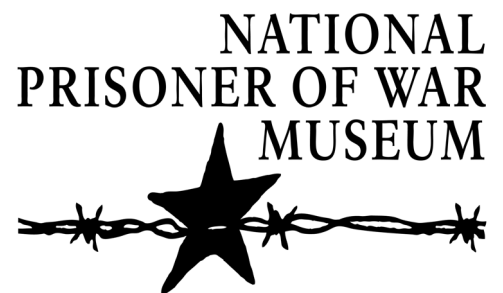
## Illustrating Sacrifice and Courage:

### *Telling the Prisoner of War Story Through Architecture, Art, and Sculpture*

At the National Prisoner of War Museum, the story of American prisoners of war (POW) is powerfully presented through exhibits, audio-visual displays, and historic artifacts. Although these are central elements in explaining the histories of POWs they are not the sole methods. Upon arrival, it is also the architecture, art, and sculpture surrounding visitors that dramatically set the stage to explore the complex realities of captivity.

#### Museum Logo

As visitors approach the National Prisoner of War Museum, two brick columns frame the walkway; each bears a plaque with the museum's logo: a simple design combining a star and a single strand of barbed wire. The logo conveys the hardships of confinement with a love of country which POWs share.



#### Architecture

The National Prisoner of War Museum was opened in 1998, the culmination of a decade-long effort.

Approaching the museum building, visitors see, across a clean sweep of lawn, a long, low solid dark-maroon brick building punctuated with three grey granite towers. The building form is reminiscent of prisons and uses the thematic elements common to all POW stories: towers, gates, confinement, water, and light. Walking toward the building from the parking lot, the visitor is forced to approach in pairs or single file up a narrow straight walk leading between two small, square brick buildings. These buildings and the black entry gate serve to constrict the approach to quiet groups and create a feeling of tension prior to entering the lobby.

The major materials selected for the museum—brick, slate and granite—reflect the materials already found in the historic structures and monuments at Andersonville, chosen to immortalize the losses suffered by American soldiers over the last two centuries.

The use of these materials links the visitor to the physical reality of imprisonment, a reality defined by solid forms which keep the captive from family, freedom and country.

Once inside the building, the mood changes as light floods down from large clerestory windows high in the tower. To enter the exhibit rooms, visitors once again pass through a narrow passage and enter displays flanking a central corridor, moving from light into the dim realm of the prisoner. The thematic exhibit rooms can be passed through sequentially, or the visitor may choose to exit for a rest, sitting in a quiet space beneath one of the two small towers. Diffused natural light enters the building at these small towers, providing visual and emotional relief from the intensity of the exhibits.



## Lobby Murals

Encircling the lobby of the National Prisoner of War Museum is a mural featuring illustrations of POWs throughout American history. Twenty illustrations of individuals or groups of prisoners recur across the mural panels. Each individual figure represents a POW from a specific conflict; on close inspection, the groups are intentionally mixed together, with POWs of different eras supporting each other. Military artist Keith Rocco was commissioned by the National Park Service to create these illustrations.

These illustrations are a vivid example of how the national park approaches the stories of POWs within the museum. Over the centuries American men and women have fought and served their country, and while the details may differ, the hardships experienced by those who willingly face capture or death at enemy hands remains the same. It also reminds us of the way that younger and older generations support one another over time in pursuit of the common good.



## “The Price of Freedom Fully Paid” The American Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial Sculpture

The park and members of the American Ex-Prisoners of War organization (AXPOW) believed that a place was needed to contemplate the POW’s often difficult story in a reflective space. An initial concept of a water feature and sculpture was developed and approved by AXPOW. Because art is difficult to procure through government contracts, AXPOW took full responsibility for that aspect of the work.

The fountain and water feature serve as a reminder of the essential need for water and mimic the remembrance of the importance of Providence Spring by Andersonville prison survivors.

The artist chosen to take the initial concept to a completed sculpture was Donna L. Dobberfuhr. Entitled, “The Price of Freedom Fully Paid,” the work includes three separate elements: a fountain and meandering water feature, three large carved brick panels, and a bronze figure of a prisoner.

Three large brick panels anchor the entire courtyard. Twenty-five figures are carved into the brick, representing the suffering of those held as prisoners of war.

The bronze figure represents someone who has escaped imprisonment, drank from the stream below, and raised his eyes upward in Thanksgiving. A trickle of water escapes from the hand of the bronze figure to the stream at the figure’s feet.

Passing through the courtyard and around the final barrier of the sculpted wall, the visitor is confronted by the historical site of Camp Sumter and the partially reconstructed Civil War prison stockade.

