

# WAR MEMORIAL





*The War Memorial is a highly symbolical architectural treasure which preserves the memory of all our citizens who died in battle in defense of our country's democracy.*

*The local municipal authority, in a bid to promote any project aimed at highlighting the importance of historical Memory, invites students, associations, visitors as well as Milanese citizens to step into this treasure trove of art in the heart of the city in order to appreciate its remarkable artistic, historical and cultural value.*

*Roberta Cocco*

*City Councillor for Digital Transformation and Civic Services*



Just a few steps away from the Basilica of St Ambrose, on the site where, in early Christian times, the 'Coemeterium ad Martyres' (Martyrs' Cemetery) once stood, veterans' associations had a mausoleum erected in 1928, the *Temple of Victory*, to commemorate the fallen soldiers of World War I and the victory against the Austrians.

The monument was inaugurated with a solemn ceremony on November 4, 1928, ten years after the end of the war. On that occasion, a sculptural group by Libero Andreotti, '*Return after Victory*', was placed in front of the Temple. The majestic chalk sculpture, however, was never realized in bronze. The Duke of Aosta, who attended the event, read out the 1918 Victory Bulletin to a huge throng.

The temple, designed by the architect Giovanni Muzio with the collaboration of Alberto Alpago Novello, Ottavio Cabiati, Tommaso Buzzi and Gio Pont, is located within a rectangular porch measuring 31x57m, and enclosed by a high curtain. The lawned front corresponds to the area occupied by the Memorial below.

The temple, with its octagonal shape, is 43 metres high and 18 m in diameter. The architectural rhythm corresponds to the symbolical meaning of each one of its parts. Each arch contains a niche. The central one is dedicated to the Patron Saint of Milan. The side niches are dedicated to the conquered provinces and the military virtues. The diagonal sides each commemorate a war year.

The octagonal gable end culminating in a bronze lantern at the top, is decorated with a row of windows and right above them is a series of reliefs (fig. 2) by the Apulian sculptor Salvatore Saponaro, showing winged Victories.



*Side 1 – the Patron Saint*

In the alcove opposite the entrance stands a five-metre high statue of St Ambrose by Adolf Wildt (fig. 3). The saint is portrayed as he wields a scourge and with snakes underfoot symbolising the seven deadly sins. In the lacunars above are the three patron saints representing some branches of the army: from the left, St Martin (Infantry), St Barbara (Navy), St George, together with the emblems of the Alpine corps, the Bersaglieri, mounted Artillery and Navy, all of

which are the work of Franco Lombardi.

### *Side 2 – the war in the mountains*

Outer wall:

- Tympanum: symbol of Monte Nero
- Bas-relief frieze: ‘The war in the Alps’, by Salvatore Saponaro.

The portal commemorates the battles fought in that year, while the vault is ornamented with the Star of Italy and a number of crowns symbolising the victories in the Alps.

### *Side 3 - Tridentine Venice*

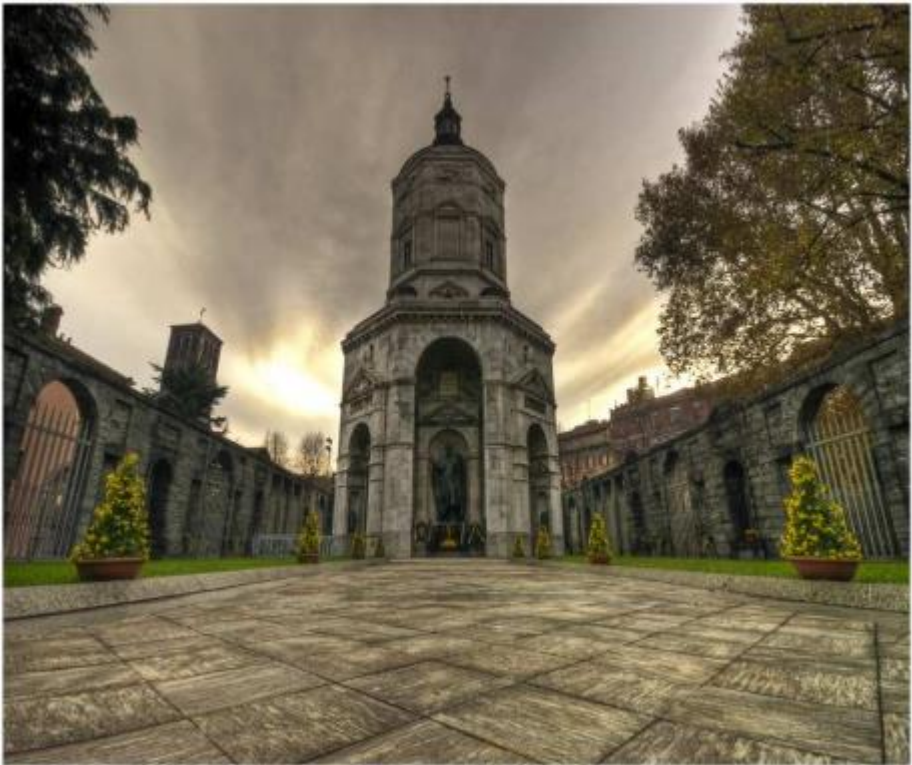
The niche features a sculpted triumphal arch of Trentino, by the sculptor Antonio Maiocchi. The reliefs represent the skylines of the six liberated cities (Trento, Rovereto, Riva, Bressanone, Merano and Bolzano) and the symbols of the gateways to Italy (Brenner and San Candido Passes). Above the niche, an alpine eagle overhanging the symbols of the Bold (left) and the Bombardiers (right). The sides of the window are ornamented with trophies of the Infantry and the Alpine Corps. The recessed panels in the vault depict Perseverance and a Salamander, the symbol of fire, by Silvio Zaniboni.

