

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Golden Gate National Cemetery

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

Inter-World War National Cemeteries, 1934-1939

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 1300 Sneath Lane

City or town: San Bruno State: California County: San Mateo

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,


I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

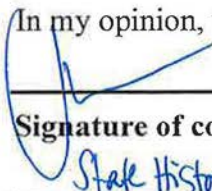
In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D

<p>Signature of certifying official/Title:            _____</p>	<p>Date  <u>11/4/16</u></p>
<p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>Signature of commenting official:            _____</p>	<p>Date  <u>1 Dec 2015</u></p>
<p>Title: <u>State Historic Preservation Officer</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

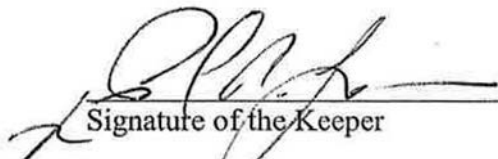
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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

  
Signature of the Keeper

3/8/2016  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object



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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals/Mission/Mediterranean Revival

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, Stucco, Mission tile (Spanish tile), California granite, Marble, Metal: cast aluminum, cast iron, and bronze

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### Narrative Description Summary Paragraph

Golden Gate National Cemetery is approximately 162 acres located at 1300 Sneath Lane in San Bruno, California, a suburb of San Francisco. The fully developed cemetery covers all its acreage. The setting is suburban in character, with neighborhoods, shopping centers, and office buildings surrounding the cemetery. Bounded by heavy development and major roadways, Golden Gate National Cemetery's L-shaped boundary is permanent.

Congress authorized the acquisition of land for use as a national cemetery near the city of San Francisco in 1937. The U.S. War Department purchased this land for use as a cemetery in San Bruno in late 1938.<sup>1</sup> On August 5, 1939, the War Department officially named the property Golden Gate National Cemetery by *General Orders No. 4*.<sup>2</sup> The first interments here were made on June 2, 1941. As of August 2014, there were a total of 141,856 interments, including 26,919 cremains. With the exception of second burials, which occur in the same grave, the cemetery was closed to full-casket burials in 1967 and to cremains in 1998. Golden Gate National Cemetery continues to perform approximately 475 second interments per year.

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<sup>1</sup> *Act to authorize the acquisition of land for cemeterial purposes in the vicinity of San Francisco, California, 75<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., June 11, 1937; Deed of Sale between Jersey Farm Company and the United States of America, October 11, 1938, Box 175, Folder "687 Golden Gate National Cemetery (GGNC), Vol. II, 1938," General Correspondence "Geographic File" (GCGF) 1936-1945, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General (OQMG), Record Group 92 (RG 92), National Archives at College Park (NACP).*

<sup>2</sup> Golden Gate National Cemetery, photocopy, no date, History Program Collection (HPC), National Cemetery Administration (NCA), Washington, DC.

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## Narrative Description

Planned by the Construction Division of the U.S. Army's Office of the Quartermaster General, low rolling hills interspersed with flat terrain and a tall, manmade mound that covers a reservoir characterize Golden Gate National Cemetery.<sup>3</sup> Two tracts intersect at the mound, creating the cemetery's L shape. Roadway patterns conform to the footprint of the land: the longer section contains a system of symmetric biaxial roads, and the shorter leg contains a loop road with three intersecting roads. The mound features a spiraling roadway that leads to a monumental flagpole circle and speaker's platform at its apex. The speaker's platform holds most of the cemetery's monuments. Affixed within a rectangular platform are twelve small plaques.

The cemetery's otherwise formal design incorporates informally placed interior trees. The vegetation is primarily a mix of evergreen, coniferous, and deciduous trees. Flowering cherry lines the entrance drive, while palms line the North Loop Drive and the uppermost section of the mound drive.

Roads have general descriptive names including: Mound Drive, Fork Drive, Circle Drive, First Drive North, Second Drive North, Third Drive North, North Loop Drive, South Drive, First Drive East, Second Drive East, Third Drive East, Mall Drive South, Mall Drive North, and Plaza Drive North. The sole exception is Nimitz Drive, named after Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz of the U.S. Navy. Nimitz is the only fleet admiral buried in the cemetery. Carrying Nimitz Drive over Fork Drive is the cemetery's only bridge.

There are forty-two interment sections: A-Z, 2A-2H, C-1, CA-CF and MA. Sections A, X-Z, 2A-2E and part of B are in the northwest leg. Sections C-W, C-1, 2F-2H, and part of B are in the northeast leg. Section MA contains headstones memorializing soldiers whose remains cannot be located or are buried elsewhere. Sections C-1 and CA-CF delineate the manmade mound and hold cremains interred at the cemetery.<sup>4</sup> The cemetery removed an entrance roadway between Sections H and L as well as Plaza Drive South, formerly located between Sections G and H, Sections K and L, and Sections O and P.

Golden Gate National Cemetery's headstones reflect the era of establishment. The style of headstone is a major distinguishing characteristic of national cemeteries established in the twentieth century. The upright headstone appearance changed dramatically between the Spanish-American War and World War I. The oldest style of government-issued headstone, for soldiers of the Civil War and Spanish-American War, is white marble with a rounded top and recessed shields on the face. The raised inscription includes the state of origin, unlike subsequent inscription practice, and rank if above private.

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<sup>3</sup> Golden Gate National Cemetery, San Bruno, Calif., Initial plan, September 12, 1939, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC, Vol. III, 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

<sup>4</sup> Memorial headstones are furnished for eligible deceased active duty service members and Veterans whose remains are not recovered or identified, are buried at sea, donated to science or whose cremated remains have been scattered.

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The predominant headstone at Golden Gate is the upright white American marble cambered “General type” introduced in 1922 for World War I soldiers, and those after. This type of headstone measures 42 inches high, 13 inches wide, and 4 inches thick; approximately 26 inches is visible above ground. Inscriptions include the name, rank, regiment, division, date of birth, date of death, and home state. Originally, the emblem of belief on these headstones was limited to the Latin cross or Star of David centered above the name of the deceased. The number of available emblem of belief options began to increase after World War II.

In addition, some cemeteries permit flat, government-issued markers in specific sections. In the 1930s, the War Department introduced flat headstones to accommodate veterans buried in private/local cemeteries that did not allow upright markers, such as the lawn park and memorial park cemeteries. Congress already authorized markers of “durable stone” in 1873, thus, the Secretary of War only needed to approve a new style—flat. The first flat marble markers were produced in 1936, with flat granite markers following two years later. They measure 24 inches x 12 inches with rounded edges. The same products are used interchangeably as memorial markers.<sup>5</sup> At Golden Gate, such markers appear infrequently, with most present along the perimeter of the cemetery near Junipero Serra Highway. Sections CA, CB, CC, CD, CE, CF, and 2H contain only flat markers, which are made of granite and predominantly date to the 1990s.

### **Contributing Resources (32)**<sup>6</sup>

**Buildings (6):** Administration Office/Lodge, Chapel/Restroom/Maintenance Facility, Utility Building, Northwest Maintenance Facility Building, South Maintenance Facility Building, Lower Yard Maintenance Facility Building

**Structures (7):** Main Entrance Gates, Gates between Sections H and L, Gates between Maintenance Facility and Section P, Flagpole Circle, Bridge, Fences and Masonry Posts and Wall Sections along Highway 280 and Sneath Lane, Chain-link Fencing

**Objects (19):** Golden Gate National Cemetery Plaque, Veterans Administration Plaque, “Gettysburg Address” Plaque, POW/MIA Flagpole, Founders and Patriots Memorial, World War II Glider Pilots Memorial, Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial, Pearl Harbor Survivors Association Memorial, American Legion Auxiliary Memorial, Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary Memorial, Ladies Auxiliary, Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial, American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Memorial, Congressional Medal of Honor Society Memorial, American Legion Memorial, Disabled American Veterans Memorial, Avenue of Flags Committee Memorial, Blue Star Memorial, Avenue of Flags, “Bivouac of the Dead” Plaque

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<sup>5</sup> Design for Flat Marker, Box 17, Folder 4, Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, Department of Memorial Affairs (DMA), National Cemetery Historical File (NCHF), Records of the VA, Record Group 15 (RG 15), National Archives Building, Washington, DC (NAB).

<sup>6</sup> Information in this section obtained from Maintenance Ledgers, various dates, Box 19, Folders 3-5, GGNC, DMA, NCHF, Records of the VA, RG 15, NAB.

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## Buildings (6)

**Administration Office/Lodge:** Completed by the War Department on May 15, 1941, the single-story lodge is co-located with the administration office and lies approximately 100 feet northeast of the main gate. The California granite, Mediterranean Revival administration office/lodge is T-shaped in plan and set on a concrete foundation. The northern portion of the building is a long rectangle crossed by an elongated octagon at the south. The rectangular portion of the building houses the residential lodge, whereas the octagonal portion of the building houses the administration's office facilities. Stucco covers portions of the exterior. The building sits below an irregularly shaped hipped roof covered in red terra cotta tile.

The southern, octagonal section features California granite exterior walls, periodically clad in white stucco, topped with a California granite entablature approximately 1½ feet below the roofline. The southwest elevation of this section features a portico. The open-air portico houses the building's office entrance. The portico faces northwest and includes three bays of double-sash, multi-light doors. The portico includes carved low-relief ornamentation including California granite quoins and a bracket centered in the northwest-facing entrance. California granite also covers the interior of the portico. The entrance to the office is a double wood door set in a simple California granite surround. Above the door is a single electric light. In the west wall of the portico is a modern electronic grave finder. Angled away from the entrance, window arches puncture the southwest-facing wall. A bracketed pilaster completes the exterior west wall. The southwest-facing window matches the entrance in size. A wrought-iron grille covers this window.

