HARTFORD, CT
WAR MEMORIALS


Nathan Hale (1755-1776) was born in Coventry, Connecticut, and joined a Connecticut militia in 1775. Because of his leadership and resourcefulness, Thomas Knowlton invited him to join Knowlton’s Rangers in 1776, a unit that conducted missions too dangerous for regular troops. While on a mission to gather intelligence behind enemy lines in New York, Hale was captured and executed by the British. He is best known for his last words, “I regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.”

The artist, Enoch Smith Woods, designed the Nathan Hale statue for a competition, sponsored by the State of Connecticut, for a piece to be placed in the Capitol. Smith’s design was the runner-up. James J. Goodwin liked his design so much that he commissioned Woods to create the statue anyway; it was cast by M.H. Mosman in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts. Goodwin donated the statue to the Wadsworth Atheneum, and it was erected there in 1894.

The State Commission on Sculpture later commissioned Woods to sculpt the Thomas Knowlton statue, which Woods designed as a companion piece to the Hale statue.†

[FNNathanHale]


The Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial is a 9-foot-high black granite stone on which are inscribed the names of 39 Hartford residents killed or missing in action in the Vietnam War. It is dedicated to “Those Who Served And Did Not Return.”

Hartford Boy Scout Troop 105 planned and raised the money for the memorial and a new flagpole. In October 2008 the city council agreed to accept and maintain it.‡

[FNVietnamVeterans]


General Israel Putnam, a Connecticut native, served with distinction in the Revolutionary War. He is the originator of the famous phrase, “Don’t one of you fire until you see the white [sic] of their eyes” at the Battle of Bunker Hill near Boston (where he led Connecticut troops; 1775). On the south elevation of the State Capitol he is depicted leaving his farm plow to answer the Lexington Alarm (1775) (in a relief sculpture by artist Hermon MacNeil). In this Bushnell Park memorial, he is shown in mid-stride, wearing 18th-century military dress.

The statue was commissioned by the Honorable Joseph Pratt Allyn, Hartford native and Associate Justice for the U.S. Court for the Territory of Arizona.

The artist, John Quincy Adams Ward (1830-1910), was one of the foremost sculptors of 19th-century America. He also designed the statuary ringing the base of the Connecticut State Capitol dome (1877-1879).


   The exterior sculptures on the State Capitol are expressive of Connecticut history, and each side represents a particular historical period. On the north elevation, the statues honor 17th- and early-18th-century historical figures, and the two medallions honor figures from after the Civil War. General Joseph Roswell Hawley (1826-1905), the subject of one of the medallions, served with distinction in the Civil War and later was Governor of the State of Connecticut. He also represented Connecticut in the U.S. Senate. On the medallion, he is dressed in a General's uniform. Inscriptions on the medallion include dates of his military service (on his left), and political offices held (on his right). He is credited with being the first volunteer in Connecticut for service in the Civil War. The medallion was commissioned under the supervision of the Connecticut State Commission on Sculpture and dedicated in 1912. It was cleaned and restored c. 1985.

   The artist, Herbert Adams, was a founder of the National Sculpture Society, whose works honored American history and ideals and dominated public art from the Civil War until the 1920s.


   The south elevation of the State Capitol represents the Civil War era as well as Ella Grasso’s governorship. Gideon Welles (1802-1878) was Secretary of the Navy under Presidents Lincoln and Johnson, as well as editor of The Hartford Times. His statue occupies one of six niches on the south elevation of the projecting pavilion, alongside the statues of General John Sedgwick and Alfred Howe Terry (see below).

   The statue was commissioned under the supervision of the state Commission on Sculpture and was installed about 1934. A cleaning and restoration project of the exterior of the capitol, including the Welles statue, was completed in 1985.

   The artist, Hermon MacNeil, is best known for his design for the Liberty quarter dollar (1916). His naturalistic style, with high modeling and surface texture, reflects his Parisian training at L’Ecole des Beaux-Arts. His works are included in public collections such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art.


