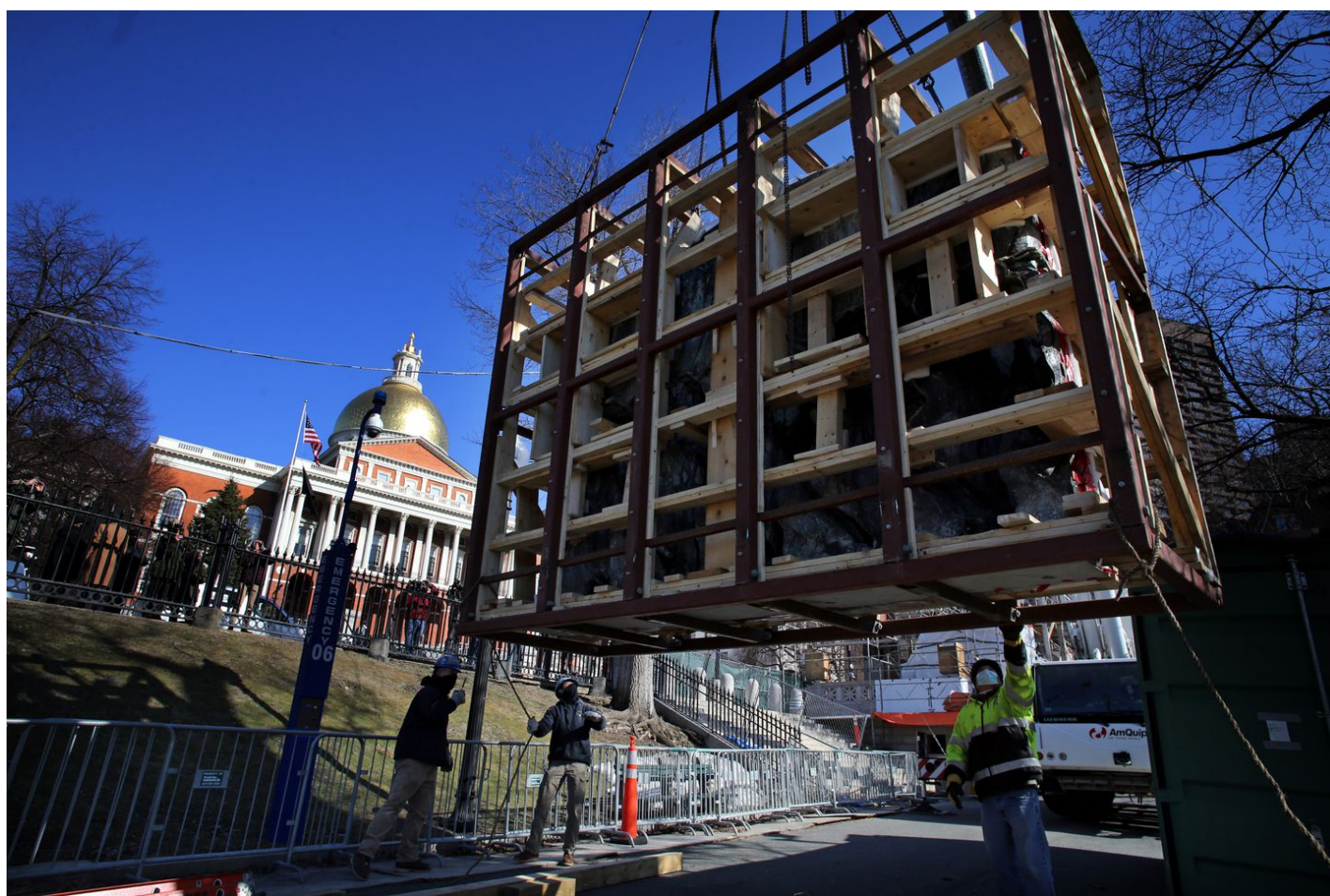


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# Civil War memorial to 54th Regiment returns to Boston Common

By [Emily Sweeney](#) and [Travis Andersen](#) Globe Staff, Updated March 3, 2021, 11:58 a.m.



The Shaw 54th Regiment Memorial was hoisted in the air and returned to its place in the Boston Common across from the State House in Boston on Wednesday. CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF

A Civil War memorial honoring Colonel Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, a famed unit of Black soldiers, is back where it belongs.

For months the bronze relief had been at a [studio in Woburn](#) where it was being cleaned and restored. It returned to Boston Common this week and a crane hoisted it back into place on its base Wednesday morning.

“This is a great story to share with everybody,” said Leslie Adam, board chair of the Friends of the Public Garden, referring to the 54th regiment. “It’s not just history. It’s relevant to where we are.”

The Shaw 54th Memorial, which stands across the street from the State House, was first unveiled in 1897. Created by sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, it depicts Colonel Robert Gould Shaw on horseback and the Massachusetts 54th Regiment, one of the first Union regiments of Black soldiers to see major combat in the Civil War, marching down Beacon Street on May 28, 1863, as they left Boston to head south.

The 54th Regiment went on to lead an assault on Fort Wagner in South Carolina, where many members of the unit, including Shaw, were killed. Roughly 40 percent of the 600-man regiment were killed, wounded, or missing in that unsuccessful frontal attack on the fort, a vital defense for Charleston Harbor.

The memorial, said Michael Creasey, superintendent of the National Parks of Boston/Boston African American National Historic Site, was the first of its kind that “really delved into the true meaning of the Civil War.”

Creasey said that during the renovations, officials have worked closely with the Friends of the Public Garden and Museum of African American History to create programming, including a series of relevant community conversations on issues such as the meaning of public monuments, voting rights, and allyship.

“How exciting for us to now be able to raise this story and really share its relevance,” Adam said.

She said the partnership with the Museum of African American History has been vital in “helping us create that sort of outdoor museum experience,” detailing the story of the



trailblazing 54th regiment as well as “adding on a level of community conversation.”

Officials said in a statement that the \$3 million restoration of the memorial is nearing its final stages and the project is “on track for a substantial completion” in April.



Project manager Michael Mucci of Allegrone Masonry watched as the Shaw 54th Regiment Memorial was hoisted in the air. CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF



Jude Clary of Allegrone Masonry watched as the Shaw 54th Regiment Memorial was placed on the ground. CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF



**Boston Parks and Recreation Department** 

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The [#Shaw54th](#) Memorial returns to Boston Common after being taken offsite for conservation. Depicting one of the Civil War's 1st Black regiments, the bronze bas-relief is one of the most important pieces of public art in the US.

More about the renewal:

[friendsofthepublicgarden.org/shaw54th/](https://friendsofthepublicgarden.org/shaw54th/)

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