The southeast elevations mimic those of the portico in form, but are not open-air. This section includes two fifteen-light windows with four-light single casements flanking an eight-light fixed central section, all under another four fixed lights. A California granite pilaster with a decorative bracket top lies between these two windows.

The rectangular, and northern, section of the building primarily serves as the residential lodge. The northwest elevation includes a series of wood casement windows, an arched private entrance, an exterior stucco chimney, and a two-light metal fixed window above a pair of metal awning-shielded windows. Toward the office end at the south, a pair of two wood, single casement windows is present. Two double wood casement windows are set along the exterior wall before reaching a small arched stoop covered by a wrought-iron grate. Two concrete steps flanked by wrought-iron railings access the stoop. Behind the grate is a wood, arched entrance door. The lateral, exterior, stucco, stepped chimney has Mission tiles decorating the stepped portions. Near the northeast end of this elevation, a large, two-light, fixed, metal window lies above two metal windows with metal awnings shading them.

The northeast elevation features two windows flanking a central metal, single-light door with full sidelights and a transom. Simple California granite pilasters separate the entrance from the large windows. Above the doorway is a single electric light. There is a simple pilaster at each corner

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of the elevation. Originally a former porch, this section was enclosed on September 30, 1966, and the metal windows and doors were added during a renovation of the lodge completed in 1979. This section also includes a simple California granite entablature about 1 foot below the roofline.

The southeast elevation of the rectangular section represents the private exterior yard used by the residents of the lodge. Enclosed in 2011 with an approximately 5-foot-tall wood privacy fence, the rear elevation of the building is not in view to the general public. Six bays in all, the rear elevation of the administration office/lodge includes one metal storm door under a short shed terracotta tiled roof flanked by two windows to the north and three to the south. Triple wood casements compose the two north windows. The south windows from south to north are: multi-light wood fixed, triple wood casement, and single wood casement.

Visible in the lodge interior are some painted and unpainted wood panels, but a majority of the interior walls are painted plaster. All of the main-floor rooms (except kitchen and bathrooms) are carpeted. The kitchen and bathrooms have varying ages of ceramic tile. A few ceilings have acoustical panels. All of the original interior architectural millwork and interior doors are intact. In the living room, the original marble mantle is extant, with a centered, bas-relief VA seal. The lodge porch on the north elevation has ceramic tiles and floors. Unfinished or painted loadbearing concrete composes the basement walls.

The cemetery retains the original lodge plan through preserving major room configurations while reversibly covering some original surfaces. Alterations to the original layout include enclosing the north porch and the addition of another full bath in the residential portion, which required the reconfiguration of the two west bedrooms and their closets.

**Chapel/Restroom/Maintenance Facility:** The basic form and architectural design of the chapel/restroom/maintenance facility mirrors that of the administration office/lodge. It is a single-story building approximately 100 feet northwest of the main gate. The Mediterranean Revival chapel/restroom/maintenance facility is T-shaped in plan. The northern portion of the building is a long rectangle crossed by a southern elongated octagon. The rectangular portion of the building houses the maintenance facilities and restrooms, whereas the octagonal portion of the building houses the chapel. Also completed May 15, 1941, this building sits atop a concrete foundation and has California granite exterior walls, which are periodically clad in stucco, and an irregularly hipped roof with terracotta tile.

The southern elongated octagonal section of the building features a combination of stucco painted white and California granite exterior walls topped by a California granite entablature measuring approximately 1½ feet below the roofline. This section of this building lies about 100 feet northwest of the main gate and is used as a small chapel for memorial services. An open-air portico at the southwest end of the building holds the chapel entrance. The portico faces northeast and includes carved low-relief ornamentation including California granite quoins, a bracket centered in the northeast-facing entrance and southeast-facing window arches, and a bracketed pilaster facing east. A wrought-iron grille secures the southeast-facing window. The



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interior of the portico is California granite. The entrance to the chapel consists of a double wood-paneled door in a simple California granite surround.

The southwest elevation of the chapel includes three bays of double-sash, multi-light doors. A single wrought-iron balconet serves all three. These doors are covered by metal storm windows.<sup>7</sup> The southwest elevations mimic those of the portico in form and include a centered pilaster topped by a large decorative bracket, but lack fenestration and are not open-air.

The interior of the chapel is simple and elegant with a red ceramic tile floor and neoclassical finishes including a paneled ceiling; dentiled crown moulding with a fluted pilaster demarking the separation between the altar and the nave; pedimented altar set on a marble floor in a checkerboard pattern; suspended light fixtures of opaque glass and delicate metalwork, and wooden pews flanking a center aisle.

The southeast elevation of the rectangular section of the building serves as the public restroom and maintenance facility. This nine-bay elevation includes a series of wood casement windows and two rectangular restroom entrances along a stucco exterior wall. Closest to the chapel is a double wood casement window behind a wood lattice grille. The following bay is an entrance to the women's restroom. Located between the two restrooms is another double wood casement window behind a wood lattice grate. Equally spaced double wood casements are the remaining five windows on this elevation.

The northeast elevation includes two equally spaced double wood casement windows.

The northwest elevation of the rectangular section also features nine bays and reveals the maintenance section of this building. Closest to the chapel is a wood-paneled double door with a concrete step lined by a single wrought-iron rail. A small electric light sits just north of this entrance. Three small single wood casement windows with twelve lights each line the rear stucco exterior wall. One double wood casement window matching those on the front and side elevation is located on the fifth bay from the chapel. The remaining four serve as large auto bays and include modern metal garage doors.

**Utility Building:** The small rectangular utility building constructed ca. 1970 on the south corner of the northeast leg's fence line, was built in two sections of concrete block, and is painted white. The south façade of the southwest block facing Sneath Lane includes a large, square, full-color vinyl sign with the words "Golden Gate National Cemetery" set around a circular seal for the VA. The northeast block of this building also features a sign on its Sneath Lane-facing elevation, indicating the direction of the VA San Bruno Clinic.

The southwest block includes a slightly raised section on its flat roof, making room for interior equipment. The building includes a single paneled concrete door on its southwest elevation, under an electrical light covered by a shaped metal grate. The northeast block of the building has

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<sup>7</sup> This change was done more than 8 years ago. Kathleen McCall, Director, Golden Gate National Cemetery, to Virginia B. Price, NCA Historian, electronic communication, September 17, 2015.

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no roof. On Sneath Lane, near the corner of El Camino Real, the building sits along a break in the chain-link fence that frames the southern edge of Golden Gate National Cemetery.

**Maintenance Facility:** Located approximately 50 feet from the service gate accessed from Sneath Lane, the maintenance facility consists of three long, rectangular buildings and a large, walled paved asphalt area. Arranged in a U-shape layout, the three buildings were not all constructed at the same time. Constructed in the area called the “upper yard” in 1952 and 1957, respectively, are the northwest and south buildings.<sup>8</sup> White fencing surrounds the third building, which serves as a garage for maintenance vehicles. The cemetery constructed this building in the “lower yard” toward the northeast edge of the maintenance facility in 2007 as part of a renovation of the maintenance facility.

**Northwest Maintenance Facility Building:** Three rectangular sections along a rectangular footprint compose the northwest building: a central gabled section and two large hipped wings extending to the northeast and southwest. The building has a concrete frame covered in stucco painted a cream color on the upper parts of the building and dark taupe on the pier bases and foundation.

The central gabled block includes three bays facing South Drive. Two smaller, multi-light metal windows flank a larger center, multi-light window. Each gable has two sets of five small, circular vents. An eyebrow dormer vent sits in the roof toward the southwest end of this section, and extends to the rear of the building. The three bays on the rear elevation face the paved asphalt, enclosed section of the maintenance facility. All three bays consist of large fixed windows with several metal panes. These were replaced in-kind since the 2007 renovation.

The southwest and northeast wings mirror each other in size. Each wing includes four bays of fenestration facing South Drive. Each bay is a multi-light metal window with upper fixed sash and lower awning sash. The southwest wing includes an approximately 5-foot wall attachment at the juncture with the central block, in which an air-conditioning unit lies. A wrought-iron gate on the northeast end of this low wall provides access for service to the unit.

The wings differ slightly to the rear. On the southeast elevation, the northeast wing includes four bays. Two metal doors with single, off-center vertical lights and single-light transoms sit to the southwest. Located just northeast of the two doors is a small automobile bay with multiple lights on a metal garage door. All doors on the rear elevation of this wing appear to be replacements dating to 2005. The northeast hipped end of this bay includes two metal multi-light windows with upper fixed sash and lower awning sash. At its northeast corner, this elevation connects to an approximately 5-foot-tall stuccoed masonry wall; the wall extends approximately 50 feet to the northeast, stepped down once, to the north entrance for maintenance vehicles. The rear elevation of the southwest wing includes one door of exact appearance as those found on the rear of the northeast wing. Near the southwest corner of this wing is a single, one-over-one, metal, single-hung sash window. The southwest elevation of the southwest wing includes an open-air

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<sup>8</sup> Office of Quartermaster General, “Golden Gate Nat. Cem. San Bruno, Calif. Key Map,” October 22, 1953, Historical File, Golden Gate National Cemetery (GGNC), San Bruno, CA.

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stuccoed arcade composed of three arches, as well as pass-through archway openings at the northwest and southeast ends of the arcade. Each of the piers making up the arcade, as well as the pilasters connecting at the arcade junction with the southwest wing, feature a single ornamental scored line in the stucco. The southeast arch of the arcade culminates alongside a wrought-iron pedestrian gate that is accessible to employees only. Measuring approximately 8 feet tall, the gate connects to a stuccoed masonry wall that extends approximately 15 feet southeast to the southwest vehicular entrance.

