

**INSCRIPTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT FURNISHED HEADSTONES, MARKERS, AND  
NICHE COVERS**

**1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This National Cemetery Administration (NCA) directive establishes the policies and responsibilities for inscriptions on Government-furnished burial and memorial headstones, markers, and niche covers.

*Note: Cemetery directors will not replace existing headstones, markers, or niche covers for the sole purpose of complying with this directive. Cemetery directors will consult current replacement policy first, to determine whether the headstone should be replaced, and then apply this inscription policy.*

**2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS:** This directive contains inscription policy and responsibilities for inscribing mandatory, optional, and additional inscription items on headstones, markers, and niche covers for eligible decedents.

**3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** NCA, Field Programs and Cemetery Operations, 810 Vermont Ave NW, Washington, DC 20420 is responsible for the contents of this directive. Direct questions to the Executive Director of Field Programs at [mps.headstones@va.gov](mailto:mps.headstones@va.gov).

**4. RELATED PUBLICATIONS:**

a. NCA Handbook 3305 - Types and Styles of Government-Furnished Headstones/Markers/Medallions (November 10, 2011)

b. NCA Handbook 3320/1- Receipt and Inspection of Government-Furnished Headstones/Markers at VA National Cemeteries (August 6, 2012)

c. NCA Handbook 3315, NCA Procedures for Ordering Government-Furnished Headstones/Markers (August 14, 2009)

**5. RESCISSIONS:**

a. M40-3 – Department of Memorial Affairs Headstone and Marker Manual, Chapter 5, Chapter 6, Chapter 7, and Chapter 8 (December 1, 1982)

b. M40-3, Change 1 – Department of Memorial Affairs Headstones and Marker Manual (December 18, 1985)

c. NCA Notice 2016-01 – Inscription/Replacement of Headstones and Markers in Private or Local Government Cemeteries (January 15, 2016), paragraph 3.a.

d. NCA Notice 2011-05 – Title and Disposition (May 19, 2011), paragraph 2.c.

- e. NCA Directive 3310.2 – Non-English Language Inscriptions on Government-Furnished Headstones and Markers (August 28, 2002)
- f. Policy Letter – Additional Inscriptions on Government-furnished Headstones and Markers (July 16, 2008)
- g. Policy Letter – Reverse Inscription (R2) Program (April 27, 2005)
- h. Policy Letter – Guidance Paper War Service Items (April 1, 2003)
- i. Policy Letter – Inscription Policy/Headstones and Markers-New Branch of Service Designation (July 11, 2001)
- j. Policy Letter – Headstone and Marker Inscriptions-US Army Aviation Branches (November 26, 1999)
- k. Policy Letter – Inscription Policy Change for Branch of Service (August 31, 1999)
- l. Policy Letter – Approved Change to World War II Branch Inscription Designation (January 12, 1998)
- m. Policy Letter – Change in Branch of Service Inscription Designation (November 28, 1997)
- n. Policy Letter – Inscriptional Policy/Headstones and Markers (August 14, 1997)
- o. Policy Letter – New Policy for Optional Inscriptions (February 17, 1997)
- p. Policy Letter – Revision of the Vietnam War Period for Veterans Benefits (November 19, 1996)
- q. Policy Letter – Revised Headstone-Marker Inscription Policy (October 20, 1994)
- r. Policy Letter – Proposed Change of Highest Grade Inscription Policy (September 22, 1994)
- s. Policy Letter – Nicknames and Name Diminutives – A Clarification (June 1, 1993)
- t. Policy Letter – OMP Navy/Coast Guard Inscription Policy (January 29, 1993)
- u. Policy Letter – Valor Awards (May 1, 1988)

**6. RECERTIFICATION:** This publication is scheduled for recertification in May 2025.

/s/ Ronald E. Walters  
Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs

Distribution: Electronic

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## SECTION I GENERAL

### 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

a. This directive mandates policies and procedures for the inscription of Government-furnished headstones, markers, and niche covers in NCA-administered cemeteries, other Federally-administered cemeteries, state and tribal Veterans' cemeteries, other government and municipality-administered cemeteries, and private cemeteries and burial grounds.

b. This directive will use the term "Veterans" to include "Veterans, active duty Servicemembers, and retired Reservists and National Guard members."

c. This directive will use the term "applicant" as defined in 38 CFR 38.600.

d. This directive will use the term "dependent" to include "spouse, surviving spouse, dependent child, adult dependent child, and any other non-Veteran relative of the Veteran buried in a national cemetery."

e. This inscription directive describes the format of mandatory, optional, and additional inscription items in detail and specifies the inscription order of precedence for all marker types.

f. The statutory authorities for the policies contained in this document are found in section 2306 of title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.), Headstones, Markers, and Burial Receptacles and 38 U.S.C. § 2404, Administration. Implementing regulations are published in Part 38 of title 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), §§ 38.630, Headstones and Markers; 38.631, Graves marked with a private headstone or marker; 38.632, Headstone or marker application process; 38.633, *Group memorial monuments* of title 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

### 2. INSCRIPTION POLICY

a. Inscriptions on Government-furnished markers will be compatible with NCA's mission to honor deceased Veterans and to commemorate their military service, and to identify all eligible decedents.

b. Inscriptions on Government-furnished markers:

(1) Provide identity and biographical information, including military service information for the decedent(s);

(2) Indicate whether the marker is a burial marker for a decedent whose remains are buried or a memorial marker for a decedent whose remains are unavailable for burial; and

(3) Identify the Veteran on whose service the decedent's eligibility is based when the Veteran's information is not inscribed on the same marker as the decedent.

c. NCA will not inscribe the decedent's information on a Veteran's or dependent's burial or memorial marker when NCA determines the decedent is or would be barred from burial or memorialization under 38 U.S.C. 2411.

d. NCA will inscribe information using uppercase letters in the English alphabet (A – Z) and/or numbers (0 – 9). NCA will inscribe uppercase letters in a smaller size on the name line, when appropriate (e.g., LEROY, MCDOWELL, etc.) and when a smaller letter size is available per contract drawings. NCA will ensure the abbreviated suffix is inscribed with a smaller sized uppercase letter, when appropriate (i.e., JR or SR). NCA will not inscribe "raised" smaller size uppercase letters (i.e., superscript characters) on a marker except when replacing in-kind a historic marker that has such characters.

e. NCA will show all inscription items in the order of precedence. The order of precedence for each marker type is displayed from top to bottom.

f. NCA will replicate the inscription used on the original marker when replacing it, unless the family member or personal representative who made the inscription decisions for the original marker requests a change consistent with NCA policy; or NCA determines the original inscription did not comply with policy; or NCA determines the original inscription was inaccurate and/or additional service information is available and the new inscription complies with policy. **Note:** NCA History Program will review all requests to replace headstones that are 50 or more years old to assist in choosing the correct replacement type and inscription.

