

Timeline: Mojave Desert Cross

1917

- U.S. involvement in World War I; 116,516 American troops KIA

1934

- The VFW erects cross and plaque to remember fallen WWI troops at Sunrise Rock in Mojave Desert

1996

- The federal government, under then-president Bill Clinton, annexes the land the cross is located on as part of the Mojave Desert Preserve

1999

- National Park Service states intention to remove cross

2001

- Congress prohibits NPS from spending federal funds to remove the cross. Former NPS employee, Frank Buono, files suit

January 2002

- Congress passes appropriations bill that designates the cross on Sunrise Rock as a “national memorial”

July 2002

- The United States District Court rules cross is unconstitutional and orders removal

September 2003

- Congress passes land exchange bill

2004

- The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals agrees with district court and says cross must be removed
- Congress authorizes the transfer of the one acre of land under the cross back to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a private organization, in exchange for five acres of other land

2005

- The United States District Court granted motion to enforce injunction against the cross.

2007

- The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals rules that Congress cannot stop an Establishment Clause violation by transferring the land

2008

- The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals refuses to hear the case again

2009

- The United States Supreme Court agrees to hear the case. Meanwhile, the cross is covered

Sources:

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