**South Maintenance Facility Building:** The south maintenance facility building is one story, masonry-framed, and clad in stucco with a hipped roof covered in Mission tile. Seven identical bays comprise the Sneath Lane elevation: two metal awning windows are above and below the central fixed sections. The southwest and northeast elevations of this building each include two identical bays consisting of one metal awning window above and below the central fixed sections. All windows on this building include multiple lights. The northwest corner of the southwest elevation is connected to a stucco masonry wall measuring about 6 feet to 8 feet in height due to terrain. This wall extends northwest to the southwest vehicular entrance. Six automobile bays line the northwest elevation of this maintenance facility building. All have been renovated and include new metal multi-light garage doors; this change occurred in 2006. The northeast corner of the southeast elevation culminates at another masonry stucco wall that stands approximately 4 feet high. This wall extends about 20 feet southeast toward Sneath Lane.

Paralleling Sneath Lane for approximately 100 feet and stepped in several places down to the lower yard, the masonry stucco wall extends the length of the maintenance facility's enclosed paved parking and work area. After that length, the wall makes a right angle and extends approximately another 30 feet, ending at the southeast corner of the new maintenance building.

**Lower Yard Maintenance Facility Building:** Constructed in 2007, the new one-story garage is stucco with a hipped roof covered in mission tile. Set in pairs along the southeast, northeast, and northwest elevations, rectangular vents line this building approximately 1 foot below the roofline. Five pairs of vents sit along the northeast elevation, while the southeast and northwest elevations include two pairs each. The northwest corner of the northeast elevation connects to another masonry stucco wall. Extending approximately 45 feet toward the northwest automobile entrance, the wall ranges from about 6 feet to 8 feet, depending on terrain. The southwest elevation of this building faces inward to the lower yard and features five automobile bays.

## Structures (7)

**Main Entrance Gates:** Located just northwest of the main turnoff for the cemetery from Sneath Lane, are the California granite main entrance gates to Golden Gate National Cemetery. Also completed May 15, 1941 in the Mediterranean Revival style, the gates feature two grand archways flanking a single granite post. Set between the Administration Office/Lodge and the Chapel/Restrooms/Maintenance Facility, the gates stand approximately 22 feet tall at the pedestrian archways and about 15 feet at the center post. A wrought-iron picket fence connects

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the archways to the two flanking buildings, while hinged, wrought-iron picket gates sit below the archways and in between the central post and archways.

Spanning approximately 95 feet wide, the entrance gates feature sharply pronounced architectural details, including pilasters at the archways, bracketed arches, bracketed pilasters at the archways and the central post, prominent entablatures and stepped caps on the archways, and a broken pediment atop the central post. The central post also includes a low-relief, arched carving of an eagle under a small crest of thirteen stars positioned above the words "U.S. National Cemetery."

**Gates between Sections H and L:** Constructed in 1941, these gates front Sneath Lane between Sections H and L and possess two posts finished with concrete and stucco. Topping the gateposts are steeply pitched hipped concrete caps with concrete ball finials. The gates also include paired wrought-iron arched vehicular gates; however, these gates are permanently closed to traffic. Small native plantings are placed at the former opening.

**Gates between Maintenance Facility and Section P:** Constructed in 1941, these front Sneath Lane and consist of two posts finished with concrete and stucco. Topped with steeply pitched hipped concrete caps with concrete ball finials, this entrance also includes paired, wrought-iron, arched vehicular gates. These gates are in active use.

**Flagpole Circle:** With a diameter of approximately 195 feet, the flagpole circle feature atop the mound includes a structural composition of California granite, hardened gravel surfaces, three small grass lawns, small native plantings, and a circular concrete walkway. Five permanent granite benches lie along the interior of the circular concrete walkway. Contractors Monson Brothers and Barrett and Hilp completed the flagpole circle on October 28, 1941.<sup>9</sup>

Three granite sets of steps lead from northwest, northeast, and south up to a stainless-steel flagpole installed in February 1988 as a replacement for an earlier pole.<sup>10</sup> The bases of the northwest and northeast steps are approximately 32 feet wide, while the south steps measure approximately 48 feet across. The hardened gravel landing, located approximately midway between the concrete walkway lining the circle and the flagpole base, is framed by three small strips of grass lined by California granite balustrades that culminate in rectangular short granite posts flanking each set of stairs.

An ornate, octagonal California granite base supports the flagpole. With four sides comprised of bracketed pilaster carvings alternating with four sides featuring low-relief garland, the bronze flagpole sleeve and conical stainless steel post has a monumental base.

**Bridge:** Bridge construction began on October 13, 1941, after project award to the local firm of Carrico and Gautier. Completed July 1, 1942, the bridge carrying Nimitz Drive was built over a

<sup>9</sup> J.H. Veal, Capt., Quartermaster Corps (QMC), to Quartermaster General, Washington, DC, October 31, 1941, Box 174, Folder 655 GGNC, GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>10</sup> "The vanishing pole," *San Bruno Herald*, February 13, 1988.

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ravine, now Fork Drive. The bridge was constructed of reinforced concrete faced with Raymond Gray Granite from the Raymond Quarry in Knowles, Madera County, California, and capped with white marble.<sup>11</sup>

The single-arch bridge consists of a segmented arch and abutment substructure. The superstructure consists of solid Raymond Gray Granite railings marked by curving ends: grass strips are set along both sides and frame the asphalt deck. Sidewalks line both sides of Fork Drive below the bridge. The roadway measures approximately 47 feet across, and the bridge span is approximately 103 feet.

**Fences and Masonry Posts and Wall Sections Along Highway 280 and Sneath Lane:** This wrought-iron picket fencing matches that at the entrance and lines part of Golden Gate National Cemetery. Workers completed both the wall sections and the fences in which they are set on January 7, 1942.<sup>12</sup> The fences and masonry posts line approximately 580 feet along the northwest leg, from the southwest edge of the chapel/ restroom/ maintenance facility through Section A to Section 2A. On the northeast leg, the wrought-iron picket fence begins at the southeast edge of the administration office/lodge and continues to just past the southwest corner of the maintenance facility. This fence section is approximately 1,903 feet long and runs along the edge of Sections D, 2F, 2H, H, L, and P.

Brick posts covered in stucco topped with limestone-hipped caps appear intermittently along the length of the fences. Sections of curved parapet decorative walls sit throughout the fences. Each of these walls features one curved parapet section with an oval cutout in the center. Built of brick and covered with stucco, the wall sections are between two ornamental posts constructed of alternating bands of concrete and stuccoed masonry topped with steeply pitched hip concrete caps and concrete ball finials. From post end to post end, these short wall sections measure approximately 20 feet wide each.

**Chain-link Fencing:** Chain-link fencing along Highway 280, Sneath Lane, El Camino Real and residential areas border the remainder of Golden Gate National Cemetery. Workers installed the chain-link fences in 1941 and 1957 and replaced the section along the northwest leg in 1962.<sup>13</sup> Beginning at the end of the northwestern-most stuccoed brick wall section at the juncture of Sections A and 2A, the chain-link fence runs approximately 1,847 feet to the northwest corner of Section 2B. From there, the fence continues to the northeast corner of 2E, measuring approximately 740 feet. Traveling along the edge of Section 2E, the fence runs for about 1,893 feet to the juncture of Sections 2D and E. At this point, the fence runs along the entire northwest perimeter of the northeast leg for about 3,415 feet, along the edges of Sections E, I, M, Q, and V.

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<sup>11</sup> Construction Contract Awarded, United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, October 7, 1941, Box 176, Folder 823 GGNC, California, GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92; NARA II; Carrico and Gautier, General Contractors, to OQMG, Washington, DC, October 20, 1941, Box 176, Folder 823 GGNC, California, GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92; NARA II.

<sup>12</sup> Construction Records. Golden Gate National Cemetery, San Bruno, CA.

<sup>13</sup> Construction Records.

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The chain-link fence continues by separating Sections V and W from a sidewalk lining El Camino Real at the northeast end of the northeast leg. This section is about 1,390 feet long.

### Objects (19)

**Golden Gate National Cemetery Plaque:** Affixed to the northwest archway at the entrance gates is a ca. 1945 rectangular bronze plaque displaying the etched name of the cemetery.

**Veterans Administration Plaque:** On the southeast archway, a rectangular bronze plaque dating to 1973 reads “Veterans Administration 1930.” These words encircle a bas-relief carving of the historic seal of the VA.

**“Gettysburg Address” Plaque:** A large, upright rectangular granite slab measuring approximately 6½ feet tall and 2½ feet wide holds the 4½-foot-tall, cast iron “Gettysburg Address” Plaque. The cemetery installed the plaque in 2011 between the Main Entrance Gates and the Administration Office/Lodge.

**POW/MIA Flagpole:** The tapered stainless-steel pole located at the south edge of the ceremonial mound base, on axis with the central post of the entrance gates to Golden Gate National Cemetery measures approximately 30 feet tall with simple gold-finish ball finial. The pole rests in a simple ground sleeve with an unobtrusive stainless-steel flash collar. Installed ca. 1975, the black POW/MIA flag flies from this flagpole, memorializing prisoners of war and those missing in action. This location marks the edge of Section CA.

**Blue Star Memorial:** Set near the entrance to the cemetery just southeast of the Administration Office/Lodge is a Blue Star Memorial marker installed ca. 1980. The marker, approximately 7 ½ feet tall, includes a two-sided rectangular plaque about 41 inches tall and 45 inches wide with a centered National Council of State Garden Clubs (NCSGC) seal. The raised lettering, modeled relief emblem, and prismatic star are cast aluminum. All lettering and emblem border rings are in gold leaf and the central star is colored blue. The background is olive green with copper shading at the center.<sup>14</sup>

**Avenue of Flags:** Created ca. 1979 to fly numerous American flags for significant occasions such as Memorial Day, the Avenue of Flags adorns parts of Circle Drive and Mound Drive. Stainless-steel tapered flagpoles measuring approximately 12 feet tall sit between 6 feet to 20 feet apart along one side of the curving roadway. The poles have simple ground sleeves and flash collars.