g. To protect the physical integrity of the marker, as well as the inscription content, format, and structure, NCA does not authorize the addition of inscriptions or emblems by any other entity after NCA inscribes the marker, unless an explicit written agreement is entered into with NCA. NCA will not, regardless of past practice, reserve space for future inscriptions, graphics, or emblems, to be added by private monument companies or local inscribers.

h. NCA will not inscribe graphics, emblems, or pictures as an additional inscription item.

i. For NCA-administered cemeteries, NCA will not apply lithichrome to marble markers:

(1) in new cemeteries;

(2) in new burial sections or new columbaria in all cemeteries (unless the absence of lithichrome will detract from achieving consistency of appearance); and

(3) when the marker is placed near other markers where lithichrome was not used or the lithichrome on the surrounding marble markers has faded.

j. For other Federally-administered cemeteries and state and tribal Veterans' cemeteries, cemetery staff will order markers with or without lithichrome in accordance with the cemetery's policies and procedures.

k. NCA will apply lithichrome to all marble and granite markers ordered for private cemeteries.

l. NCA will only inscribe an Emblem of Belief (EOB) on markers when the applicant requesting the EOB is a family member or personal representative as defined in 38 CFR § 38.600.

### 3. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Executive Director of Field Programs** is responsible for:

(1) Establishing inscription policies and specifications for Government markers for NCA-administered cemeteries, other Federally-administered cemeteries, state and tribal Veterans' cemeteries, other government and municipality-administered cemeteries, and private cemeteries and burial grounds,

(2) Making final decisions on inscriptions when there are policy and procedural questions or an applicant makes a request for an exception to policy, regardless of the location of the marker, and

(3) Tracking and maintaining a list of approved and disapproved inscription exceptions.

b. **Executive Director of Cemetery Operations** is responsible for making recommendations to the Executive Director for Field Programs regarding inscriptions in VA national cemetery when there are policy and procedural questions from NCA cemeteries or when an applicant or cemetery director makes a request for an exception to policy.

c. **Director of Memorial Products Service (MPS)** is responsible for:

(1) Overseeing inscriptions on headstones, markers, and niche covers;

(2) Ensuring inscription suppliers adhere to NCA's inscription policy;

(3) Communicating inscription policy and procedures to all users;

(4) Maintaining lists of Optional Inscription Items; and

(5) Making a recommendation to the Executive Director of Field Programs when an applicant or cemetery director makes a request for an exception to policy.

d. **MPS Processing Site Supervisors** are responsible for:

(1) Applying NCA inscription policy when ordering headstones and markers;

(2) Training employees to properly enter inscription information into NCA's marker ordering system prior to ordering markers;

(3) Ensuring additional inscription items are appropriate and for verifying non-English additional inscription items;

(4) Providing timely, thorough, and accurate information on inscription options to applicants, upon request; and

(5) Making a recommendation to the Executive Director of Field Programs through the Director of MPS when an applicant makes a request for an exception to policy.

e. **District Executive Directors** are responsible for:

(1) Making a recommendation to the Executive Director of Cemetery Operations when an applicant or NCA cemetery director makes a request for an exception to policy, and

(2) Advising Cemetery Directors in determining when to order headstones, markers, and niche covers with or without lithichrome as defined in Section I, paragraph 2.i.

f. **NCA Cemetery Directors** are responsible for:

(1) Applying NCA inscription policies and procedures when ordering headstones, markers, and niche covers or directing a local inscriber (regardless of whether that inscriber is on-site or off-site);

(2) Providing timely, thorough, and accurate information on inscription options to family members, personal representatives, and other applicants;

(3) Inspecting inscriptions for policy compliance upon receipt of the headstone, marker, or niche cover at the cemetery, and entering appropriate data into NCA's marker ordering system;

(4) Making recommendations to the Executive Director of Cemetery Operations through the District Executive Director when an applicant makes a request for an exception to policy;

(5) Submitting requests for inscription of mandatory and optional inscription items (highest rank attained, war service, awards, special designations, and month and day of birth and death) supported by valid documentation when no family member or personal representative (as defined in Section II of this directive) is available. NCA cemetery directors will not request additional inscription items or an EOB when no family member or personal representative (as defined in Section II of this directive) is available;

(6) Training employees to properly enter inscription information into NCA's marker ordering system prior to ordering headstones, markers, and niche covers and procedures for reviewing inscriptions upon receipt of headstones, markers, niche covers

(7) Ensuring requested additional inscription items are appropriate and verifying non-English additional inscription items prior to ordering the headstones, marker, or niche cover;

(8) Confirming the accuracy of an inscription order with the applicant prior to ordering a headstone, marker, or niche cover when possible;



- (9) Maintaining a file copy (either hardcopy or electronic) of the inscription order;
- (10) Reviewing all headstone, marker, and niche cover inscription orders before releasing the order in BOSS; and
- (11) Checking inscriptions for accuracy prior to setting the headstone, marker, or niche cover at the gravesite.

g. **Veterans Cemetery Grants Program Director** is responsible for directing inscription related questions or concerns of state and tribal Veterans' cemeteries to the Executive Director of Field Programs and/or Director of MPS.

#### 4. REQUESTING INSCRIPTIONS

a. **VA national cemeteries and state and tribal Veterans' cemeteries that use the NCA electronic ordering system.** The Cemetery Director and staff will confirm inscription requests with the applicant, explaining which items are mandatory, which are optional, and whether there is space for additional inscription items, prior to ordering a headstone, marker, or niche cover using the NCA electronic ordering system.

b. **State and tribal Veterans' cemeteries, Department of the Interior (National Park Service) national cemeteries, American Battle Monument Commission cemeteries, and military/post cemeteries that submit VA Form 40-1330, *Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker*.** The Cemetery Director or designee will submit a VA Form 40-1330, *Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker*, following the instructions on the form and completing the blocks for mandatory inscription items and desired optional and additional inscription items.

c. **Arlington National Cemetery.** Arlington National Cemetery staff will order headstones, markers, and niche covers for Army National Military Cemeteries using Arlington's electronic ordering system in accordance with cemetery policies and procedures and agreements made with NCA.

d. **Private and locally administered cemeteries and burial grounds.** The applicant must request a headstone or marker inscription by submitting a VA Form 40-1330, *Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker*, following the instructions on the form and completing the blocks for mandatory inscription items and desired optional and additional inscription items. NCA will inscribe additional information referring to the Veteran's spouse in the following format: "HUSBAND OF," "WIFE OF," or "SPOUSE OF [name of non-Veteran spouse]." Requests for inscriptions concerning any other relationship will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Director, Memorial Products Service.

