



The National Medal of Honor Museum Facts at a Glance

They represent America's bravest and best — all who have served and sacrificed in defense of our nation. They are the recipients of our nation's highest military award: the Medal of Honor. There are museums for the various branches of the service, there are museums to the various military functions, and there are museums to the various wars, and the Medal of Honor recipients, from the Civil War to the present, are recognized in all of them. But there is no museum that brings together the story of the nation's highest military honor, all of its recipients, and the wars in which they fought. The new National Medal of Honor Museum will change that. It will:

- Preserve the stories of Medal recipients, presenting them to new generations sorely in need of true heroes to look up to and to emulate;
- Help visitors understand what it means to put service above self and the meaning and price of freedom; and
- Inspire visitors about the ideals of patriotism, leadership and courage, and encourage them to embrace their responsibilities as citizens in a democracy.

The Congressional Medal of Honor Society, whose membership consists of the living Medal recipients, has designated this as the National Medal of Honor Museum.

The Site: Located at Patriots Point in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, on the eastern shore of Charleston Harbor, the museum's waterfront location is near the iconic Ravenel Bridge. The aircraft carrier *USS Yorktown* is moored just offshore. This location offers an ideal complement to historic Charleston—situated on the west side of the harbor—which is consistently rated as one of the top tourist destinations in the world. The region welcomes between four and five million visitors each year.

The Museum: While the city of Charleston is across the harbor, the physical context of the museum is the site itself – the *USS Yorktown*, the expanse of wetlands and the clusters of trees. The concrete and glass structure, tinted gray-blue to pair visually with the *Yorktown*, will be built on pylons, to rise 128 feet so it hovers above the trees and matches the aircraft carrier's height. It has been designed to project strength, with five galleries radiating out to form a pentagonal structure, rising upwards and clustering into a single star-like form. Metaphorically, the stories of many individuals are gathered into a powerful collective narrative – the story of the Medal of Honor.



Plans for the National Medal of Honor Museum envision three buildings:

- A grass-topped land pavilion that will house the museum entrance and lobby, a 240-seat auditorium, a museum shop, curatorial and archival space and administrative offices for the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation and the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation;
- A museum building that will include a Hall of Valor that can accommodate public and private events, celebrations and memorials; eight permanent and two special exhibits galleries; and conference, meeting and classroom space, and a small café. A two-level pedestrian bridge – the lower level for groups and conferences and the upper level to take visitors to museum exhibits – will span a ravine to connect the pavilion to the museum.
- A 140-seat chapel at the tip of the site, overlooking the sea, will be connected to the museum by another two-level pedestrian bridge. It will serve as a place of contemplation and celebration for public as well as personal events.

The National Medal of Honor Museum will be designed with the goal of meeting LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) performance certification at the silver level. LEED certification is determined by the U.S. Green Building Council, which sets voluntary standards for high performance, sustainable buildings.

The Exhibits: Throughout the museum, visitors will have multiple opportunities to meet, interact with and learn from recipients, through films, videos, dynamic elements and in-depth explorations of personal stories and experiences that will honor and promote the ideals and values associated with the Medal.

Museum exhibits will explore themes like bravery, selflessness and patriotism as they track the Medal's evolution. A detailed timeline around the Hall of Valor will provide visitors with a chronological orientation; eight permanent and two special exhibits galleries will provide content and context.

- In the first gallery, an introductory film entitled *Why We Fight* will explore the need for a standing army to protect our freedoms. Outside the theater, exhibits will examine how American democracy shaped a medal that recognizes bravery without regard for rank or status.
- Three galleries will explore in greater detail the Medal's history: the Shaping of the Medal's Traditions, from its origins during the Civil War up to the start of World War I; Crisis and Change, depicting the years from World War I through World War II; and The New Tests of Courage, from the Cold War to the present.
- One gallery will explore the roles that U.S. Presidents have played in defining and awarding the Medal, from the decision-making process to the Medal ceremony.
- Two galleries will be devoted to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society's *Character Development* and *Citizen Honors* programs. They will encourage visitors to consider how the values embodied by the Medal relate to their own lives, and will feature stories of Medal recipients who have also led inspiring lives as civilians.

- Two special exhibits galleries will showcase temporary and traveling exhibits to broaden the number of topics covered in the museum.
- A second film, *Sacrifice and Valor*, will be an emotional experience, exploring the significance of the Medal, the sacrifices of its recipients and its meaning for all of us.

Size: 107,000 square feet

Hall of Valor: 5,168 square feet

Exhibit Space: Eight permanent galleries totaling 25,847 square feet
Two special exhibits galleries totaling 5,525 square feet

Meeting, Conference and Classroom Space: 20,000 square feet

Chapel: 3,118 square feet

Estimated Cost: \$98 million

Architect: Safdie Architects of Boston, Massachusetts, was selected for their creativity in a variety of settings, the unique nature of every building they design, and their skill in working with waterfront sites. Notable Safdie-designed museums include the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas; the Khalsa Heritage Memorial Complex, the national museum of the Sikh people in India; the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa; and the Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum in Jerusalem, Israel.

Moshe Safdie was recently awarded the 2015 AIA Gold Medal by the American Institute of Architects. Considered one of the profession's highest honors, the Gold Medal is given annually to an individual whose work has had a lasting influence on the theory and practice of architecture.

Museum Planning and Design: Gallagher & Associates has designed some of the world's most memorable museum experiences, from the National World War II Museum, to high profile projects in Asia and Europe. Under Patrick Gallagher's guidance, the firm has gained international acclaim for its leadership in the field of museum planning and experience design. The firm's collective portfolio is extremely diverse and often flows from the creation of an interpretive and economic master plan, to full service renovation and finally, to complete ground up building projects.

Projects managed by Gallagher & Associates of Silver Spring, Maryland, include; the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, California; the Museum and Visitor Center at Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania; and the Normandy American Cemetery Visitor Center in France.