**“Bivouac of the Dead” Plaque:** The cemetery installed the cast-aluminum “Bivouac of the Dead” Plaque on the wall facing the chapel entrance in 2003. This verse historically adorned the national cemeteries beginning in the nineteenth century.

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<sup>14</sup> National Garden Clubs, Inc., “Guidelines for Blue Star Memorial Markers,” Blue Star Memorial Program, accessed August 20, 2012, [www.gardenclub.org/media/2798/BlueStar.doc](http://www.gardenclub.org/media/2798/BlueStar.doc).

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### **Speakers Platform Memorial Group**

Set adjacent to the speaker's platform on Circle Drive is a memorial group of twelve small, flat bronze plaques. Consisting primarily of circular plaques, they are evenly spaced within a rectangular platform lined by low concrete retaining walls. Each plaque sits flush in the hardened gravel surface, which measures approximately 40 feet x 20 feet. As part of the flagpole mound, the platform faces the northwest leg of Golden Gate National Cemetery.

**Founders and Patriots Memorial (Speaker's Platform):** Rectangular bronze plaque, erected Memorial Day 2003.

**World War II Glider Pilots Memorial (Speaker's Platform):** Rectangular bronze plaque, erected September 16, 1993.

**Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial (Speaker's Platform):** Cruciform bronze plaque, erected ca. 1979.

**Pearl Harbor Survivors Association Memorial (Speaker's Platform):** Circular bronze plaque, erected ca. 1979.

**American Legion Auxiliary Memorial (Speaker's Platform):** Circular bronze plaque, erected ca. 1979.

**Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary Memorial (Speaker's Platform):** Circular bronze plaque, erected ca. 1979.

**Ladies Auxiliary, Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial (Speaker's Platform):** Cruciform bronze plaque, erected ca. 1979.

**American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Memorial (Speaker's Platform):** Hexagonal bronze plaque, erected ca. 1979.

**Congressional Medal of Honor Society Memorial (Speaker's Platform):** Circular bronze plaque, erected ca. 1979.

**American Legion Memorial (Speaker's Platform):** Circular bronze plaque, erected ca. 1979.

**Disabled American Veterans Memorial (Speaker's Platform):** Circular bronze plaque, erected ca. 1979.

**Avenue of Flags Committee Memorial (Speaker's Platform):** Rectangular bronze plaque, erected May 28, 1979.

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## Historic Integrity

The integrity of Golden Gate National Cemetery is high. Its historic design, monuments, buildings, and structures are intact, and any changes and alterations have been done sympathetically and have taken place within the cemetery's period of significance. The cemetery retains historic integrity in the areas of location (1), design (2), setting (3), materials (4), workmanship (5), feeling (6), and association. The cemetery's remains intact since 1939, with no change occurring to its boundaries since that time (1). The cemetery's historic design (2) and layout remains intact overall, with only minimal road alterations taking place in the 1960s following the finalizing of the design in the early 1950s. The setting (3) of Golden Gate National Cemetery remains intact, as the cemetery is still suburban in nature. However, increasing commercial and residential development and progressively hectic roadways flanking the cemetery have somewhat altered the former feeling of a formerly agricultural area. The historic materials (4) used to construct the cemetery's buildings, structures, and objects remain present wherever possible, further supporting the integrity of this site. The presence of these materials, combined with the preservation of much of the cemetery's original plan and lack of unsympathetic additions to the historic buildings or to the cemetery landscape, supports the cemetery's historic integrity in the area of workmanship (5). The feeling (6) of Golden Gate National Cemetery as a nationally significant historic burial ground remains, as does the association (7) of the cemetery with the national cemetery movement during the Inter-World War years and thereafter.



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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Military

Social History

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1937-Present

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1938

1939

1941

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

War Department

Works Progress Administration

\_\_\_\_\_

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### Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Golden Gate National Cemetery is part of a Multiple Property Listing, *Inter-World War National Cemeteries, 1934-1939*. This study includes the following associated contexts: Development of National Cemeteries, 1862-1940; Cemetery Landscape and Design, 1930s; Rise of Veteran Service Organizations and Evolving Veteran Burial Benefits, 1860s-1930s; and the Impact of the Great Depression and the WPA Programs on National Cemeteries, 1930s.

Golden Gate National Cemetery's significance rests in its position as one of seven national cemeteries established between World War I and World War II, specifically in 1934-1939. The increased veteran population, combined with the rapidly depleting burial space at existing national cemeteries, led to a series of federal legislation during this period aimed at establishing new cemeteries: Baltimore, Fort Snelling, Fort Rosecrans, Golden Gate, Fort Bliss, Long Island, and Fort Sam Houston national cemeteries. These seven properties are nationally significant under Criterion A for their association with the expansion of the National Cemetery System during the Inter-World War period. These cemeteries are physical shrines illustrating selfless sacrifices of the U.S. military, which expand upon the burial and memorial mission established during the Civil War through the first national cemeteries. For these reasons, Criteria Consideration D is satisfied.

In 2011, the Keeper of the National Register confirmed National Register for Historic Places eligibility by issuing a clarification of policy stating that all national cemeteries are considered exceptionally significant and eligible for listing in the NRHP regardless of age, and that all buildings, structures, and objects located within the boundaries of national cemeteries are considered contributing elements to each national cemetery regardless of age.<sup>15</sup>

The period of significance (1937-Present) at Golden Gate National Cemetery begins with the establishment by Congress as a national cemetery. Orders for the War Department named the national cemetery in 1939 and the first interments came in 1941. Due to the complex nature of cemetery development, Congressional establishment was chosen as the beginning date for the Inter-World War national cemeteries because all other dates occur due to the authorizing legislation.

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### Narrative Statement of Significance

#### Historical Background

The Spanish establishment of both Mission San Francisco de Asís (or Mission Dolores) and El Presidio Real de San Francisco in 1776 on the San Francisco Peninsula proved beneficial for defense and as a base to convert Native Americans to Christianity. However, the position of these two sites was on fog-prone, sandy soil and marshy lands. Just south of this, on the opposite

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<sup>15</sup> Keeper of the National Register, "National Register Eligibility of National Cemeteries—A Clarification of Policy." September 8, 2011. (Washington, DC: History Program Collection, NCA). Available at: [http://www.cem.va.gov/pdf/Final\\_Eligibility\\_of\\_VA\\_cemeteries\\_A\\_Clarification\\_of\\_Policy\\_rev.pdf](http://www.cem.va.gov/pdf/Final_Eligibility_of_VA_cemeteries_A_Clarification_of_Policy_rev.pdf)

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side of the San Bruno hills, were grass-filled valleys occupied by a Native American population called "Buri Buri."<sup>16</sup>

Converted by the Spanish into farmlands, the former Buri Buri area stretched from the San Bruno Mountains to San Mateo. At first, the Mission raised only cattle and its own crops here. In 1797, Governor Diego de Borica decided that the Presidio garrison should depend less on the Mission's nearby resources. While the Spanish government already controlled Rancho del Rey for cattle, it was too small for the growing herd. Buri Buri transferred Rancho del Rey's land and herd, with proceeds from the property sale going directly to the maintenance of the Presidio.<sup>17</sup>

The following years witnessed the decline of Spanish rule, ending with the Mexican War of Independence in 1821. Under Mexican governmental control, the herds of Buri Buri dwindled until 1827, when the rancho was transferred as a private land grant.<sup>18</sup> That year, the Mexican government provisionally granted ownership of Rancho Buri Buri to José Antonio Sanchez, a decorated officer who took part in twenty campaigns against Native Americans in the region. Officially granted the property on September 23, 1835, Sanchez later expanded it to 14,369 acres.

On May 13, 1846, the United States declared war on Mexico after a small clash between the U.S. Cavalry and Mexican forces outside of Brownsville, Texas. Not realizing their countries were at war, a band of American settlers overtook Mexico's northern California headquarters in Sonoma in June that same year. Led by frontiersman Ezekiel Merritt, the group unfurled a homemade flag atop its newly acquired fort. The flag bore the words "California Republic" and depicted a grizzly bear facing a star. The capture of Sonoma was hence named the "Bear Flag Revolt." The Mexican War continued until 1848; with the cessation of hostilities, Mexico surrendered California in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Despite the death of Sanchez in 1843, the upheaval of war, and subsequent territorial reorganization, Sanchez's family retained control over Rancho Buri Buri. Divided into ten equal parts, the Sanchez family eventually sold off portions of the rancho to various parties during the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

By June 15, 1875, R. G. Sneath purchased about 1,269 acres of Rancho Buri Buri. That tract became known as the Sneath Ranch. Subsequently sold to the Jersey Farm Company, they subdivided it prior to selling to the Federal government in 1938 for a new national cemetery.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the approximately 162 acres forming Golden Gate National Cemetery were once part of the original Rancho Buri Buri.

<sup>16</sup> Frank M. Stanger, "A California Rancho Under Three Flags: A History of Rancho Buri Buri in San Mateo County," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (September 1938): 245.

<sup>17</sup> Stanger, "A California Rancho," 246.

<sup>18</sup> Stanger, "A California Rancho," 249.

<sup>19</sup> Stanger, "A California Rancho," 253-254.

<sup>20</sup> Deed, October 11, 1938.