## SECTION II INSCRIPTIONS FOR VETERANS

### (For inscription information about dependents, see Section IV)

**1. MANDATORY INSCRIPTION ITEMS** - Mandatory inscription items are the decedent's legal name, branch of service, and year of birth and year of death (if known). The inscription IN MEMORY OF is mandatory on all memorial headstones, markers, and niche covers as required under 38 CFR 38.630(c).

a. **Legal Name of Veteran:** NCA will inscribe the Veteran's legal or official name (as shown on a Federal or state issued document such as a driver's license, state ID card, passport, birth certificate, discharge document, voter ID card, etc.). **Note:** NCA will not accept a death certificate as an acceptable form for the Veteran's legal name. At a minimum, NCA will inscribe Veteran's first initial or middle initial and last name, if known. NCA will omit the Veteran's first name or middle name when requested by the applicant.

(1) NCA will inscribe a diminutive of the Veteran's first and/or middle name when requested by the applicant (e.g., JOE in lieu of JOSEPH, BOB in lieu of ROBERT, BETH in lieu of ELIZABETH, etc.). NCA will not inscribe the diminutive in addition to the full legal name (e.g., ROBERT BOB ALLEN SMITH or ROBERT BOB A SMITH).

(2) NCA will inscribe a suffix (e.g., JR, SR, II, III, etc.) following the last name when requested by the applicant.

(3) NCA will not inscribe nicknames or professional and military titles on the name line (e.g., SLICK, DOCTOR, CHAPLAIN, etc.).

b. **Branch of Service:** NCA will inscribe the Veteran's branch of service. This item identifies the Veteran as a former member of the Armed Forces or Uniformed Services and specifies the service branch in which the Veteran served during enlistment and/or commission. NCA will inscribe multiple branches of service when requested by the applicant. NCA will not inscribe the component designations "Reserve" or "National Guard" with the branch of service inscription (e.g., U.S. Army Reserve will be inscribed as US ARMY or USA). NCA's authorized full and abbreviated *Branches of Service and Designations* are located at: <http://www.cem.va.gov/hmm/abbreviations.asp>.

c. **Years of Birth and Death:** NCA will inscribe the Veteran's 4-digit year of birth and 4-digit year of death.

d. **Section and Grave Number:** The section and grave number is mandatory on upright headstones and flat markers for NCA-administered cemeteries (but is not inscribed on niche covers, memorial wall markers, or bronze niche markers). NCA will inscribe the section and grave number on upright headstones, flat markers, and bronze niche markers for other Federally-administered cemeteries, and state and tribal Veterans' cemeteries when requested. NCA will not inscribe the section and grave number on any markers for other government and municipality-administered cemeteries, and private cemeteries and burial grounds.

**2. OPTIONAL INSCRIPTION ITEMS** - Optional inscription items are the month and day of birth and month and day of death, highest rank attained, war service, awards, special designations, and an emblem of belief. All optional inscription items are inscribed when requested by the applicant except for the emblem of belief, which must be specifically requested by a family member or personal representative as defined in 38 CFR 38.600.

a. **Month and Day of Birth/Month and Day of Death:** NCA will inscribe full dates using the first three letters of the month, the 1- or 2-digit day, and 4-digit year, with no comma between the day and year (e.g., March 9, 2004 is inscribed as MAR 9 2004).

b. **Highest Rank Attained:** NCA will inscribe the Veteran's highest rank or rating, even if the rank or rating was attained in the Reserves or National Guard, was a temporary rank or rating, or was not the Veteran's rank or rating at the time of discharge. NCA will inscribe the rank or rating using the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) approved abbreviation for the period in which the rank or rating was attained. When the applicant requests multiple branches of service, the rank or rating will correspond to each branch of service. NCA's authorized full and abbreviated *Ranks* are located at: <http://www.cem.va.gov/hmm/abbreviations.asp>.

c. **War Service Inscription Items:** NCA will inscribe information to identify the Veteran's war service. *War Service* items and all NCA-approved war service abbreviations are located at: <http://www.cem.va.gov/hmm/abbreviations.asp>.

(1) Periods of war: NCA will inscribe the requested war service inscription items, directly below the rank and branch of service, for any Veteran who served on active duty for a minimum of one day during a period of war, as defined in title 38 CFR § 3.2, *Periods of war*, whether or not the Veteran served in the theater of operations. Reservists and National Guard members with *no active duty other than for training* do not qualify for any war service, even if their active duty training was during a period of war.

(2) Country names: NCA will inscribe the requested country names as the war service inscription items, directly below the rank and branch of service, for any Veteran who participated in a theater of operations or any Servicemember who was killed in action, as listed on the discharge document (DD Form 214 or equivalent) or *Report of Casualty* (DD Form 1300).

(3) Military Operation(s): NCA does not consider names of military operations as war service inscription items and will therefore not inscribe the name of a military operation (e.g., OPERATION DESERT STORM) as a war service item directly below the rank and branch of service. Upon request, NCA will inscribe military operations in the additional inscription items area of the headstone, marker, or niche cover.

d. **Awards and Special Designations:** NCA will inscribe military awards and special designations listed on the discharge document (DD Form 214 or equivalent), *Report of Casualty* (DD Form 1300), or when awarded/designated posthumously with

documentation from DoD. Examples of authorized full and abbreviated awards and special designations are located at: <http://www.cem.va.gov/hmm/abbreviations.asp>.

(1) NCA will inscribe PURPLE HEART for Servicemembers killed in action even when the award is not documented at the time of the request.

(2) Subsequent Awards:

(a) NCA will show subsequent awards with oak leaf clusters for the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force. NCA will inscribe OLC to signify one (1) bronze oak leaf cluster. One (1) silver oak leaf cluster equals five (5) bronze oak leaf clusters and will be inscribed as 5 OLC.

(b) NCA will show subsequent awards with gold stars for the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Coast Guard. NCA will inscribe GS to signify one (1) gold star. One (1) silver star equals five (5) gold stars and will be inscribed as 5 GS.

(c) NCA will inscribe an ampersand (&) between the award and OLC or GS.

(d) NCA will inscribe one (1) oak leaf cluster or one (1) gold star as OLC or GS, respectively, unless another award is shown with a numeral in front of OLC or GS to signify multiple oak leaf clusters or gold stars. When this is the case, NCA will inscribe the numeral 1 in front of OLC or GS for consistency (e.g., PH & 1 OLC AM & 8 OLC; BSM & 2 GS PH & 3 GS AM & 1 GS; etc.).

(3) Awards with "V" Device for Valor:

(a) NCA will inscribe W/ V to signify awards with "V" device for valor (e.g., BRONZE STAR MEDAL W/ V; BSM W/ V; DFC W/ V; ARCOM W/ V, etc.).

(b) NCA will inscribe W/ V before & OLC or & GS when an award with "V" device has subsequent awards (e.g., BSM W/ V & 3 OLC, which means "Bronze Star Medal, four awards, of which at least one was for valor").

(4) NCA will inscribe an ampersand (&), the Strike/Flight Numeral, and S/F after AIR MEDAL or its abbreviation AM to signify the number of Strike/Flight Awards (i.e., the Strike/Flight Numeral) awarded with the Air Medal (e.g., AIR MEDAL & 38 S/F; AM & 50 S/F).