   Continuing the Civil War Era theme of the south elevation, the statue of General John Sedgwick occupies a niche alongside the statues of Gideon Welles and General Alfred Howe Terry. General Sedgwick (1813-1864) was born in Cornwall, Connecticut. His grandfather served with George Washington in the Revolutionary War. Sedgwick served with distinction in the Mexican-American War, and was promoted to Major General during the Civil War (July, 1862). He was killed when shot by Confederate sharpshooters at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House May 9, 1864, during his command of the VI Corps of the Army of the Potomac.

   For commission and artist details, see the description under 107(a), Gideon Welles.

General Alfred Howe Terry (1827-1890) was born in Hartford Connecticut. He was one of 15 officers to receive the “Thanks of Congress” for his part in capturing Fort Fisher, North Carolina during the Civil War (1865)∗ The Union Army’s capture of this Fort ended the Confederate’s ability to use Wilmington, North Carolina as a shipping port, and was therefore a significant victory. Terry later led U.S. troops against the Plains Indians, and was in command of the expedition against the Sioux when Colonel George A. Custer was killed at the Battle of Little Big Horn (June 1876). He retired from the Army due to illness in 1888, and died two years later.

For commission and artist details, see the description under 107(a), Gideon Welles. [FN107]


The west elevation of the State Capitol honors significant historical figures of 18th-century Connecticut. Three of the four statues on this elevation honor veterans of the Revolutionary War. Oliver Wolcott (1726-1797), one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, was born in Litchfield, Connecticut. He commanded fourteen regiments of Connecticut militia sent to the defense of New York in the Revolutionary War. In 1796 he was chosen governor of Connecticut.

In 1915 the state Commission on Sculpture selected the four statues to be installed on the west elevation of the capitol. All were sculpted by Hermon MacNeil. More of MacNeil’s work can be seen in statues and medallions on the north and south sides of the capitol. He is best known for his design of the Liberty Quarter Dollar (1916). [FN108]


David Humphreys (1752-1818) was born in Derby, Connecticut, educated at Yale, and became known as one of a group of poets and writers known as the “Hartford Wits.” In 1788, he wrote, Essay on the Life of the Honorable Major-General Israel Putnam† (Putnam’s statue can be seen in Bushnell Park—See #101 in this list). During the Revolutionary War, Humphreys served as secretary-aide to General Washington, and is said to have been responsible for enlisting the first African-Americans in American armed forces. His heroic actions at the Battle of Yorktown earned him a presentation sword from Congress. He ended the War as a Lieutenant-Colonel, and served with the rank of Brigadier General in the War of 1812.

Humphreys’ statue was commissioned along with those of Oliver Wolcott, David Wooster, and Oliver Ellsworth by the state Commission on Sculpture in 1915, and dedicated about 1921.

The artist, Hermon MacNeil, is best known for his design of the Liberty Quarter dollar. More of MacNeil’s work can be seen in statues and medallions on the north and south sides of the capitol. [FN108]


General David Wooster (1711-1777) was born in Stratford, Connecticut, and served in the French and Indian Wars before commanding troops in the Revolutionary War. He is credited with masterminding the plan to capture Fort Ticonderoga in 1775, carried out by Ethan Allen and Aaron Burr. In 1776 he was put in command of the American troops at Quebec. After resigning from the Continental Army, Wooster served in command of the Connecticut militia. He was killed pursuing General Tryon’s retreating forces following Tryon’s attack on Danbury in 1777.

The Wooster statue was commissioned by the state Commission on Sculpture in 1915. Completion of the this and the Humphreys statue was delayed until more funds were approved in 1921.

The artist, Hermon MacNeil, is best known for his design for the Liberty quarter dollar (1916). His naturalistic style, with high modeling and surface texture, reflects his Parisian training at L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts. His works are included in public collections such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art. [FN108]


General Clarence Ransom Edwards (1860-1931) led the “Yankee Division” (U.S. Army 26th Division), which was composed of the National Guard troops of the six New England states. The division distinguished itself on the American battle lines in France during World War I. The granite base of the statue depicts the American battle lines at the time the division joined them, contrasted with the lines on Armistice Day 1918. The larger-than-life figure of General Edwards stands at attention in full military uniform, facing east, with the head turned looking to the southeast as though reviewing troops. By all accounts he was much loved by the troops he commanded.