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According to the deed associated with the property as well as correspondence between Jersey Farm Company and the U.S. government, tenant farmers held leases on the land. Tenant farmers, also called “truck farmers,” resided on the property, grew vegetable crops, and transported them to local markets. The year the United States government purchased the land, tenant farmers remained on the property through the growing season, or until the lease expiration. Jersey Farm Company sold the acreage on October 11, 1938, for \$158.<sup>21</sup>

### **Cemetery Development**

By the mid-1930s, interment space at San Francisco National Cemetery on the Presidio (approximately 16 miles north) dwindled quickly. At the time, the War Department’s policy was to expand existing national cemeteries rather than create new ones. In the case of Golden Gate and other Inter-World War national cemeteries, they were either intended to supplement and expand existing facilities or to serve current burial needs of the armed forces. With an estimated closure date of 1938, an Act of Congress on June 11, 1937, approved the “acquisition of land for cemeterial purposes in the vicinity of San Francisco.”<sup>22</sup> A law enacted on March 30, 1900, prohibited placement of the cemetery within the city or county of San Francisco.<sup>23</sup> Thus, a search for land began in nearby Alameda and San Mateo counties.

Due to the cemetery ban, and San Francisco’s location at the northern tip a peninsula, many cemeteries existed directly south of the county line in neighboring municipalities. By the 1930s, San Mateo County maintained an established pattern of cemetery construction; in particular, close to the county’s border with San Francisco, in the City of Colma.<sup>24</sup>

As early as 1936, the War Department compiled descriptions of possible land in the San Francisco vicinity upon which to locate new national cemetery. Many area veterans and their congressional representatives preferred Alameda County on the east side of San Francisco Bay due to its anticipated future growth.<sup>25</sup> In the selection of the cemetery site, however, the

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<sup>21</sup> Deed, October 11, 1938.; Rudolph E. Smyser, Col., QMC, to the Quartermaster General, Washington, DC, September 27, 1938, Box 175, Folder “687 GGNC, Vol. II, 1938,” GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>22</sup> John T. Harris, Col., QMC, to Hon. John H. Tolan, House of Representatives, December 7, 1937, Box 176, Folder “687 GGNC, Vol, 1937,” GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II; *Act to authorize*, June 11, 1937.

<sup>23</sup> Mayor and Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco, Bill No. 54, Ordinance No. 25, March 30, 1900.

<sup>24</sup> Colma Historical Association, History, accessed May 13, 2011, <http://www.colmahistory.org/history.html>. Between 1900-1935, seven cemeteries were established in Colma alone, mainly to provide burial services to San Francisco residents.

<sup>25</sup> Congressman Albert E. Carter, 6<sup>th</sup> District, California, to Maj. Gen. Henry Gibbins, Quartermaster General, War Department, February 16, 1938, Box 175, Folder “687 GGNC Vol. II 1938,” GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NARA II; California Assemblyman Arthur H. Breed, Jr. to Hon. Albert E. Carter, House Office Building, Washington, DC, February 9, 1938, Box 175, Folder “687 GGNC Vol. II 1938,” GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NARA II; John T. Harris, Lt. Col., QMC, to House Appropriations Committee, Washington, DC, August 2, 1937; Box 176, Folder “687 GGNC;” GCGF 1936-1945; RG 92; NARA II.

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Quartermaster Corps did not adhere to the input of the veterans. By early 1938, the government had narrowed its search to lands located in San Mateo County.<sup>26</sup>

The Quartermaster Corps considered several tracts in San Mateo and Alameda counties, some of which included similar benefits to the Jersey Farm. The Quartermaster Corps ruled out such sites due to cost. Other lower-cost tracts that offered extant buildings or structures were unsuitable for burials due to unfavorable land contours and ravines.<sup>27</sup> For instance, in a letter outlining reasons for selecting the Jersey Farm property, Colonel James H. Laubach explained to Colonel John T. Harris that the existing farmhouse on the property was well suited as a superintendent's lodge.<sup>28</sup> Colonel Laubach briefly compared the acreage to another tract that required substantial drainage and included no existing structures.<sup>29</sup>

According to Quartermaster Corps correspondence from Colonel Rudolph E. Smyser to Colonel Harris, a discussion of several possible names for the new national cemetery occurred in March 1939. Among the suggestions were Valhalla, Calvary, Eucalyptus Grove, Laurel Hills, Greenlawn, Bay View, Golden Gate, and San Bruno. Smyser observed that the two latter names were most suitable, as most national cemeteries were named for their location. Use of "San Bruno" was inappropriate due to the association with a nearby "road house" of the same name.<sup>30</sup> War Department issuance of *General Orders No. 4* in 1939 officially designated the new property as Golden Gate National Cemetery.<sup>31</sup>

Civil Engineer L.B. Hainline surveyed the approximately 162 acres, and the U.S Army acquired the property in one purchase in 1938. Development by the Construction Division, Office of the Quartermaster General began in smaller sections in the southern half of the northeast leg.<sup>32</sup> A plan for the dramatic cemetery entrance with a centralized lodge, chapel, and vista to the flagpole mound with its speaker's platform established the cemetery as a national shrine. The construction of the Junipero Serra Highway in 1939, connecting San Francisco with Sneath Lane in San Bruno, dictated the placement of the entrance and other important buildings and structures. Prior to the road construction, the location of the entrance was the subject of some disagreement. During the planning process, the Quartermaster Corps stressed, "the entrance and

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<sup>26</sup> Watson B. Miller, National Director, The American Legion, to Quartermaster General, War Department, Washington, DC, December 6, 1940, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>27</sup> Proceedings of a Board of Officers Convened at Headquarters Ninth Corps Area, January 11, 1938, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>28</sup> This building and with two barns were dismantled during the initial construction of the cemetery and its extant buildings.

<sup>29</sup> Proceedings, January 11, 1938; Col. Jas. H. Laubach, QMC, to Col. John T. Harris, QMC, January 24, 1938, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>30</sup> Rudolph E. Smyser, Col., QMC, to Col. John T. Harris, QMC, March 31, 1939, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>31</sup> John T. Spelman, "National Cemetery Data," July 1, 1971, HPC, NCA, Washington, DC.

<sup>32</sup> Aerial photograph. "Golden Gate National Cemetery (Entrance)," September 23, 1948. HPC, NCA, Washington, DC; Golden Gate National Cemetery, San Bruno, Calif., Plan of Main Entrance, September 12, 1939, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.

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the view from the road present a beautiful and dignified vista.”<sup>33</sup> The checkmark-shaped parcel composed primarily of northeast and northwest-reaching “legs” of land guided the cemetery’s layout. Located at the intersection of the two legs to the south are the flagpole mound, main entrance gates, and primary buildings. Just southwest of the flagpole mound is Section A, while Sections B through W and Section 2G compose the northeast leg. The northwest leg holds Sections X through Z, as well as Sections 2A through 2D. Located just behind the administration office/lodge are Sections 2F and 2H. The flagpole mound holds Section MA, as well as Sections CA through CF.

In 1939, planning for the new cemetery moved at a slow pace due to simultaneous projects assigned to the Quartermaster Corps, 9<sup>th</sup> Corps Area, taking place in Panama and Puerto Rico. To ease the burden on the Quartermaster Corps, the new national cemetery used both private contractor labor and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Complications with WPA funds, however, delayed the initial development of the property. The New Deal labor program, begun in 1935, primarily completed small-scale new construction, rehabilitation, and/or landscape improvement projects that could be completed in a year or less. Though originally promised \$200,000 without restrictions, in late 1939, the Quartermaster Corps supplied \$10,000 in matching funds in order to receive \$195,000 in WPA funding.<sup>34</sup> By June 1, 1940, work on the land began in Sections K and L, with grading and topsoil replacement.<sup>35</sup>

WPA workers, mainly funded by the state of California, completed several projects related to the creation of Golden Gate National Cemetery. Their labor graded the first four sections of the cemetery (I, J, K, and L), located in the northeast leg, without the use of heavy equipment. Heavy equipment needs came from the War Department (later renamed the Department of Defense in 1949) funds. In July 1940, the WPA also performed the grading and installation of header boards and red rock for the road system in the first sections. During this time, the WPA project changed to include the installation of a sprinkler system for the cemetery.<sup>36</sup>

By October 1940, the Quartermaster Corps moved forward to develop the first 63 acres of the cemetery located primarily in the northeast leg, which included Sections A through L.<sup>37</sup> The cemetery’s new superintendent, “Mr. Kearney” (likely Clayborne F. Kearney, who served as superintendent at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery from 1945-49) relocated to the cemetery and resided in the former Sneath family home.<sup>38</sup> This house, referred to as the “assistant

<sup>33</sup> John T. Harris, Col., QMC, to Rudolph E. Smyser, Col., QMC, November 14, 1939, Box 175, Folder “687 GGNC Vol. III 1939,” GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>34</sup> Harris to Smyser, November 14, 1939.

<sup>35</sup> F. D. Jones, Progress Report, Grading, Golden Gate National Cemetery-Calif. Office of Constructing Quartermaster, Fort Mason, Calif., June 1, 1940, Box 175, Folder “687 GGNC Vol. III 1939,” GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>36</sup> F.D. Jones, Maj., OMC, to Quartermaster General, Washington, DC, July 20, 1940, Box 175, Folder “687 GGNC Vol. III 1939,” GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>37</sup> Aerial photograph. “Golden Gate National Cemetery (Entrance),” September 23, 1948. HPC, NCA, Washington, DC.

<sup>38</sup> C.C. Reynolds, Col., QMC, to Rudolph E. Smyser, Col., QMC, October 30, 1940, Box 175, Folder “687 GGNC Vol. III 1939,” GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.

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superintendent's lodge" in the first years of the cemetery, was located near the southwestern edge of then-undeveloped Section P.<sup>39</sup> The Army demolished this building ca. 1957.