(5) NCA will inscribe special designations such as KILLED IN ACTION or KIA, MISSING IN ACTION or MIA, PRISONER OF WAR or POW, and EX-PRISONER OF WAR or EX-POW when requested by the applicant. NCA will inscribe KIA, MIA, POW, or EX-POW as follows:

(a) Upright headstone – below the date of death and after any awards.

(b) Flat marker – below the dates of birth and death and after any awards.

(c) Niche cover – directly above the years of birth and death and after any awards.

(d) Alternate location – on the war service line after an authorized period of war or country name (e.g., IRAQ KIA).

e. **Emblem of Belief (EOB):** An emblem of belief (EOB) is a symbol that represents the decedent's religious affiliation or sincerely held religious belief system, or a sincerely held belief system that was functionally equivalent to a religious belief system in the life of the decedent. An EOB does not include social, cultural, ethnic, civic, fraternal, trade, commercial, political, professional, or military emblems. NCA will only inscribe approved EOBs. NCA's list of approved EOBs is located on the NCA website at <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/emblems.asp>. To request an EOB not currently available, an applicant must follow the procedures in 38 CFR § 38.632, *Headstone or Marker Application Process*. NCA will only inscribe an emblem of belief on markers when the applicant is a family member or personal representative as defined in 38 CFR § 38.600. NCA will only provide EOB inscriptions for spouses and dependents for headstones, markers, and niche covers placed in NCA-administered cemeteries, other Federally-administered cemeteries, and state and tribal Veterans' cemeteries. NCA will inscribe an EOB at the top of the headstone, marker, or niche cover, centered, and below any section and grave number, unless otherwise specified below.

(1) On an upright headstone (except for sunken shield headstones, which have no EOB), NCA will:

(a) Inscribe a maximum of one EOB on the front of an upright headstone;

(b) Inscribe a maximum of one EOB (either the same or different) on the back of an upright headstone provided there is at least one decedent on the back;

(2) On a flat bronze marker or bronze niche marker, NCA will:

(a) Inscribe a maximum of one EOB per decedent between the dates of birth and death of the decedent.

(b) Inscribe a second EOB (either the same or different) between the dates of birth and death of a second decedent, if space permits.

(3) On a flat marble or granite marker, niche cover, or memorial wall marker, NCA will:

(a) Inscribe one EOB when it applies to all decedents inscribed on the marker; or

(b) Inscribe one EOB for the first decedent in the upper left corner, and inscribe a second EOB for a second decedent, which must be different, in the upper right corner.

**3. ADDITIONAL INSCRIPTION ITEMS (AI)** – Additional inscription items are information about the decedent in English or non-English text consisting only of letters in the English alphabet (A – Z), numbers (0 – 9), and/or approved diacritical (accent) and punctuation marks. These items may include, but are not limited to, terms of endearment, nicknames, military or civilian credentials or accomplishments,

organizational affiliations, etc. NCA will inscribe additional inscription items when requested by an applicant and when space is available. Additional inscription items must not adversely affect the dignity and solemnity of the cemetery setting in which military service is honored. NCA prohibits undignified language on Government-furnished headstones, markers, and niche covers. Undignified language includes, but is not limited to, words or phrases that are coarse, abusive, pandering, shocking, titillating, or in poor humor; references to controlled substances or alcohol; and language that may be construed as partisan as defined in 38 CFR 1.218(a)(14)(ii).

a. NCA will inscribe additional inscription item(s) on the side of the headstone bearing the name of the decedent.

b. NCA will inscribe non-English text after verifying the translation through one of the many resources available on the Internet.

c. For local government and municipality-administered cemeteries, private cemeteries, and private burial grounds, NCA will inscribe additional information referring to the Veteran's spouse in the following format: "HUSBAND OF," "WIFE OF," or "SPOUSE OF [name of non-Veteran spouse]." Requests for inscriptions concerning any other relationship will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Director, Memorial Products Service.

(1) **Acceptable additional inscriptions items** include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) Terms of endearment (e.g., LOVING FATHER, DEEPLY MISSED, LOVED BY ALL, REST IN PEACE, DEAREST MICKEY, BELOVED SPOUSE, etc.);

(b) Nicknames in expressions (e.g., OUR BELOVED POPPY, LOVINGLY CALLED BUD, ALSO KNOWN AS SPIKE, etc.);

(c) Names of family members showing their relationship to the decedent (e.g., HUSBAND OF, WIFE OF, SPOUSE OF [non-Veteran's name]);

(d) Affiliation with military organizations (e.g., AIR FORCE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION, MILITARY OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, etc.);

(e) Military operations (e.g., OPERATION DESERT STORM, OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, ENDURING FREEDOM, NOBLE EAGLE, etc.);

(f) Special military unit designations (e.g., WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS, AIR CORPS, ARMY NURSE CORPS, SEABEES, NAVY SEAL, etc.); and/or

(g) Professional titles (e.g., DOCTOR OF MEDICINE, CHAPLIN, REVEREND, JURIS DOCTOR, etc.).

(2) **Unacceptable additional inscriptions items** include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Statements in poor humor (e.g., BYE-BYE BOO-HOO, I TOLD YOU I WAS SICK, etc.);
- (b) References to alcohol or drugs (e.g., THIS BUD'S FOR YOU, 420, etc.);
- (c) Text message-style inscriptions (e.g., LOL, 2GETHER 4EVER, TTYL, etc.);
- (d) Shortened or misspelled words (e.g., I LUV U, THRU, BCUZ, etc.);
- (e) Non-standard abbreviations or initialisms (e.g., BFFL for BEST FRIENDS FOR LIFE, IWALY for I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU, NAM for VIETNAM, GR GRANDFATHER for GREAT-GRANDFATHER, etc.);
- (f) Non-standard contractions (e.g., GONE FISHIN', WANNA, GONNA, Y'ALL, I'MMA, etc.); and/or
- (g) Emoticons (e.g., :- ) :- ( :( etc.).

**4. DIACRITICAL AND PUNCTUATION MARKS:** NCA will inscribe approved diacritical (accent) marks and punctuation marks. See Appendix – *Authorized Diacritical and Punctuation Marks*.

