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HISTORIC MONUMENTS

There are two monuments in southeast Arkansas that should be preserved. These tall shafts stand as silent sentinels in a lonely wayside cemetery. They are unique in their history and in their artistic concrete construction. They occupy a spot near the center of an acre given by the Federal Government to the ^{American} people of Japanese descent and their parents, ~~most of them native born American citizens~~, who were confined during the Second World War in one of the ten wire enclosures called Relocation Centers.

One of these shafts was erected as a memorial to the dead who were buried three thousand miles from their California homes. There are twenty four graves in this lonely cemetery. One statement in Japanese characters and two in English appear on this obelisk. The first is to the elderly people buried here, people who came to America about the turn of the century. It reads: "To him who sleeps eternally here--- who came in his prime with hopes and ambitions heroic to battle the fortunes of life." The other is an appeal to the people of Arkansas:

"May the people of Arkansas keep in beauty and reverence this ground where our bodies sleep."

The second memorial shaft was erected late in 1945 after the close of the Second World War. It was sponsored by the USO and erected by the people of the Center. Its construction is also unique in that the tall shaft rests on a massive base shaped like an army tank. The face of this statue bears the following inscription:

"In Memory"

"Dedicated to the men from Rohwer Center who gave their lives to America on foreign soil."

Then follows the names of thirty young men who died in Italy and France. Some of them gave their lives in that desperate undertaking for which the 442, the All-Japanese battalion, volunteered, the rescuing of the "Lost Texas Battalion" of the 141st Infantry Regiment. The rescue of these beleaguered men ^{was accomplished}, but the 442nd suffered in that operation more than 2000 casualties and had more men killed than there were in the Texas unit awaiting rescue. ~~211~~.

On the north surface of this monument another tribute appears:

"In memory of our sons who sacrificed their lives in the service of their country. They fought for freedom. They died that the world might have peace."

The American Legion officiated at a dedication of this memorial to their dead comrades in October, 1961. Since then this lonely acre has had some care which interested friends have provided. Certainly some provision could be made in connection with a permanent department of state government, such as the state park service, to provide these monuments with adequate and continuing care. We dare not forget that these thirty young men died in the American army while their parents, wives, sweet-hearts, little brothers and sisters, were confined behind barbed wire. We must preserve gratitude as well as memorials.