While some of the planning for cemetery buildings and structures began as early as 1939, the Quartermaster contracted out most of this work in 1941 and 1942. For example, plans for the monumental flagpole existed by December 18, 1939; however, no record of the \$91,000 in appropriations for the flagpole base exists until September 2, 1940.<sup>40</sup> F.W. Jones of the Construction Division, Office of the Quartermaster General completed design drawings for the flagpole circle and entrance. Contractors Monson Brothers and Barrett and Hilp finished the flagpole circle in 1941.<sup>41</sup>

As early as 1940, plans began for the main entrance gates and superintendent's lodge. Later blueprints suggest that, at the very earliest, the lodge was completed in 1941. Likely, construction on the chapel finished at the same time as the lodge, or shortly thereafter. Monson Brothers received contracts for both the lodge and main entrance gates. H.A. Thrush & Co completed blueprints for the lodge in 1942.<sup>42</sup>

Located along the perimeter of cemetery sections farthest away from the main entrance is chain-link fencing. According to construction records, the installation of most chain-link fencing occurred between 1941 and 1959, replacing the northwest-leg section in 1962. These records also state that the masonry posts and wrought-iron fencing were completed ca. 1955.<sup>43</sup> The masonry posts and wrought-iron fencing surround the perimeter of the cemetery, northwest from the entrance to Section A, and northeast from the entrance to Section P.

The presence of a ravine on the property where a roadway would be built led to planning the cemetery's only bridge in 1940.<sup>44</sup> On August 9, 1940, correspondence from the Quartermaster Corps mentions the use of WPA funds for construction of the bridge.<sup>45</sup> WPA manpower was not used for this project, however, and a contractor was selected in 1941. Built using Raymond gray

<sup>39</sup> Aerial photograph. Ca. 1945. HPC, NCA, Washington, DC.

<sup>40</sup> John T. Harris, Col., QMC, to Constructing Quartermaster, San Francisco and Vicinity, Fort Mason, California, December 18, 1939, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II; "F.Y. Appropriation 'Cemeterial Expenses,'" September 2, 1940, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>41</sup> Plan of Main Entrance, September 12, 1939; Veal to Quartermaster General, Washington, DC, October 31, 1941; J.H. Veal, Capt., QMC, to Quartermaster General, Washington, DC, December 9, 1941, Box 174, Folder 655 GGNC, 1941, GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>42</sup> Quartermaster General, to Hon. Lee E. Geyer, House of Representatives, June 24, 1940, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II; R. Newell Lusby, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., Quartermaster Reserve, to Constructing Quartermaster, San Francisco and Vicinity, Fort Mason, California, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II; H.A. Thrush & Co., "First Floor Plan, Superintendent's Office," Blueprint, March 25, 1942, Box 174, Folder 674 GGNC, 1939-42, GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>43</sup> Construction Records. Golden Gate National Cemetery, San Bruno, CA.

<sup>44</sup> H.B. Nurse, Maj., QMC, to Constructing Quartermaster, San Francisco and Vicinity, Fort Mason, California, June 10, 1940, Box 176, Folder 823 GGNC, California, GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>45</sup> O.E. Davis, Maj., QMC, to Constructing Quartermaster, San Francisco & Vicinity, Fort Mason, California, August 9, 1940, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, RG 92, NARA II.



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granite from the Raymond Quarry in Knowles, California, the bridge cost \$79,697. Contractor Carrico and Gautier started work on October 13, 1941, with a scheduled completion date of July 13, 1942. They finished single span structure carrying Nimitz Drive over Fork Drive twelve days ahead of schedule.<sup>46</sup>

While the dedication of Golden Gate National Cemetery occurred on July 4, 1941, the first three interments occurred earlier in Section L on June 2, 1941.<sup>47</sup>

### **Cemetery Evolution Over Time**

Throughout the 1950s, much of the interment space in Golden Gate National Cemetery remained available for burials.<sup>48</sup> By 1953, the design, layout, and landscaping construction wound down and the cemetery obtained its current appearance. The northwest leg of the property (Section X-Z, 2A-2E, drawn by Bryson of the Memorial Division, Office of the Quartermaster General, neared completion.<sup>49</sup> Construction continued by the way of two maintenance buildings located between sections P and Q. The earliest, completed in 1952, features a covered arcade. Workers completed the other on August 16, 1957.<sup>50</sup> By 1961, interments began in Section 2C of the northwest leg.<sup>51</sup>

By 1962, the cemetery filled at a rapid pace, faster than anticipated at the time of establishment. The high number of interments stemmed from the impact of World War II and the Korean War increasing the number of veterans, and from the continuing repatriation program returning remains for burial to the United States.<sup>52</sup> By the early 1960s, interments completely or partially occupied most sections at Golden Gate National Cemetery. Between 1962 and 1966, needs for additional burial space required changes to the original roadway. Two original roads removed at this time included the curving road in Section H and an angled road dividing Sections K and L.<sup>53</sup> The additional burial space created by these removals extended the period of use for the cemetery for only a few years, as it was full in 1966.<sup>54</sup>

Passage of the *National Cemetery Act of 1973* (Public Law 93-43), signed on June 18, 1973, provided for development of the National Cemetery System. The act transferred eighty-two of the eighty-four national cemeteries to the Veterans Administration (VA). The two exceptions were among the oldest and most recognized properties: Soldiers' Home and Arlington National

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<sup>46</sup> Carrico and Gautier to OQMG, October 20, 1941; Construction Contract Awarded, October 7, 1941.

<sup>47</sup> Lt. Col. Truman M. Martin, "Press Release No. 122," Headquarters 9th Corps Area, Presidio of San Francisco, California, June 2, 1941, Historical File, GGNC, San Bruno, CA.

<sup>48</sup> Aerial photograph. May 30, 1952. HPC, NCA, Washington, DC.

<sup>49</sup> "Key Map," October 22, 1953.

<sup>50</sup> Maintenance Ledgers for Service Buildings "A" and "B", Box 19, Folder 4, GGNC, DMA, NCHF, Records of the VA, RG 15, NARA I.

<sup>51</sup> Aerial photograph. July 18, 1961. HPC, NCA, Washington, DC.

<sup>52</sup> Maintenance Ledgers, various dates.

<sup>53</sup> Aerial photographs. January 8, 1962, and May 27, 1967. Historical File, GGNC, San Bruno, CA.

<sup>54</sup> Carroll Peeke, "Golden Gate National Cemetery to Completely Filled This Year: Where Are Veterans To Be Buried?" *The California Legionnaire*, January 1966.

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Cemeteries. The eighty-two cemeteries joined twenty-one that the VA already administered as part of VA medical centers. Also transferred from the Army were thirty-three soldiers' lots, government lots, and Confederate cemeteries dating to the Civil War.<sup>55</sup> During the following decades, Golden Gate National Cemetery and the VA itself evolved. In 1989, the VA gained cabinet-level status and was renamed the Department of Veterans Affairs (also known by the abbreviation VA); in 1998 the National Cemetery System became the National Cemetery Administration (NCA).

Over the years, organizations and groups donated several memorial plaques and objects to the cemetery. Donations erected during the 1970s include the Prisoners of War/Missing in Action Flagpole, as well as the Avenue of Flags. Installed into the hardened gravel surface along the speaker's platform between the late 1970s and 2003 are twelve small memorial plaques commemorating Veterans Service Organizations and memorializing special groups of veterans such as the Survivors of Pearl Harbor. A Blue Star Memorial marker was installed near the cemetery entrance ca. 1980.

The Army, and in turn VA, updated and renovated the interiors of the Mediterranean Revival-style chapel, office, and superintendent's lodge during the 1960s and 1970s. The 1966-1967 renovations included enclosing the lodge porch, adding interior acoustical tiles, and an electrical heater and vent in the kitchen. The next remodel under VA, 1976-77, refinished the lodge kitchen and bathrooms. In 2007, during a period of renovations to the maintenance facility located between Sections P and U, workers constructed a third building to serve as a garage for maintenance vehicles. In 2011, workers repainted the chapel.

In spite of the interior road changes, Golden Gate National Cemetery retains its integrity. The cemetery maintains the same approximately 162 acres as originally purchased by the federal government in 1938. The design changes varied only by adding more graves after removing two roads in the 1960s, which has not affected the feeling or workmanship of the designed landscape. The cemetery is less isolated than its original design, but the surrounding development has been gradual and began with the construction of Junipero Serra Highway in 1939, the same year of the cemetery's first burial.

### **Medal of Honor Recipients (15)**<sup>56</sup>

The Medal of Honor is the highest award that can be bestowed upon Armed Services personnel. The honor recognizes an act of valor performed in action against an enemy force. The

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<sup>55</sup> Dean W. Holt, *American Military Cemeteries: A Comprehensive Illustrated Guide to the Hollowed Grounds of the United States, Including Cemeteries Overseas* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 1992), 5, 409; Donald E. Johnson, *A Study of the National Cemetery System* (Washington, DC: Department of Veterans Affairs [VA], 1974), 15; VA, *Report on the National Cemetery System*, prepared in response to Public Law 99-576 (Sec. 412), Veterans Benefit Improvement and Health-Care Authorization Act of 1986 (February 1994).

<sup>56</sup> This section was compiled by information from George Lang, Raymond Luther Collins, and Gerard White, *Medal of Honor Recipients, 1863-1994: World War II to Somalia* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1995) and the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, "Full Archive," accessed June 1, 2010, [www.CMOHS.org](http://www.CMOHS.org).

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recipients' headstones installed or replaced since 1976 feature the Medal of Honor emblem in gold. Headstones prior to 1976 may list the medal in text only.

Edward A. Bennett, Major, U.S. Army. As a corporal during World War II, Bennett received the Medal of Honor for an impressive display of combat ability in Heckhuscheid, Germany, on February 1, 1945. He served in the Korean Conflict before leaving the U.S. Army. Bennett died on May 2, 1983, and is interred in Section 2B, Grave 1071-A.

Vito R. Bertoldo, Master Sergeant, U.S. Army. During World War II in Hatten, France, on January 9, 1945, Bertoldo displayed valiant courage manning a machine gun in defense of a severely outnumbered command post. He escaped death several times facing strong German forces. Bertoldo received the Medal of Honor on January 10, 1946. He is interred in Section C, Grave 52-A.

