

Humanists Sue Calif. City Over War Memorial Cross

A humanist group is suing Lake Elsinore, Calif., for funding a monument depicting a soldier kneeling at a gravestone with a cross on it.

The 6-foot-tall black granite monument to veterans would stand in front of the Lake Elsinore Diamond Baseball Stadium.

The memorial features a World War II soldier kneeling at the gravesite of a fallen comrade, with other graves showing crosses and stars of David.

The American Humanist Association claims the monument is a government-sponsored religious symbol.

The Pacific Justice Institute represents the city in the case and says the lawsuit is a desperate attempt to remove Christianity from the public square.

"A war memorial is not unconstitutional," PJI attorney Brad Dacus said.

"It doesn't endorse a religion simply because it depicts a cemetery from World War II where it has crosses and stars of David shown as grave markings," he explained.

"This is about remembering those who died and fought for freedom and liberty and we at Pacific Justice Institute are hopeful that the courts will agree with our assessment," he said.

The Institute pointed out that religious symbols are found at national cemeteries across the nation, including Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

The city said the memorial was meant to depict a World War II

soldier mourning a comrade and wasn't intended to have a religious message.