### *Side 4 – Trench warfare*

Outer wall:

- Tympanum: symbol of the river Isonzo
- Bas-relief frieze: ‘The conquest of Gorizia’ by Salvatore Saponaro.

Both sides of the door are engraved with the names of the battles fought in 1916. The vault is decorated with the Star of Italy and a number of crowns symbolising the Infantry’s victories.



### *Side 5 – The military virtues*

The frieze shows (from left to right): the symbols of the Bersaglieri, the Corps of Engineers, the Infantrymen, the Artillerymen and the Alpines. The window is flanked by Infantry weapon trophies. The vault lacunars feature bas-reliefs by the sculptor Luigi Supino, representing, from the left: courage, military discipline and sacrifice.

### *Side 6 – 1917: the Artillery*

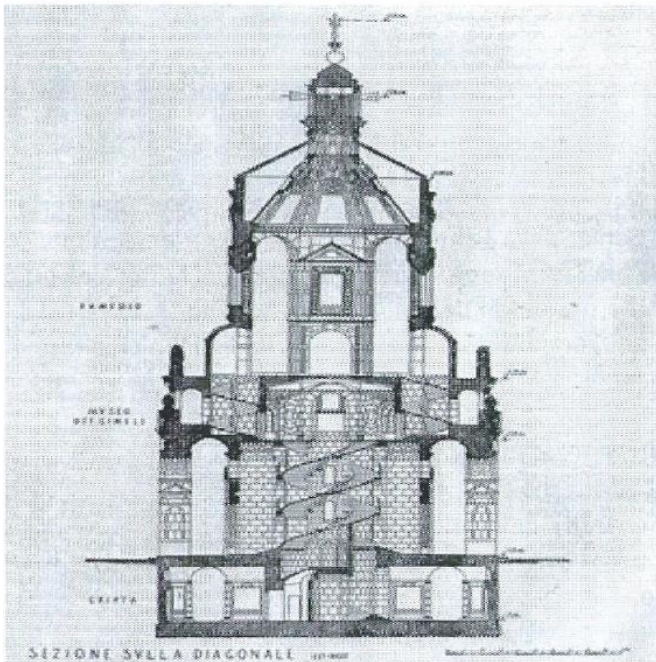
Outer wall

- Tympanum: symbol of Mount Grappa
- Bas-relief frieze: 'The Bombards', by Salvatore Saponaro.

The names of the battles fought in 1917 are engraved on both sides of the door. The vault is decorated with the Star of Italy and a number of crowns symbolising victories of the Artillery.

### *Side 7- Venezia Giulia*

The niche houses a sculpted triumphal arch of the Adriatic Sea, by the sculptor Antonio Maiocchi. The reliefs represent the six cities re-annexed to the homeland: Aquileia, Gorizia, Trieste, Pola, Fiume and Zara. Above the niche, the frieze of an eagle representing the victories at sea between the emblems of the Air Force and those of the Cavalry. On both sides of the window, some trophies of the Air Force and the Navy. The vault lacunars display Zaniboni's works, 'Conspiracy' (centre), 'Allegiance' (right) and 'Roman Tradition' (left).





## *Side 8 – The Air Force and the Navy*

Outer wall:

- Tympanum: symbol of the river Piave
- Bas-relief: landscape of the river Piave at Vittorio Veneto, by Salvatore Saponaro.

Both sides of the door are engraved with the names of the battles fought on the French front and of the following military successes which led to victory. The vault is decorated with the Star of Italy and a number of crowns representing the victories at sea and in the air.

On the sides corresponding to the years 1915 and 1917, two spiral staircases lead to a relic room from which two more staircases lead up to a Memorial Chapel.