As a result of a bill sponsored by the Yankee Division Veterans’ Association, the statue was commissioned by the state Commission on Sculpture in 1937. Due to a shortage of metals, a plaster model was dedicated in 1942, and replaced with the current bronze statue in 1948.

Sculptor George Snowden was trained at Yale and L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He won the Prix de Rome in 1927. [FN111]


Thomas Knowlton (1740-1776) was born in Massachusetts and grew up in Ashford, Connecticut. In his youth he fought in the French and Indian Wars and at the siege of Havana (1862). During the Revolutionary War he distinguished himself at the Battle of Bunker Hill by fiercely defending the base of the hill, preventing the British from flanking the Continental troops. He covered the retreat of his men when their position was eventually overrun. In 1776, Knowlton organized a small corps of hand-picked men known as “Knowlton’s Rangers,” one of whom was Nathan Hale. Knowlton’s Rangers are considered the precursors of today’s Army Rangers and similar elite units, conducting missions considered too dangerous for regular army troops. Knowlton was killed at the battle of Harlem Heights (September, 1776).*

The statue was commissioned under the supervision of the state Commission on Sculpture and dedicated in 1895.

The artist, Enoch Smith Woods (1846-1919), sculpted Knowlton in mid-stride, chin up, with sword in hand. Woods designed the Knowlton statue as a companion piece to his sculpture of Nathan Hale, which was presented by James J. Goodwin to the Wadsworth Atheneum in 1892 (see next entry). [FN113]


The contributions of the Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834) to the Continental Army are recognized by a plaque on this equestrian statue, which reads: "To the Marquis De Lafayette...A True Friend of Liberty, Who served as a Major General in the Continental Army With 'All Possible Zeal, Without Any Special Pay Or Allowances' Until the American Colonists Secured Their Freedom, And Whose Frequent Visits To This State as Aide to Washington, As Liaison Officer With Supporting French Troops, and in the Pursuit of Freedom, are Gratefully Remembered."

The sculpture was created to stand in the courtyard of the Louvre in Paris, a gift of the schoolchildren of the United States, who raised $50,000 "a nickel at a time." The sculptor, Paul Wayland Bartlett, contributed $25,000 himself, and donated the plaster cast of the piece to the State of Connecticut. Mrs. Frances B. Storrs in 1930 donated $20,000 to cast and erect a bronze copy of the sculpture in Hartford. [FN116]


General Casimir Pulaski (1748-1779), a Polish Count, fled Poland for Turkey and then France after unsuccessfully fighting against Russian domination of Poland. While in Paris he was recruited by Benjamin Franklin to fight in the American Revolution, and is considered the father of the American cavalry. He was the first foreign leader to die in the War of Independence (Battle of Savannah, 1779).

His sculpture was proposed and paid for by the Hartford-area Polish-American community under the leadership of the Pulaski Memorial Committee of Connecticut.

The sculptor, Granville W. Carter, depicted Pulaski on a rearing horse signaling a forward charge with a sword in his right hand. Among his other works are the West Texas Pioneer Family Monument in Lubbock, Texas; and archangels Michael and Gabriel at the National Cathedral in Washington. [FN132]


The Spirit of Victory is Hartford’s only war memorial honoring Hartford men who fought in the Spanish-American War, and the only Hartford war memorial sculpted by a woman artist. It was commissioned by the Hartford City Council. The sculpture depicts a winged female figure on the prow of a vessel, wearing a helmet and raising a torch in her right hand. In her left hand she holds a large shield with a design based on the U.S. and Connecticut flags. Bas relief panels depict military men in silhouette: a rifleman and a sailor.

The sculpture was repaired and cleaned in 1991-1993, funded mainly by a grant from the Alexander Goldfarb Memorial Trust.