**5. ORDER OF PRECEDENCE:** Information will be inscribed in the following order:

a. UPRIGHT MARBLE OR GRANITE HEADSTONE

(1) Front:

- (a) Emblem of belief
- (b) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial headstone only*)
- (c) Name of Veteran
- (d) Military rank or rating
- (e) Military branch of service
- (f) War service
- (g) Date of birth
- (h) Date of death
- (i) Awards
- (j) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW
- (k) Additional inscription items

(2) Back: Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only, when required*).

b. FLAT BRONZE MARKER

(1) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

(2) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)

(3) Name of Veteran

(4) Military rank or rating

(5) Military branch of service

(6) War service

(7) Dates of birth and death

(8) Emblem of belief

(9) Awards

(10) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW

(11) Additional inscription items

c. OLD STYLE FLAT BRONZE MARKER

(1) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

(2) Emblem of belief

(3) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)

(4) Name of Veteran

(5) State (*where Veteran resided at the time entered on active duty*)

(6) Military rank or rating

(7) Military branch of service or unit

(8) War service

(9) Dates of birth and death

(10) Awards

(11) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW



(12) Additional inscription items

d. FLAT MARBLE OR GRANITE MARKER

(1) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

(2) Emblem of belief

(3) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)

(4) Name of Veteran

(5) Military rank or rating

(6) Military branch of service

(7) War service

(8) Dates of birth and death

(9) Awards

(10) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW

(11) Additional inscription items

e. SMALL FLAT GRANITE MARKER

(1) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

(2) Emblem of belief

(3) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)

(4) Name of Veteran

(5) Military rank or rating

(6) Military branch of service

(7) War service

(8) Dates of birth and death

(9) Awards

(10) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW

(11) Additional inscription items

f. MARBLE OR GRANITE NICHE COVER

(1) Emblem of belief

(2) Surname

(3) First name (or first initial and/or middle name or middle initial) of Veteran

(4) Military rank or rating

(5) Abbreviated military branch of service

(6) War service

(7) Awards

(8) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW

(9) Years of birth and death

(10) Additional inscription items

g. BRONZE NICHE MARKER

(1) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)

(2) Name of Veteran

(3) Military rank or rating

(4) Military branch of service

(5) War service

(6) Dates of birth and death

(7) Emblem of belief

(8) Awards

(9) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW

(10) Additional inscription items

(11) Section and grave number (*some national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

h. MARBLE OR GRANITE MEMORIAL WALL MARKER

- (1) Emblem of belief
- (2) IN MEMORY OF
- (3) Surname
- (4) First name (or first initial and/or middle name or middle initial) of Veteran
- (5) Military rank or rating
- (6) Military branch of service
- (7) War service
- (8) Dates of birth and death
- (9) Awards
- (10) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW
- (11) Additional inscription items

### SECTION III INSCRIPTIONS FOR SPECIAL MARKER TYPES

Special headstone and marker types consist of the following: Civil War Union/Spanish American War, Civil War Confederate, Medal of Honor, and Group Memorial Monument. Refer to NCA Handbook 3305, *Types and Styles of Government-Furnished Headstones/Markers/Medallions* for pictures, dimensions, and weights of headstones, markers, and niche covers.

**1. CIVIL WAR UNION/SPANISH AMERICAN WAR** markers are upright marble headstones (and granite headstones for private cemeteries) with raised lettering inside a sunken shield.

a. NCA will inscribe the decedent's name. At a minimum, NCA will inscribe decedent's first initial or middle initial and last name, if known. NCA will omit the decedent's first name or middle name when requested by the applicant.

b. NCA will inscribe the unit or name of commissioned ship, if known.

c. NCA will inscribe the decedent's dates of birth and date of death (if known). NCA will not inscribe the date of birth if the date of death is unknown.

d. NCA will inscribe the section and grave number for headstones placed in national cemeteries, when required.

e. NCA will inscribe SP-AM WAR for Spanish American War decedents.

f. NCA will not inscribe an emblem of belief, the rank of Private (PVT) or Ordinary Seaman (OS), an award (except for the Medal of Honor), or an additional inscription item.

g. NCA will inscribe an EOB, the rank PVT or OS, and for Civil War Union markers, the war service CIVIL WAR, when NCA orders a type other than a sunken shield headstone.

h. NCA will inscribe the war service SPANISH AMERICAN WAR when NCA orders a flat marker, bronze niche marker, or memorial wall marker for a Spanish American War decedent.

i. Order of precedence. Information will be inscribed in the following order:

(1) Front:

(a) Name of Veteran

(b) Military rank or rating

(c) Military branch of service/unit or name of commissioned ship

(d) War service (*for Spanish American War only*)

(e) Date of birth (if known)

(f) Date of death

(2) Back:

(a) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only, when required*)

(b) Spouse's first name and middle initial (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

(c) Relationship line (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

(d) Date of birth (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

(e) Date of death (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

**2. CIVIL WAR CONFEDERATE** markers are upright marble or granite headstones with a pointed top and the Southern Cross of Honor emblem and will only be used as burial makers. NCA has no legal authority to furnish memorial headstones, markers, or niche covers for soldiers or sailors who served exclusively with the Confederate forces during the Civil War, with no other qualifying period of active duty service in the Armed Forces of the United States.

a. NCA will inscribe the decedent's name. At a minimum, NCA will inscribe decedent's first initial or middle initial and last name, if known. NCA will omit the decedent's first name or middle name when requested by the applicant.

b. NCA will inscribe the unit or name of commissioned ship, if known.

c. NCA will inscribe the decedent's date of birth and date of death (if known). NCA will not inscribe the date of birth if the date of death is unknown.

d. NCA will inscribe the section and grave number for headstones placed in national cemeteries, when required.

e. NCA will not inscribe an emblem of belief, the rank of Private (PVT) or Ordinary Seaman (OS), an award, or an additional inscription item.

f. NCA will inscribe an EOB or the Southern Cross of Honor emblem, but not both, and the rank PVT or OS when NCA orders a type other than the pointed top headstone.

g. Order of Precedence. Information will be inscribed in the following order:

(1) Front:

(a) Southern Cross of Honor Emblem

(b) Military rank or rating

(c) Name of Confederate Soldier/Sailor

(d) Unit or name of commissioned ship

- (e) CSA
- (f) Date of birth (if known)
- (g) Date of death

(2) Back:

- (a) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only, when required*)
- (b) Spouse's first name and middle initial (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)
- (c) Relationship line (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)
- (d) Date of birth (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)
- (e) Date of death (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

**3. MEDAL OF HONOR (MOH)** markers are headstones, markers, and niche covers inscribed with the words MEDAL OF HONOR and a replica of the medal of the awarding branch of service. All inscription items on marble and granite headstones, markers, and niche covers will be highlighted with gold lithichrome, including dependent inscriptions and section and grave numbers. Inscription items on bronze markers are automatically highlighted by the finishing process.

**4. MEMORIAL MARKERS** are headstones, markers, and niche covers inscribed with the words IN MEMORY OF. Criteria for the provision of a memorial headstone, marker, and niche cover is found in 38 USC § 2306(b) and 38 CFR 38.600(a)(2). NCA has no legal authority to furnish memorial headstones, markers, or niche covers for soldiers or sailors who served exclusively with the Confederate forces during the Civil War, with no other qualifying period of active duty service in the Armed Forces of the United States, NCA will inscribe IN MEMORY OF on any other memorial headstone, marker, or niche cover except on an upright headstone with a sunken shield.