After walking through the portal that opens onto the '1918' side, visitors can gain access to a further staircase leading down to a crypt on the walls of which bronze plaques honour the memory of the soldiers who died in the First World War. In the crypt, opposite the niche housing an altar, a door opens into the Memorial proper containing the glorious mortal remains of the soldiers previously buried in several cemeteries across the city. This was strongly desired by the Municipal authorities as well as many Veterans' and Army associations to commemorate the 50th anniversary of victory. The Memorial was built by digging the ground of the temple forecourt. The work, designed by the architect Mario Baccini, consists of a large hall subdivided into three floors with wide balconies. More mortal remains from other municipal cemeteries are expected to be brought to the Memorial, up to a total of 6,250 dead soldiers.

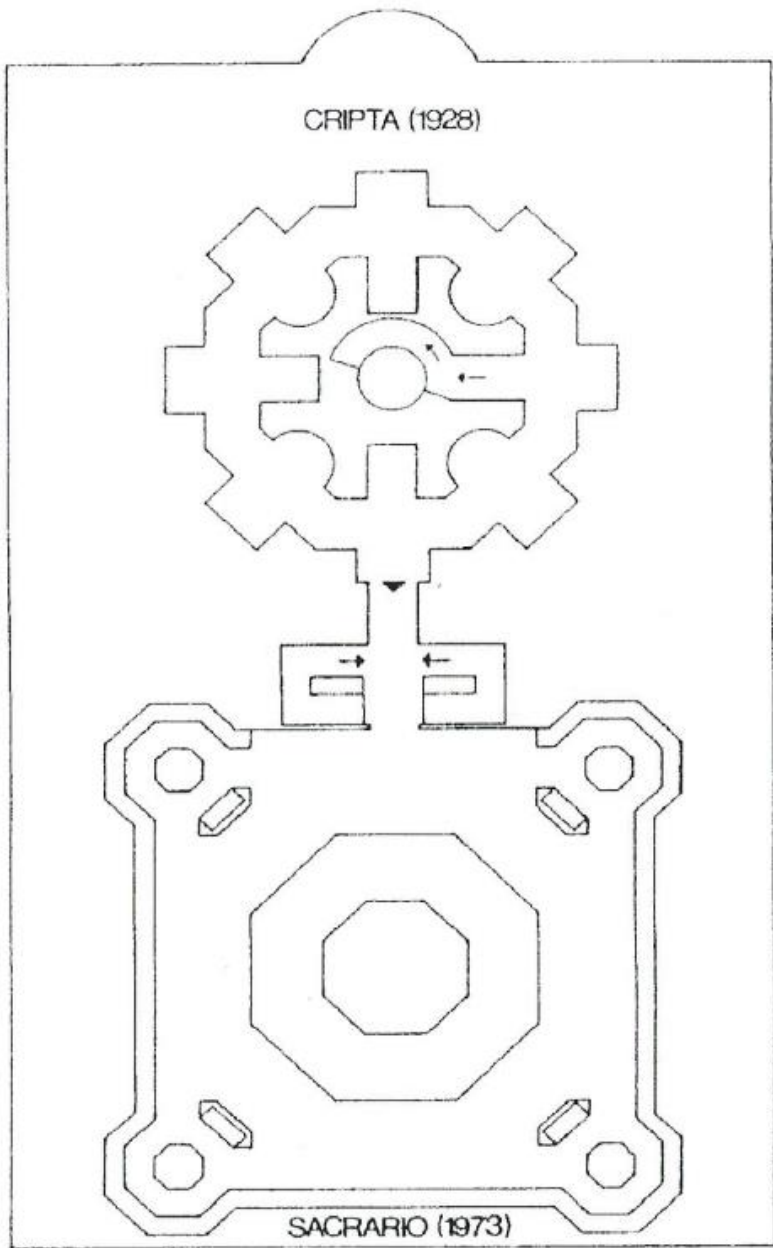
The burial of the first group of 4,578 urns of the glorious dead was completed on May 13, 1973.

The Memorial is devotedly visited by dead soldiers' families, school groups, delegations of cultural associations, municipal institutions, Italian and foreign veterans' and army associations.

The Memorial contains the mortal remains of 3,752 WWI casualties (1915-1918), 779 from WWII (1940-1945), 33 soldiers killed overseas, 2 Red Cross volunteers and 51 French soldiers.

The simplicity of the architectural lines enhances the sacredness of the place which, thanks to its central location, preserves the memory of its young citizens who left Milan and died in service to their country.

The Guard of Honour to the Memorial, operated by veterans' associations, was recently reinstated under the aegis of the Association of the Friends of the Memorial to the Fallen Milanese soldiers, of the Tricolour and the Armed Forces.





***War Memorial***  
***Largo Caduti Milanesi per la Patria***  
***20123 Milan***

**OPENING HOURS**

Wednesdays-Saturdays-Sundays- public holidays

From 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.

From 1.00 p.m. to 5 p.m.

**In the month of AUGUST**

Saturdays and Sundays: from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.

January 1st, Easter, Easter Monday,

May 1st, August 15th, Dec. 8th-25th- 26th:

from 9.00 a.m. to 12.p.m.

January 2018