The artist, Evelyn Beatrice Longman Batchelder (1874-1954), was a gifted and widely known sculptor. Among other works, she sculpted Victory for the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, and The Genius of Telegraphy for the top of the AT&T building in
New York. She also designed the Founders of Windsor Memorial Plaque and the War Memorial to Patriots of Windsor, located on the Windsor Green.  


The Weld monument honors two Hartford brothers, both officers in the Civil War. Lewis Ledyard Weld (1833-1865) served as Acting Governor of Colorado for four months in 1862 before returning East and joining the 7th U.S. Regiment in 1863. In 1864 he transferred to the 41st Colored Infantry, where he was a Lieutenant Colonel. Although a regiment composed of African Americans, the 41st was led by white officers. It was organized in the fall of 1864, and mustered out in December 1865. Weld caught a severe cold in January 1865, from which he never recovered. He died January 10, 1865 at Point of Rocks on the Appomattox River.  

Charles Theodore Weld (1831-1863) enlisted in 1861 as First Lieutenant in the 17th U.S. Infantry. He received a brevet promotion to Captain and died at the Battle of Chancellorsville, Virginia, on May 14, 1863.  

The monument was commissioned by “Early Friends” of the two brothers. Its artist is unknown; the monument is in a style typically imported from Italy at the time. The supplier, J.G. Batterson, was a stone importer.


The Forlorn Soldier statue depicts a Union soldier in the Civil War. One account of its history tells that it was commissioned as a Civil War memorial for a town in New York and rejected because the wrong foot was forward for a soldier at parade rest (the right foot rather than the left foot). It is significant for having been executed in brownstone; most Civil War monumental figures were granite.  

The figure was present at James G. Batterson’s monument business on Charter Oak Avenue when it was bought by the Kelly Brothers in 1895. The Kellys later moved the business to Airport Road (ca. 1938), leaving the figure behind. It was swept away in a flood, rescued by one of the Kellys, and moved to Airport Road in 1968. When the Kellys sold the business to the Pistritto family, the small parcel out front holding the Forlorn Soldier was purchased by the Metropolitan District.  

The Hartford Courant featured this monument’s story in at least two articles (November 17, 1968 and December 31, 1989).


Griffin Alexander Stedman (1838-1864) joined Connecticut’s 14th Infantry Regiment in 1861, and almost immediately afterward became Captain in the 5th Regiment Connecticut Volunteers. He organized the 11th Regiment and fought with it through many battle actions, including Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Cold Harbor, among others. For his efficiency, leadership, and bravery, he received admiration and promotions up to Brigadier General at the time of his death—his commission arriving just after he died. He was killed August 5, 1864 at Petersburg, Virginia.  

The monument honors not only General Stedman, but also the volunteer Civil War soldiers of Connecticut, who were organized and trained at “Camp Field” where the monument now stands. It was paid for by money the legislature had given the 22nd and 25th regiments, Connecticut Volunteers, and by contributions from unnamed individuals.  

The sculptor, Frederick Moynihan (1843-1910), was born in England and studied at the Royal Academy, London. After arriving in the United States he specialized in sculpting military figures of the Civil War period.

This sculpture was dedicated in memory of Connecticut Civil War soldiers who suffered in southern military prisons. The original statue, produced under the supervision of the Andersonville Commission appointed by the Connecticut state legislature, was dedicated in October of 1907 in the national cemetery at Andersonville, Georgia. A large number of Connecticut soldiers who had been imprisoned there journeyed to Andersonville with Commission members to view the dedication. The statue depicts the youth of the typical Union soldier imprisoned at Andersonville, and conveys both suffering and dignity in its posture and facial expression.

Colonel Frank W. Cheney of South Manchester, Connecticut paid for a replica of the statue to be cast in bronze, and donated it to the state. This copy was dedicated September 17, 1909 on the capitol grounds.

