

Should We Tear Down a War Memorial Because It ‘Shocks’ and ‘Upsets’ Atheists?

For nearly 90 years, a war memorial has stood, proudly honoring American heroes who fought and paid the ultimate sacrifice defending our great nation in World War I.

Last month, the American Humanist Association sued to have this war memorial torn down. Why? Because the memorial is fashioned in the shape of a cross.

In 1925, the people of Prince George County, Md., erected a memorial to honor the 49 brave residents of their town who fought and died to preserve our freedom. The Bladensburg Cross, or “Peace Cross” as it became known, has stood since that day as a testament to the heroism and sacrifice that these brave young men displayed fighting for America—fighting for our freedom.

That is, until one angry atheist, literally riding his bike around town, discovered the cross. He was “shocked” at the sight of the cross and “upset” that the cross could possibly be displayed to honor our nation’s veterans.

Yet he and a couple of other angry atheists, along with the American Humanist Association—after the shock had subsided a bit, I suppose, since it took them since 1982 to finally do something about it—filed a federal lawsuit a couple weeks ago, calling the cross a constitutional violation and demanding that the cross be torn down.

The lawsuit actually alleges that because the war memorial is located on what they claim is public property near a busy intersection that at least one of the plaintiffs passes “about once a month” driving around town or on his bike, it

“associates a Christian religious symbol with the State and gives the impression that the State supports and approves of Christianity, as opposed to other religions, and that the state may even prefer Christians and Christianity over other religions.” One of the plaintiffs actually says that he is “personally offended and feels excluded” because the cross honors our nation’s veterans.

In fact, the lawsuit states that he was “shocked when he first saw the cross and it upsets him whenever he passes it.”

Each of the plaintiffs complains of “unwelcome contact” with the WWI memorial cross and tells the court they “do not wish to encounter the Bladensburg Cross in the future.”

In other words, they want it torn down.

It’s just one more example of angry atheists who become so easily offended by the very sight or even the existence of something they supposedly don’t believe in.

Of course, the cross has long been a symbol of sacrifice and has stood in honor of war heroes for centuries. Imagine their “shock” if they ever visited Arlington National Cemetery a few miles away in Virginia.

In fact, the Supreme Court has recognized that “a Latin cross is not merely a reaffirmation of Christian beliefs. It is a symbol often used to honor and respect those whose heroic acts, noble contributions, and patient striving help secure an honored place in history for this Nation and its people.”

This could not be more true than in the case of this nearly 90-year-old WWI memorial meant to honor 49 specific men of valor who gave their last full measure for a grateful nation.

The fact of the matter is that a war memorial symbolized by a cross does not constitute a constitutional crisis.

Every time an angry atheist sees a symbol with which he or she

disagrees, their first step is to rush to court. They conflate their feelings with the Constitution. As I've said before, the Constitution is not an atheist manifesto.

To tear this war memorial cross to the ground because the idea of it hurts some atheists' feelings does a disservice to the very ones who gave their lives for this nation. They gave their lives so that everyone could be free—so that anyone would be free to believe or disbelieve as they so choose. To tear down their memorial dishonors their memory.

At the American Center for Law and Justice, we will be filing an amicus (friend of the court) brief in this case, defending the cross and honoring those for whom it stands.

In a bit of disturbing irony, when the angry atheists first demanded the cross be torn down, they wrote a letter to the managing authorities, asserting, "When considering this matter, you will likely hear from a loud and self-righteous portion of the populace that seeks to see its particular religious symbols preferred by the state."

It is, in fact, a small but loud and self-righteous portion of the populace that wishes to eradicate any religious symbol in our society with which they disagree, regardless of who it hurts or dishonors, because they have deemed it "offensive."

But if they want to hear a loud voice, I think it's time they and their 24,800 members hear from the American people.

The veterans of WWI are no longer here to defend their memorial, yet the price they paid gives us the freedom to defend it for them. If you don't want this WWI memorial torn down, sign onto our brief today.

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