



## CASE STUDY

# Honoring Veterans at a Local Landmark | USS Arizona



### CHALLENGES

- Historic Relic
- Cross Collaboration
- Public Landmark

### BACKGROUND

Arizona's Salt River Pima - Maricopa Indian Community first began work on a monument for the USS Arizona after it was gifted a flag from the ship in 2007. The USS Arizona, was destroyed in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. The community's goal was to create a remarkable space at the Salt River that would forever pay tribute to, and recognize the individuals aboard the ship that day; sharing their stories and their sacrifice.

After more than 10 years of negotiations, the Salt River Indian Community became the recipient of a large part of the superstructure of the USS Arizona (BB-39), identified as the original Boat House, and planned to build a garden around it. The Boat House relic is the largest and only piece ever given to a tribal community.

American Legion Post 114, the "Bushmasters", was one group of predominantly Pima and Maricopa natives who participated in the monument's design and creation. The native community wanted to design a space that would help

people recognize the service of many Native Americans who have fought in WW2 for the U.S. and continue to service all arms of the military to this day.

### CHALLENGES

Once the Salt River Indian Community had secured the relic for the museum, it had to be transported from Honolulu, Hawaii to Arizona by the U.S. Navy. Ken Keating, Kovach's manager on the project noted, "Before the relic left Hawaii, the Tribe sent over Tribal Elders, some who were Medicine Men, to perform a Blessing Ceremony for the Spirits of the Entombed sailors and to ensure safe passage of the Relic and the Navy members escorting it." The Boat House weighed over 800 lbs. and with the steel stand it is over 2,000lbs.

Like most designs, the new memorial needed to incorporate the elements that were already existing on the site. That's when Kovach and the project architects and contractors came together to develop the best design for the desired intent and budget. Great



“KOVACH IS PROUD OF OUR HALF CENTURY LEGACY OF DEPENDABILITY AND INNOVATION, CREATING THE BEST POSSIBLE SOLUTION FOR EVERY UNIQUE PROJECT LIKE THE USS ARIZONA. WE ARE COMMITTED TO CRAFTING LONG-LASTING, MEMORABLE BUILDINGS AND SPACES THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.”

**JAMES HATCH**  
**VICE PRESIDENT,**  
**PRE-CONSTRUCTION**

## SOLUTION

Upon completion, the USS Arizona Memorial Gardens at Salt River spans the exact length and width of the USS Arizona. It's comprised of hundreds of pillars, formed to the exact size and shape of the ship. The Boat House relic is placed in the same approximate location as it would have existed on the ship before it was struck in an ammunition magazine by a Japanese torpedo bomber. The monument's raised and lit pillars represent the members of the crew who lost their lives in the attack, while lowered pillars represent those crew that survived.

Other tributes at the site include benches with quotes from survivors of the Pearl Harbor attack, detailed hand-drawn blueprints of the USS Arizona, wood planks from the deck of the Battleship and windchimes with the names of those who were lost that day.



## KOVACH'S INVOLVEMENT

Kovach was proud to participate on this project, providing all metal scopes of work for the Boat House relic. The building envelope design included wall panels and soffits on the exterior. Kovach made the panels and trim first in .063 aluminum in light copper color. Kovach also clad the base and pedestal for the relic in a charcoal-color painted aluminum.

Important in the structure of this project was consideration for the hot climate in Arizona. It's critical that the building maintain its function and design for decades to come without cracking, fading or failing.

Part of what made this project special was partnering with the Native American community. “I still appreciate my cultural sensitivity banner provided to me by the tribe after I attended a class with them to learn their history and understand the historical importance of the materials and artifacts. It was something I will never forget being involved in,” added Keating.