**5. GROUP BURIAL MONUMENTS** furnished only for placement in national cemeteries, are upright headstones and flat markers that contain the names of two or more known decedents who perished in a common military event and are buried in the same grave.

- a. NCA will inscribe the names of decedents in alphabetical order, their military rank or rating and branch of service (e.g., JANE Q SERVICE CAPT USA), and the one date of death for the group;
- b. NCA may inscribe one or more emblems of belief upon request; and
- c. NCA will inscribe the name of the event and/or location of the event.

**6. GROUP MEMORIAL MONUMENTS** furnished only for placement in national cemeteries, are upright headstones and flat markers that contain the names of known

decedents and/or a statement acknowledging unknown decedents who perished in a common military event and whose remains are unrecoverable or unavailable for burial.

- a. NCA will inscribe the names of decedents in alphabetical order, their military rank or rating and branch of service (e.g., JANE Q SERVICE CAPT USA), and the one date of death for the group;
- b. NCA may inscribe one or more emblems of belief upon request for known decedent; and
- c. NCA will inscribe the name of the event and/or location of the event.
- d. NCA will inscribe IN MEMORY OF as required under 38 CFR 38.630(c) for Group Memorial Markers.

**SECTION IV INSCRIPTIONS FOR DEPENDENTS (For inscription information about Veterans, see Section II)**

**1. ALL DEPENDENTS**

a. **Legal Name of Dependent:** NCA will inscribe the dependent's legal, official, or maiden name. If submitted documents are inconsistent, NCA will inscribe the legal name as shown on a Federal or state issued document such as a driver's license, state ID card, passport, birth certificate, voter ID card, etc. NCA will not accept a death certificate as an acceptable form for the dependent's legal name. NCA will inscribe INFANT on the name line for a dependent who was not named.

(1) NCA will inscribe a diminutive of the dependent's first and/or middle name when requested by the applicant (e.g., JOE in lieu of JOSEPH, BOB in lieu of ROBERT, BETH in lieu of ELIZABETH, etc.). NCA will not inscribe the diminutive in addition to the full legal name (e.g., ROBERT BOB ALLEN SMITH or ROBERT BOB A SMITH).

(2) NCA will inscribe a suffix (e.g., JR, SR, II, III, etc.) following the last name when requested by the applicant.

(3) NCA will not inscribe nicknames or professional and military titles on the name line (e.g., SLICK, DOCTOR, CHAPLAIN, etc.).

b. **Dates of Birth and Death:** NCA will inscribe the dependent's 4-digit year of birth and 4-digit year of death. NCA will inscribe full dates using the first three letters of the month, the 1- or 2-digit day, and 4-digit year, with no comma between the day and year (e.g., March 9, 2004 is inscribed as MAR 9 2004).

c. **Additional Inscription Items:** NCA will inscribe an additional inscription item in accordance with Section II, paragraph 3 of this directive.

d. **Section/Grave Number:** The section and grave number is mandatory on upright headstones and flat markers for NCA-administered cemeteries (but is not inscribed on niche covers, memorial wall markers, or bronze niche markers). NCA will inscribe the section and grave number on upright headstones, flat markers, and bronze niche markers for other Federally-administered cemeteries, and state and tribal Veterans' cemeteries, when requested.

**2. DEPENDENT BURIED WITH VETERAN**

a. NCA will inscribe the last name of the dependent unless the applicant requests that it not be inscribed.

b. NCA will not inscribe a relationship line unless requested by the applicant (e.g., HIS WIFE, HER HUSBAND, THEIR SON, etc.). NCA will not add to or deviate from the relationship line format (e.g., HIS WIFE, HER HUSBAND, THEIR SON, etc.). For local government and municipality-administered cemeteries, private cemeteries, and private burial grounds, NCA will inscribe an additional inscription item referring to the Veteran's



spouse in the format "HUSBAND OF," "WIFE OF," or "SPOUSE OF [name of non-Veteran spouse]."

c. Order of Precedence. Information will be inscribed in the following order:

(1) UPRIGHT MARBLE OR GRANITE HEADSTONE

(a) Front:

1. Emblem of belief
2. IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial headstone only*)
3. Name of Veteran
4. Military rank or rating
5. Military branch of service
6. War service
7. Date of birth
8. Date of death
9. Awards
10. KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW
11. Additional inscription items

(b) Back:

1. Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)
2. Emblem of belief (*same as Veteran or different*)
3. IN MEMORY OF (*for memorial inscription only*)
4. Name of dependent (*including last name, unless applicant requests it be omitted*)
5. Relationship line (*only if requested by applicant*)
6. Date of birth
7. Date of death
8. Additional inscription items

(2) FLAT BRONZE MARKER

- (a) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)
- (b) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)

- (c) Name of Veteran
- (d) Military rank or rating
- (e) Military branch of service
- (f) War service
- (g) Dates of birth and death of Veteran
- (h) Emblem of belief
- (i) Awards
- (j) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW
- (k) IN MEMORY OF (*for memorial inscription only*)
- (l) Name of dependent
- (m) Dates of birth and death of dependent
- (n) Emblem of belief (*same as Veteran or different*)
- (o) Additional inscription items

(3) OLD STYLE FLAT BRONZE MARKER

- (a) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)
- (b) Emblem of belief
- (c) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)
- (d) Name of Veteran
- (e) State (*where Veteran resided at the time entered on active duty*)
- (f) Military rank or rating
- (g) Military branch of service or unit
- (h) War service
- (i) Dates of birth and death of Veteran
- (j) Awards
- (k) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW
- (l) IN MEMORY OF (*for memorial inscription only*)
- (m) Name of dependent

(n) Dates of birth and death of dependent

(o) Additional inscription items

(4) FLAT MARBLE OR GRANITE MARKER

(a) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

(b) Emblem(s) of belief (*One maximum if same; two maximum if different*)

(c) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)

(d) Name of Veteran

(e) Military rank or rating

(f) Military branch of service

(g) War service

(h) Dates of birth and death of Veteran

(i) Awards

(j) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW

(k) IN MEMORY OF (*for memorial inscription only*)

(l) Name of dependent

(m) Dates of birth and death of dependent

(n) Additional inscription items

(5) SMALL FLAT GRANITE MARKER

(a) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

(b) Emblem(s) of belief (*One maximum if same; two maximum if different*)

(c) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)

(d) Name of Veteran

(e) Military rank or rating

(f) Military branch of service

(g) War service

(h) Dates of birth and death of Veteran

(i) Awards

- (j) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW
- (k) IN MEMORY OF (*for memorial inscription only*)
- (l) Name of dependent
- (m) Dates of birth and death of dependent
- (n) Additional inscription items