The sculptor, Bela Lyon Pratt (1867-1917), studied at the Yale School of Fine Arts, and also with Saint-Gaudens and at L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris. He is renowned in Connecticut for his statue of Nathan Hale (New Haven). [FNCW043]


The Petersburg Express is a 13” seacoast mortar mounted on a carriage. It was used in the Battle of Petersburg in the Civil War by the First Connecticut Heavy Artillery (originally the Fourth Connecticut Infantry). It is set on a granite pedestal, with inset bronze plaques.

The monument is dedicated to the men of the First Connecticut Heavy Artillery, which was the first volunteer regiment sworn into U.S. service for the Civil War. On the day of its dedication, a grand parade was held which included many veterans of the regiment. Many civic offices and businesses closed for the duration of the parade and dedication ceremony, including offices at the Capitol and at the Hall of Records; the Sage Allen department store; the Hartford Post Office, and the Wadsworth Atheneum building, which included the Connecticut Historical Society, the Watkinson Library, the Hartford Public Library and the Hartford Scientific Society collections. *

The monument was arranged for by the survivors and friends of the First Connecticut Heavy Artillery regiment and veteran and active companies of the Hartford City Guard. [FNCW044]


Griffin A. Stedman (1838-1864) was born in Hartford, Connecticut, and graduated from Trinity College in 1859. He joined Connecticut’s 14th Infantry Regiment in 1861, which disbanded; he then became Captain in the 5th Regiment Connecticut Volunteers. He fought in many battle actions, including Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Cold Harbor, among others. For his efficiency, leadership, and bravery, he received promotions up to Brigadier General at the time of his death--his commission arriving just after he died. He was killed August 5, 1864 at Petersburg, Virginia.

*Hartford Courant*, September 25, 1902.
General Stedman was first buried in 1864 in New London, Connecticut, where his family had a summer home. In 1875 his remains were removed to Hartford’s Cedar Hill Cemetery, where a granite monument in the shape of a sarcophagus was erected.† The carvings depict Stedman’s hat, belt, and sword arranged on top of his flag and coat on the sarcophagus.

The artist, John M. Moffit (1837-1887), was born in England. His firm of Moffit & Doyle also designed and built the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, East Rock, New Haven. [FNCW045]


The Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch is dedicated to all men from Hartford who served in the Civil War. It is the first permanent triumphal arch in the United States. Originally made of brownstone and terra cotta, it combines a Gothic arch with two medieval towers and a classical frieze. Symbols of the four services (a Navy anchor; crossed cannon of the Artillery; crossed sabers of the Cavalry; and crossed rifles for the Infantry) are depicted in the spandrels of the arch. It is one of the earliest monuments in Connecticut to use the term “Civil War” in its lettering.

The architect, George Keller (1842-1935), was an Irish immigrant who came to Hartford to work for James G. Batterson, a prolific supplier of Civil War monuments. Keller later developed his own national reputation for designs of Civil War monuments.

The arch was rehabilitated in 1986-88 at a cost to the state of $1,500,000. Architect Dominick C. Cimino oversaw the reconstruction, part of which consisted of replacing the crumbling terra cotta finial angels with bronze. [FNCW046]


Thomas McManus (1834-1914) was a Hartford native who served in the Union army as a major in the 25th Connecticut Regiment, 1862-1863. He participated in battle in Louisiana and commanded his regiment at Port Hudson. In civilian life he remained active in veterans’ organizations and was a chief organizer for the Griffin A. Stedman monument located nearby.

Admitted to the bar in 1864, McManus went on to serve in many civil offices, including Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Hartford County from 1875 to 1877 and Hartford’s Representative to the State Legislature in 1878.

The plaque, which is set in a large granite boulder, reads, “Born in Hartford, he lived here and died rich in the esteem of his fellows. Major of the 25th Infantry Connecticut Volunteers 1862-1863. He was a brave soldier beloved by his men. Upon this field which was once their camping ground his surviving comrades in affectionate memory have placed this tablet as a tribute to his merit and patriotism as citizen and soldier, 1923.” [FNCW047]


Neighborhood honor roll associations created memorials dedicated to WWII servicemen and women. Records on these memorials are currently unavailable. For an example, see the Parkville Memorial on the corner of Park Street and New Park Avenue.