John Joseph Clausey, Lieutenant, U.S. Navy. Chief Gunner's Mate Clausey was aboard the USS *Bennington* during a deadly peacetime boiler explosion in the San Diego Harbor on June 21, 1905. For extraordinary heroism, Clausey received the Medal of Honor. He went on to rise to the rank of lieutenant. After his death on July 9, 1951, he was interred in Section C, Grave 121-B.

John O. Dahlgren, Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps. After immigrating to the United States from Sweden, Dahlgren displayed meritorious conduct from June 20-July 16, 1900, during the Boxer Rebellion in China. He died February 11, 1963 and is interred in Section Z, Grave 1950.

John Francis DeSwan, Private, Company H, 21<sup>st</sup> U.S. Infantry. During the Spanish-American War, DeSwan rescued wounded from the front lines under heavy fire at Santiago, Cuba, on July 1, 1898. He received the Medal of Honor on June 22, 1899. After his death on December 1, 1956, he was interred in Section R, Grave 195-A.

Mosheim Feaster, Private, Company E, 7<sup>th</sup> U.S. Cavalry. Feaster received the Medal of Honor on June 23, 1891, for gallant actions on December 29, 1890, at Wounded Knee Creek, South Dakota, during the Indian Campaigns. Feaster is interred in Section O, Grave 319.

Paul H. Foster, Sergeant, U.S. Marine Corps. As Artillery Liaison Operations Chief with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Marines, 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division, Foster was mortally wounded near Con Thien during the Vietnam Conflict. October 14, 1967, Foster protected his five companions when he threw himself upon a hand grenade. He is interred in Section V, Grave 4764.

Edward H. Gibson, Sergeant, Company M, 27<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry. While under heavy fire during the Philippine Insurrection on December 19, 1899, Gibson and another soldier swam an unfordable river to return with a canoe acquired from enemy forces. He received the Medal of Honor on April 5, 1911. After his death on April 25, 1942, Sergeant Gibson was interred in Section L, Grave 7791.

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Harold Gonsalves, Private First Class, U.S. Marine Corps. On April 15, 1945, while serving in Okinawa, Japan, during World War II, Gonsalves hurled himself at a grenade, saving two comrades. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor on June 19, 1946 and is interred in Section B, Grave 61.

Nelson M. Holderman, Captain, U.S. Army. Despite incurring battle wounds and great pain, Holderman carried two wounded men to safety under enemy fire and commanded a company of the Lost Battalion during World War I at Argonne, France, in October 1918. For his heroics, Holderman was awarded the Medal of Honor. After his death on September 3, 1953, he was interred in Section R, Grave 17.

William R. Huber, Lieutenant, U.S. Navy. As Machinist Mate aboard the USS *Bruce*, stationed at the Naval Shipyard, Norfolk, Virginia, Huber displayed selfless courage after a dangerous boiler accident on June 11, 1928. Entering the steam-filled fireroom, Huber was severely burned about the arms and neck and risked his own life to carry Charles H. Bryan to safety. A veteran of the Great War, Huber went on to serve in World War II. After his death on January 1, 1982, he was interred in Section 2B, Grave 4085.

Reinhardt J. Keppler, Boatswain's Mate First Class, U.S. Navy. Serving aboard the USS *San Francisco*, Keppler nobly served at the beginning of the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal. When a Japanese bomber crashed into the *San Francisco* on November 12, 1942, Keppler cared for the casualties. As the battle between his and enemy naval vessels spiked to dangerous levels during the night, Keppler continued to fight to save his ship and shipmates. He died November 13, 1942, from mortal wounds obtained in the battle, received the Medal of Honor posthumously, and is interred in Section C, Grave 379.

Hugh Patrick Mullin, Seaman, U.S. Navy. Mullin displayed valiant selflessness while aboard the USS *Texas* during the Philippine Insurrection on November 11, 1899. When shipmate Alfred Kosminski fell overboard, Mullin rescued him. His actions led to the Medal of Honor on January 8, 1900; he is interred in Section A-2, Grave 294.

Stuart S. Stryker, Private First Class, U.S. Army. Refusing to back down despite heavy fire, Stryker voluntarily led his company of the 513<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment comrades closer to enemy headquarters near Wesel, Germany, during World War II. On March 24, 1945, within twenty-five yards of the objective, Stryker was killed, but his leadership inspired the remainder of Company E to continue toward the enemy, leading to the capture of more than 200 hostile forces and rescue of three American prisoners. Stryker earned a posthumous Medal of Honor and is interred in Section B, Grave 719.

Robert H. Young, Private First Class, U.S. Army. After being seriously wounded in battle during the Korean Conflict on September 14, 1950, Young quickly returned for combat. On October 9, 1950, he engaged again in battle, where he received additional wounds for which he refused medical aid. Continuing to fight, Young killed five enemy soldiers before losing

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consciousness. He died on November 5, 1950, and was awarded the Medal of Honor on August 2, 1951. He is interred in Section O, Grave 8.

### **Other Notable Burials**

Edward L. Beach, Sr., Captain, U.S. Navy. Serving as a career naval officer, Beach participated in and/or commanded several battles from the Spanish-American War through World War I. Retiring in September 1921 after thirty-seven years in the military, Beach went on to author thirteen novels for young adults. His son published his father's autobiography, *From Annapolis to Scapa Flow: the Autobiography of Edward L. Beach, Sr.* The headquarters of the U.S. Naval Institute, Beach Hall, was named for Beach. After his death in 1943, he was interred in Section K, Grave 2960-A.

George Barnes Grigsby, First Lieutenant, U.S. Army. Serving during the Spanish-American War, Grigsby became a politician for the Alaska Territory. After moving to Nome, Alaska, in 1902 he worked as U.S. Attorney for the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Alaska Territory and was elected mayor of Nome in 1914. Grigsby served as Alaska Territory Attorney General, U.S. Congressman, and delegate to the Democratic National Convention. After his death in 1962, he was interred in Section X, Grave 1333.

Maxwell M. Hamilton, Private, U.S. Army. After serving as a U.S. Army private during World War I, Hamilton became a Foreign Service officer who served as Vice Consul in Canton in 1924 and as U.S. Consul in Shanghai in 1926. From 1945-47, he served as U.S. Minister to Finland. He died in 1957 and is interred in Section U, Grave 2413.

Percy W. Kilbride, Private, U.S. Army. After serving in World War I, Kilbride became a popular American character actor on Broadway and in film. Beginning in the theater at age 12, his career was interrupted by Army service. His best-known role was in the *Ma and Pa Kettle* series during the 1940s and 1950s. In 1964, Kilbride was killed when he was struck by a car while walking in Los Angeles, California. He is interred in Section 2B, Grave 3771-B.

Charles A. Lockwood, Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy. Legendary commander of Submarine Force Pacific Fleet during World War II, Lockwood received the Distinguished Service Medal, two gold stars, and the Legion of Merit. Lockwood served as Inspector General of the Navy until his retirement in June 1947. He is interred in Section C, Grave 5, alongside admirals Raymond A. Spruance, Richmond K. Turner, and Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz.

Chester W. Nimitz, Fleet Admiral, U.S. Navy. Highly celebrated Commander-in-Chief and eventual Fleet Admiral of the U.S. Pacific Fleet during World War II. During World War II, Nimitz was the Naval subject matter expert on submarines and was instrumental in the defeat of Japan at the Battle of Midway in June 1942. Nimitz went on to direct the limited offensive of 1942-1943 in the Solomons and the 1943-1945 Central Pacific counteroffensive. He was the United States signatory during the signing of the terms of surrender by the Japanese in Tokyo Bay aboard the battleship USS *Missouri* on September 2, 1945. Nimitz also served with

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distinction in World War I. His leadership and dedication to those who served with him and the American people earned Nimitz great worldwide respect. The aircraft carrier USS *Nimitz* was commissioned on May 3, 1975 in honor of Fleet Admiral Nimitz. Nimitz was interred with great solemnity and decorum on February 24, 1966 in Section C, Grave 1.

Leo Ryan, Seaman First Class, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Congressman. Ryan was posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 1983 for investigating rumors of abuses on constituents involved with the Peoples Temple at Port Kaituma. After Navy service, Ryan became a Democratic leader in California and eventually was elected a U.S. Representative. As part of an investigation into dealings of the Peoples Temple, a religious group led by Jim Jones, Ryan led a team of reporters and staffers to Jones' Guyana headquarters. An ambush orchestrated by the Peoples Temple at Port Kaituma airport outside of Jonestown on November 18, 1978, ended in the assassination of Ryan and four others. He is interred in Section C, Grave 15-A.

Oliver Sipple, Private First Class, U.S. Marine Corps. Sipple served during the Vietnam Conflict and suffered shrapnel wounds in December 1968. On September 22, 1975, Sipple was present among about 3,000 others outside San Francisco's St. Francis Hotel to see President Gerald Ford. When Ford stepped outside the hotel, Sipple saw that the woman standing next to him had a pistol aimed at the president. He lunged at Sara Jane Moore and saved the president's life. Surviving his wound from the assassination attempt, Sipple is interred in Section T, Grave 2268.

Raymond A. Spruance, Admiral, U.S. Navy. Commanding U.S. Naval forces during the most significant battles in the Pacific theater, the Battle of Midway, and the Battle of the Philippine Sea, Spruance became known for his ability to remain calm under pressure. Later serving as president of the Naval War College, he also served as ambassador to the Philippines. He is interred in Section C, Grave 3, alongside admirals Richmond K. Turner, Charles A. Lockwood, and Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz.

Richmond K. Turner, Admiral, U.S. Navy. Helping to lead American forces take control of the Pacific theater during World War II, Turner went on to serve as the U.S. Naval representative on the United Nations Military Staff Committee. Turner died in 1961 and is interred in Section C, Grave 7, alongside admirals Raymond A. Spruance, Charles A. Lockwood, and Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz.