(6) MARBLE OR GRANITE NICHE COVER

- (a) Emblem(s) of belief (*one maximum if same; two maximum if different*)
- (b) Surname
- (c) First name (or first initial and/or middle name or middle initial) of Veteran
- (d) Military rank or rating
- (e) Abbreviated military branch of service
- (f) War service
- (g) Awards
- (h) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW
- (i) Years of birth and death of Veteran
- (j) IN MEMORY OF (*for memorial inscription only*)
- (k) First name (or first initial and/or middle name or middle initial) of dependent
- (l) Years of birth and death of dependent
- (m) Additional inscription items

(7) BRONZE NICHE MARKER

- (a) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)
- (b) Name of Veteran
- (c) Military rank or rating
- (d) Military branch of service
- (e) War service
- (f) Dates of birth and death of Veteran
- (g) Emblem of belief

- (h) Awards
- (i) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW
- (j) IN MEMORY OF (*for memorial inscription only*)
- (k) Name of dependent
- (l) Dates of birth and death of dependent
- (m) Emblem of belief (*same as Veteran or different*)
- (n) Additional inscription items
- (o) Section and grave number (*some national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

**(8) MARBLE OR GRANITE MEMORIAL WALL MARKER**

- (a) Emblem(s) of belief (*One maximum if same; two maximum if different*)
- (b) IN MEMORY OF
- (c) Surname
- (d) First name (or first initial and/or middle name or middle initial) of Veteran
- (e) Military rank or rating
- (f) Military branch of service
- (g) War service
- (h) Dates of birth and death of Veteran
- (i) Awards
- (j) KIA / MIA / POW / EX-POW
- (k) First name (or first initial and/or middle name or middle initial) of dependent
- (l) Dates of birth and death of dependent
- (m) Additional inscription items

**3. DEPENDENT BURIED WITHOUT VETERAN**

a. NCA will inscribe the dependent's first name or initial, and/or middle name or initial, and last name as directed under 1.a. of this section.

b. NCA will inscribe a relationship line to show the relationship to the Veteran (e.g., WIFE OF, DAUGHTER OF, SPOUSE OF, etc.). NCA will not add to or deviate from the relationship line format (e.g., WIFE OF, DAUGHTER OF, SPOUSE OF, etc.). For local government and municipality-administered cemeteries, private cemeteries, and private

burial grounds, NCA will inscribe an additional inscription item referring to the Veteran's spouse in the format "HUSBAND OF," "WIFE OF," or "SPOUSE OF [name of non-Veteran spouse]."

c. NCA will inscribe the Veteran's full legal name as defined in Section II, paragraph 1(a) of this directive.

d. NCA will inscribe the Veteran's highest rank attained as defined in Section II, paragraph 2(b) of this directive.

e. NCA will inscribe the Veteran's abbreviated branch(es) of service.

f. NCA will inscribe the dependent's information on the front of a headstone until such time the headstone is replaced due to the Veteran's death.

g. Order of Precedence. Information will be inscribed in the following order:

(1) UPRIGHT MARBLE OR GRANITE HEADSTONE

(a) Front:

1. Emblem of belief
2. IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial headstone only*)
3. Name of dependent
4. Date of birth
5. Date of death
6. Relationship to Veteran line
7. Military rank or rating of Veteran
8. Name of Veteran
9. Abbreviated military branch of service of Veteran
10. Additional inscription items

(b) Back:

1. Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

(2) FLAT BRONZE MARKER

(a) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

(b) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)

(c) Name of dependent

- (d) Dates of birth and death of dependent
- (e) Emblem of belief
- (f) Relationship to Veteran line
- (g) Military rank or rating of Veteran
- (h) Name of Veteran
- (i) Abbreviated military branch of service of Veteran
- (j) Additional inscription items

(3) OLD STYLE FLAT BRONZE MARKER

- (a) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)
- (b) Emblem of belief
- (c) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)
- (d) Name of dependent
- (e) Dates of birth and death of dependent
- (f) Relationship to Veteran line
- (g) Military rank or rating of Veteran
- (h) Name of Veteran
- (i) Abbreviated military branch of service of Veteran
- (j) Additional inscription items

(4) FLAT MARBLE OR GRANITE MARKER

- (a) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)
- (b) Emblem of belief
- (c) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)
- (d) Name of dependent
- (e) Dates of birth and death of dependent
- (f) Relationship to Veteran line
- (g) Military rank or rating of Veteran
- (h) Name of Veteran

(i) Abbreviated military branch of service of Veteran

(j) Additional inscription items

(5) SMALL FLAT GRANITE MARKER

(a) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)

(b) Emblem of belief

(c) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)

(d) Name of dependent

(e) Dates of birth and death of dependent

(f) Relationship to Veteran line

(g) Military rank or rating of Veteran

(h) Name of Veteran

(i) Abbreviated military branch of service of Veteran

(j) Additional inscription items

(6) MARBLE OR GRANITE NICHE COVER

(a) Emblem of belief

(b) Surname

(c) First name (or first initial and/or middle name or middle initial) of Veteran

(d) Military rank or rating

(e) Abbreviated military branch of service

(f) War service

(g) Awards

(h) POW / EX-POW

(i) (RESERVE BLANK LINE) for years of birth and death of Veteran

(j) First name (or first initial and/or middle name or middle initial) of dependent

(k) Years of birth and death of dependent

(l) Additional inscription items

(7) BRONZE NICHE MARKER



- (a) Name of dependent
- (b) Dates of birth and death of dependent
- (c) Emblem of belief
- (d) Relationship to Veteran line
- (e) Military rank or rating of Veteran
- (f) Name of Veteran
- (g) Abbreviated military branch of service of Veteran
- (h) Additional inscription items
- (i) Section and grave number *(some national, state, and tribal cemeteries only)*

(8) MARBLE OR GRANITE MEMORIAL WALL MARKER

- (a) Emblem of belief
- (b) IN MEMORY OF
- (c) Surname
- (d) First name (or first initial and/or middle name or middle initial) of dependent
- (e) Dates of birth and death of dependent
- (f) Relationship to Veteran line
- (g) Military rank or rating of Veteran
- (h) Name of Veteran
- (i) Abbreviated military branch of service of Veteran
- (j) Additional inscription items

## **SECTION V INSCRIPTIONS FOR NON-VETERANS/NON-DEPENDENTS**

**1. GENERAL:** Under 38 U.S.C. 2404(c)(1), NCA is required to mark all graves in VA national cemeteries with an appropriate marker. This Section provides direction for marking the grave of a decedent who is a non-Veteran/non-dependent, such as an individual who served with allied forces (38 U.S.C. 2402(a)(4)) or an individual designated as eligible for burial under 38 U.S.C. 2402(a)(6).

### **2. ALL NON-VETERANS/NON-DEPENDENTS**

a. **Legal Name of Decedent:** NCA will inscribe the decedent's legal, official, or maiden name (as shown on a Federal or state issued document such as a driver's license, state ID card, passport, birth certificate, voter ID card, etc.). **Note:** NCA will not accept a death certificate as an acceptable form for the decedent's legal name. The decedent's first name or initial, and/or middle name or initial, and last name will be inscribed.

