

**NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSCRIPTIONS ON GOVERNMENT-FURNISHED  
HEADSTONES AND MARKERS**

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** To clarify National Cemetery Administration (NCA) policy for inscriptions in languages other than English on Government-furnished headstones and markers.
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS:** This directive prescribes policy related to inscriptions using languages other than English on Government-furnished headstones and markers.
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Memorial Programs Service (402E), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, is responsible for the material contained in this directive. Information contained in this directive will be incorporated into the complete NCA Directive 3310, Government-furnished Headstones and Markers, when published.
4. **RELATED HANDBOOK:** Material contained in this directive will be incorporated into NCA Handbook 3310, Government-furnished Headstones and Markers, when published.
5. **RESCISSION:** Paragraph 2 (only) of Inscription Policy/Headstones and Markers, dated August 14, 1997, signed by the Director, National Cemetery System.

/s/  
Robin L. Higgins  
Under Secretary  
for Memorial Affairs

Distribution: RPC  
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**NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSCRIPTIONS ON GOVERNMENT-FURNISHED  
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**1. PURPOSE:** This directive states the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA's) National Cemetery Administration's (NCA's) policy concerning non-English language inscriptions on Government-furnished headstones and markers. This directive applies to Government-furnished headstones and markers to be placed in VA National Cemeteries, State Veterans' cemeteries, military and post cemeteries, and private cemeteries. The statutory authority for this directive is title 38, United States Code, sections 2306 and 2404.

**2. POLICY**

a. This directive sets forth NCA's policy concerning inscriptions in other than the English language.

b. Inscriptions on Government-furnished headstones or markers will be in characters of the Latin alphabet and/or integers. The given name of the decedents(s) must appear on the headstone or marker when known and the following standard inscription items must be in the English language: rank, branch of military service, war service, military decorations or awards, dates of birth and death, and for the purposes of memorial headstones or markers the words "In Memory Of."

c. Inscriptions in languages other than English, using the Latin alphabet, are permitted in the additional inscription area when space is available. The additional inscription area is located at the bottom of a headstone or marker, or as the last available line(s) of the whole inscription. If an additional inscription, such as a term of endearment, is requested in Spanish, French, German or other foreign languages based on the Latin alphabet, it will be permitted, provided the inscription does not contain – in either the language it is written in or in the English translation of that language – words that are not compatible with our mission to honor deceased veterans and/or that could be perceived as offensive or derogatory by a reasonable person. Offensive or derogatory language includes language that is obscene, sexual, abusive or threatening.

d. Certain diacritical (accent) marks are acceptable, and may be used on given names and other parts of the standard or additional items of inscription when warranted. Allowable accent marks include, but are not limited to (except in those instances when a monument maker cannot supply the accent mark): grave, acute, tilde, macron, dieresis, plus the characters of ampersand, parenthesis, colon, curved apostrophe, and hyphen.

e. When requesting an additional inscription in a language other than English, the applicant must provide the English translation at the time of application.