Dan White, Sergeant, U.S. Army. White enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1965 and served in the Vietnam Conflict. After being discharged in 1972, he returned to his hometown of San Francisco to work as a police officer and firefighter. In 1977, White was elected to the city's Board of Supervisors. He resigned from that position on November 10, 1978, but changed his mind four days later and sought reappointment from San Francisco Mayor George Moscone. Moscone at first agreed to the reappointment but quickly rescinded the offer. White, arriving at San Francisco's City Hall on November 27, 1978, sought to plea with Moscone one last time. When Moscone denied the reappointment, White shot and killed the mayor, then walked to City Supervisor Harvey Milk's office and shot and killed Milk, as well. White was released from

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prison after serving just over five years, and committed suicide soon thereafter. He is interred in Section 2C, Grave 5064.<sup>57</sup>

### **Group Burials**

#### **Port Chicago Unknowns**

While loading Liberty ships bound for the World War II Pacific Theater at the Port Chicago Naval Magazine in Port Chicago, California, the explosion of a large munitions load killed 320 sailors and civilians on July 17, 1944. The unidentifiable bodies of twenty-four African-American sailors who perished during the tragedy are interred in Section P.

#### **Angel Island Reinterments**

Between 1863 and 1947, Angel Island in the San Francisco Bay served as an active U.S. Army post. During this time, a small cemetery on the island served as the burial ground for military and civilian personnel who lived and died on the island. This cemetery also served as the final resting place for prisoners and personnel from Alcatraz Island, which was too small and rocky to house its own burial ground. After World War II, the Army decommissioned Angel Island, and the 142 individuals buried at the post cemetery were reinterred at Golden Gate National Cemetery in Section E.

### **POW Burials**

After the collapse of the German *Afrika Korps* under the command of Fieldmarshal Erwin Rommel in 1943, Camps Beale and Cook in California and Camp Rupert in Idaho housed forty-four German and Italian prisoners of war. Originally buried at the cemeteries on each of these posts, these forty-four prisoners of war were reinterred at Golden Gate National Cemetery, Section E, after the closure of the three camps in 1947.

### **Criteria Consideration D – Cemeteries**

Golden Gate National Cemetery's significance lies in its status as one of the seven national cemeteries established in the Inter World War period between 1919 and 1939. Nationally significant under Criterion A for its association with the expansion of the National Cemetery System during the Inter-World War period, this cemetery is a physical shrine to the sacrifices of the U.S. military, and expands upon the burial and memorial mission established during the Civil War through the first national cemeteries. Golden Gate National Cemetery meets the requirements for Criteria Consideration D. This is supported by the Keeper of the National Register's 2011 decision that all national cemeteries are considered exceptionally significant and eligible for listing in the NRHP regardless of age, and that all buildings, structures, and objects

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<sup>57</sup> Public Law 105-116 enacted in 1997 created section 2411 of title 38 of the United States Code and bars individuals who commit capital crimes from burial in a national cemetery. However, in 1978, when White died, this was not yet law and VA had no authority to prohibit his burial in Golden Gate National Cemetery.

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located within the boundaries of national cemeteries are considered contributing elements to each national cemetery regardless of age.

**Conclusion**

Amid the bustling San Francisco suburb of San Bruno, California, Golden Gate National Cemetery maintains the designers' intended solemn sense of respect and honor throughout its approximately 162 acres. With only minor changes to the interior roads, the national cemetery retains its integrity of the original Inter-World War plans. As a steadfast reminder, Golden Gate National Cemetery preserves a national shrine for the defenders of the United States.



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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscapes Survey # CA-8

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: San Francisco Public Library, National Archives, Golden Gate National Cemetery

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

Golden Gate National Cemetery  
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County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 161.6

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.640409 | Longitude: -122.423761 |
| 2. Latitude: 37.636942 | Longitude: -122.421615 |
| 3. Latitude: 37.630757 | Longitude: -122.434662 |
| 4. Latitude: 37.637214 | Longitude: -122.439468 |
| 5. Latitude: 37.638302 | Longitude: -122.437451 |
| 6. Latitude: 37.634359 | Longitude: -122.433074 |

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |               |                 |                   |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 10 N | Easting: 549537 | Northing: 4165775 |
| 2. Zone: 10 N | Easting: 549863 | Northing: 4165026 |
| 3. Zone: 10 N | Easting: 550019 | Northing: 4165399 |
| 4. Zone: 10 N | Easting: 550951 | Northing: 4165847 |

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

To the west, Junipero Serra Freeway bounds L-shaped Golden Gate National Cemetery; Sneath Lane borders the cemetery to the south; and El Camino Real bounds the northeast. Along the northeast leg of the cemetery, the boundary continues to the rear property lines of residential units along Rockwood and Greenwood drives. Bounding the northwest leg along the northwest and northeast edges are Brentwood Park and properties set along Briarwood Drive, Dianne Court, and Alta Vista Drive.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The NRHP boundary for Golden Gate National Cemetery corresponds to the legal boundary of the cemetery. All acres of Golden Gate National Cemetery are currently in use for burial space or to hold cemetery support buildings and structures.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kristie L. Person/Historian  
organization: New South Associates, Inc.  
street & number: 6150 E Ponce de Leon Avenue  
city or town: Stone Mountain state: Georgia zip code: 30083  
e-mail: kperson@newsouthassoc.com  
telephone: 770-498-4155  
date: November 3, 2015

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

### Photographs

#### Photo Log

Name of Property: Golden Gate National Cemetery  
City or Vicinity: San Bruno  
County: San Mateo State: California  
Photographer: Kristie L. Person  
Date Photographed: December 11-15, 2008

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 64. View to southwest, From Section 2G
- 2 of 64. View to north, General View of Setting
- 3 of 64. View to southwest, Third Drive East and Plaza Drive North
- 4 of 64. View to southwest, From Third Drive East
- 5 of 64. View to south, From Section Q and Second Drive East
- 6 of 64. View to southeast, From Section 2B
- 7 of 64. View to southwest, From First Drive East and South Drive
- 8 of 64. View to northeast, From Mound
- 9 of 64. View to northwest, From Speaker's Platform
- 10 of 64. View to north, From Speaker's Platform
- 11 of 64. View to west, From Speaker's Platform
- 12 of 64. View to northeast, From Section G

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- 13 of 64. View to southeast, From North Loop Drive
- 14 of 64. View to northwest, From Postern Gate Entrance
- 15 of 64. View to north, Maintenance and Chain-link Juncture on Sneath Lane
- 16 of 64. View to northeast, Chain-link Fence Along Sneath Lane
- 17 of 64. View to northwest, From Flagpole Circle
- 18 of 64. View to west, From Section A
- 19 of 64. View to northeast, Setting
- 20 of 64. View to southeast, Entrance Gates, Administration Office/Lodge,  
Chapel/Restroom/Maintenance Facility
- 21 of 64. View to northwest, Setting
- 22 of 64. View to southwest, From Juncture of Sections P and L
- 23 of 64. View to southeast, Administration Office/Lodge Front Oblique
- 24 of 64. View to north, Administration Office/Lodge South Façade
- 25 of 64. View to southeast, Administration Office/Lodge North Façade Oblique
- 26 of 64. View to west, Administration Office/Lodge East Façade
- 27 of 64. View to southwest, Bridge Rail Detail
- 28 of 64. View to southeast, Bridge
- 29 of 64. View to north, Bridge
- 30 of 64. View to west, Chapel/Restroom/Maintenance Facility East Façade
- 31 of 64. View to south, Chapel/Restroom/Maintenance Facility North Façade
- 32 of 64. View to north, Chapel/Restroom/Maintenance Facility South Façade
- 33 of 64. View to southeast, Chapel/Restroom/Maintenance Facility Rear Oblique
- 34 of 64. View to south, Entrance from Mound
- 35 of 64. View to southeast, Entrance Gates
- 36 of 64. View to northeast, Entrance Gates
- 37 of 64. View to north, Entrance Gates
- 38 of 64. View to northwest, Entrance
- 39 of 64. View to northwest, Flagpole Circle
- 40 of 64. View to west, Speaker's Platform
- 41 of 64. View to northeast, From Flagpole Circle
- 42 of 64. View to northeast, Flagpole Base
- 43 of 64. View to east, from Flagpole Circle
- 44 of 64. View to north, Flagpole Circle
- 45 of 64. View to southeast, Mound from North Loop Drive at Section 2C
- 46 of 64. View to northeast, From Mound Drive
- 47 of 64. View to southeast, From Speaker's Platform
- 48 of 64. View to northwest, From Mound Drive
- 49 of 64. View to north, From Circle Drive
- 50 of 64. View to southwest, From Nimitz Drive and Circle Drive
- 51 of 64. View to south, Maintenance Facility
- 52 of 64. View to south, Lower Yard Maintenance Facility Building Oblique
- 53 of 64. View to east, Lower Yard Maintenance Facility Building Oblique
- 54 of 64. View to southwest, Northwest Maintenance Facility Building Oblique
- 55 of 64. View to east, Maintenance Facility Buildings Oblique



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- 56 of 64. View to east, Maintenance Facility Entrance and South Maintenance Facility Building Oblique
- 57 of 64. View to north, Northwest Maintenance Facility Building Oblique
- 58 of 64. View to northeast, South Maintenance Facility Building Oblique
- 59 of 64. View to north, Maintenance Facility and Postern Gate from Sneath Lane
- 60 of 64. View to northeast, Maintenance Facility
- 61 of 64. View to southeast, Postern Gate (closed)
- 62 of 64. View to northeast, Postern Gate (open)
- 63 of 64. View to southwest, Speaker's Platform Memorial Group
- 64 of 64. View to southeast, Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial Plaque

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 United StatesC.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, United States Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.