(1) NCA will inscribe a diminutive of the decedent's first and/or middle name when requested by the applicant (e.g., JOE in lieu of JOSEPH, BOB in lieu of ROBERT, BETH in lieu of ELIZABETH, etc.). NCA will not inscribe the diminutive in addition to the full legal name (e.g., ROBERT BOB ALLEN SMITH or ROBERT BOB A SMITH).

(2) NCA will inscribe a suffix (e.g., JR, SR, II, III, etc.) following the last name when requested by the applicant.

(3) NCA will not inscribe nicknames or professional and military titles on the name line (e.g., SLICK, DOCTOR, CHAPLAIN, etc.).

b. **Rank:** If applicable, NCA will inscribe the rank shown on documentation, upon request.

c. **Branch of Service:** If applicable, NCA will inscribe an NCA-approved non-U.S. military branch of service.

d. **War Service Items:** If applicable, NCA will inscribe a period of war, upon request.

e. **Dates of Birth and Death:** NCA will inscribe the decedent's 4-digit year of birth and 4-digit year of death. NCA will inscribe full dates using the first three letters of the month, the 1- or 2-digit day, and 4-digit year, with no comma between the day and year (e.g., March 9, 2004 is inscribed as MAR 9 2004).

f. **Emblem of Belief:** NCA will inscribe an approved emblem of belief when requested by a family member or personal representative as defined in 38 CFR 38.600.

g. **Additional Inscription Items:** NCA will inscribe an additional inscription item in accordance with Section II, paragraph 3 of this directive.

h. **Section/Grave Number:** The section and grave number is mandatory on upright headstones and flat markers for NCA-administered cemeteries (but is not inscribed on

niche covers, memorial wall markers, or bronze niche markers). NCA will inscribe the section and grave number on upright headstones, flat markers, and bronze niche markers for other Federally-administered cemeteries, and state and tribal Veterans' cemeteries, when requested.

i. Order of Precedence. Information will be inscribed in the following order:

(1) UPRIGHT MARBLE OR GRANITE HEADSTONE

(a) Front:

1. Emblem of belief
2. IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial headstone only*)
3. Name of decedent
4. Military rank or rating (*if applicable*)
5. Non-U.S. military branch of service (*if applicable*)
6. War service (*if applicable*)
7. Date of birth
8. Date of death
9. Additional inscription items

(b) Back: Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only, when required*)

(2) FLAT BRONZE MARKER

- (a) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)
- (b) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)
- (c) Name of decedent
- (d) Military rank or rating (*if applicable*)
- (e) Non-U.S. military branch of service (*if applicable*)
- (f) War service (*if applicable*)
- (g) Dates of birth and death
- (h) Emblem of belief
- (i) Additional inscription items

(3) OLD STYLE FLAT BRONZE MARKER

- (a) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)
- (b) Emblem of belief
- (c) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)
- (d) Name of decedent
- (e) Military rank or rating (*if applicable*)
- (f) Non-U.S. military branch of service (*if applicable*)
- (g) War service (*if applicable*)
- (h) Dates of birth and death
- (i) Additional inscription items

(4) FLAT MARBLE OR GRANITE MARKER

- (a) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)
- (b) Emblem of belief
- (c) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)
- (d) Name of decedent
- (e) Military rank or rating (*if applicable*)
- (f) Non-U.S. military branch of service (*if applicable*)
- (g) War service (*if applicable*)
- (h) Dates of birth and death
- (i) Additional inscription items

(5) SMALL FLAT GRANITE MARKER

- (a) Section and grave number (*national, state, and tribal cemeteries only*)
- (b) Emblem of belief
- (c) IN MEMORY OF (*on memorial marker only*)
- (d) Name of decedent
- (e) Military rank or rating (*if applicable*)
- (f) Non-U.S. military branch of service (*if applicable*)
- (g) War service (*if applicable*)

(h) Dates of birth and death

(i) Additional inscription items

(6) MARBLE OR GRANITE NICHE COVER

(a) Emblem of belief

(b) Surname

(c) First name (or first initial and/or middle name or middle initial) of decedent

(d) Military rank or rating *(if applicable)*

(e) Abbreviated non-U.S. military branch of service *(if applicable)*

(f) War service *(if applicable)*

(g) Years of birth and death

(h) Additional inscription items

(7) BRONZE NICHE MARKER

(a) IN MEMORY OF *(on memorial marker only)*

(b) Name of decedent

(c) Military rank or rating *(if applicable)*

(d) Non-U.S. military branch of service *(if applicable)*

(e) War service *(if applicable)*

(f) Dates of birth and death

(g) Emblem of belief

(h) Additional inscription items

(i) Section and grave number *(some national, state, and tribal cemeteries only)*

(8) MARBLE OR GRANITE MEMORIAL WALL MARKER

(a) Emblem of belief

(b) IN MEMORY OF

(c) Surname

- (d) First name (or first initial and/or middle name or middle initial) of decedent
- (e) Military rank or rating *(if applicable)*
- (f) Non-U.S. military branch of service *(if applicable)*
- (g) War service *(if applicable)*
- (h) Dates of birth and death
- (i) Additional inscription items

**AUTHORIZED DIACRITICAL AND PUNCTUATION MARKS**

1. NCA will inscribe diacritical (accent) and punctuation marks in the below chart. NCA will not inscribe periods/dots, except on replacements-in-kind of existing markers that have them.

Name	Mark/ Symbol
Grave Accent	È è
Acute Accent	É é
Tilde	Ã ã
Macron	Ō ō
Dieresis	Ë ë
Ampersand or "And" symbol	&
Parentheses	()
Colon	:
Virgule or forward slash	/
Curved Apostrophe	'
Hyphen	-

**Table A1.**

2. **Proper Use of Diacritical and Punctuation Marks.** Examples of using allowable characters include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. IT'S
- b. DON'T
- c. IN GOD'S HANDS
- d. O'CONNOR
- e. JOHN 3:16
- f. GREAT-GRANDMOTHER
- g. YN(SS)

**3. Improper Use of Diacritical and Punctuation Marks.** Examples of misusing allowable characters include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. - BUD - (The hyphen will not be used in place of quotation marks which are not allowed)
- b. GRAND-DAD (Granddad is one word with no hyphen)
- c. SAVED - ALWAYS FAITHFUL (The hyphen is only used in hyphenated names or words, not as a dash)
- d. 'DUTCH' (The curved apostrophe will not be used in place of quotation marks which are not allowed)
- e. SERVED W/ HONOR (WITH must be spelled out; the inscription W/ V is authorized to signify awards with "V" device for valor)
- f. (POPPY) (Nicknames will not be shown in parentheses)
- g. & THIS ONE IS FOR YOU (An additional inscription line will not begin with an ampersand)