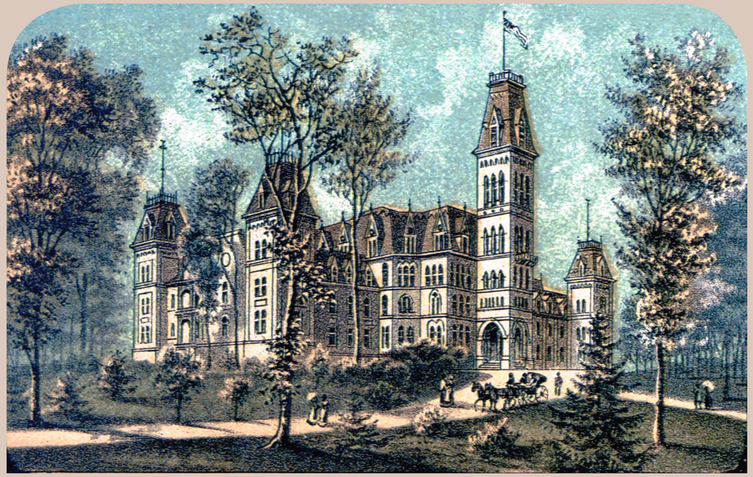
WOOD NATIONAL CEMETERY



The National Home, 1886. Library of Congress.

National Home

The Northwestern Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS) opened in 1867 in Milwaukee. Local architect Edward Townsend Mix designed the campus using popular architectural styles. Thomas Budd Van Horne designed the grounds with gardens, curved paths, and park space. City residents found the setting so pleasant the National Home became a popular destination to enjoy leisurely strolls and picnics.

The hospital was distinguished by innovative medical practices. It was the first to hire female nurses. A mess hall in a barracks for older residents served special-diet meals. Other NHDVS branches later adopted both practices.

The National Homes merged with the U.S. Veterans Bureau and Bureau of Pensions to form the Veterans Administration (now U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) in 1930. Today the facility continues to serve veterans as the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center.

NHDVS Cemetery

Men who died at the National Home were initially buried in private cemeteries. In 1871, a cemetery was laid out on a wooded rise in the northwest corner of the campus. The design combined the formality of early national cemeteries with the picturesque landscapes found on the National Home grounds.

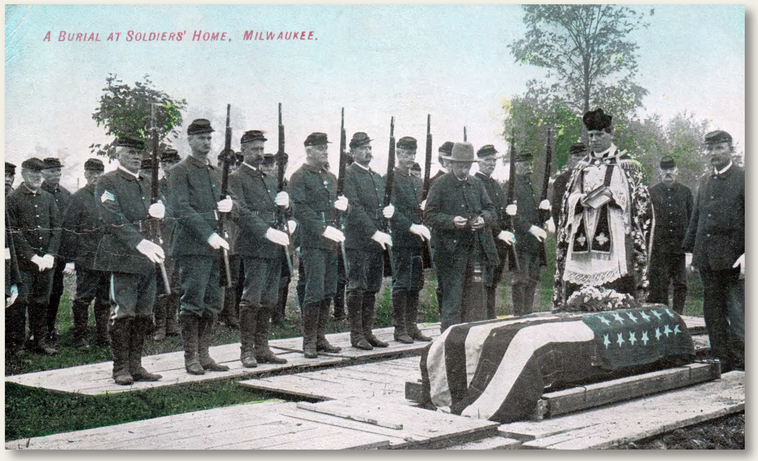
In 1937, the name was changed to Wood Cemetery after Gen. George H. Wood, the last NHDVS Home Board of Managers president. It became a national cemetery in 1973. The cemetery is part of the Northwestern Branch, NHDVS, National Historic Landmark district, designated in 2011.

Civil War Monument

The Soldiers and Sailors Monument Association of the home funded this monument. It was dedicated in 1903.

Joseph Shaver Granite & Marble of Milwaukee constructed the 46-foot-tall shaft of rough-cut New Hampshire granite. A Union soldier wearing a great coat stands at parade rest at the top.

Early twentieth-century photograph, Soldiers and Sailors Monument. National Cemetery Administration.



Postcard view of a burial at the National Home, c. 1908. National Cemetery Administration.

Medal of Honor Recipients

Five Civil War Medal of Honor recipients are buried or memorialized here.

Ordinary Seaman James K. L. Duncan, for gallantry aboard the U.S.S. *Fort Hindman* during an engagement near Harrisonburg, Louisiana, March 2, 1864 (Section 19, Grave 41).

Pvt. Milton Matthews, 61st Pennsylvania Infantry, captured the 7th Tennessee Infantry flag at the Battle of Petersburg, Virginia, April 2, 1865 (Section 11, Grave 61).

Boatswain's Mate Michael McCormick, for gallantry aboard the U.S.S. *Signal* during the Red River Campaign, Louisiana, May 5, 1864 (Section MA, Grave 10A).

Corp. Winthrop D. Putnam, 77th Illinois Infantry, for bravery at Vicksburg, Mississippi, May 22, 1863 (Section 16, Grave 109).

Pvt. Lewis A. Rounds, 8th Ohio Infantry, captured an enemy flag at the Battle of Spotsylvania, Virginia, May 12, 1864 (Section 20, Grave 256).