

REPORTING MEMORIALS IN VA NATIONAL CEMETERIES

1. PURPOSE: This notice states policy and procedures for the reporting of new memorials installed at national cemeteries administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA).

2. DEFINITIONS: For the purposes of this notice:

a. The term “national cemeteries” includes all VA national cemeteries, Confederate cemeteries, soldiers’ lots, and government-owned plots administered by the VA National Cemetery Administration (NCA); and

b. “Memorials” are defined as unique, three-dimensional objects (commonly called monuments or memorials) erected within national cemeteries, that are clearly designated to permanently memorialize a person or persons, or event(s). Examples include obelisks, sundials, commemorative and sculptural statues, simple block memorials, and fixed stone memorial benches. Standard Government-furnished memorial headstones or markers installed in memorial sections within a national cemetery are not considered “memorials” for these reporting purposes. If a generic landscape feature such as a bench, cannon, or sundial is not *specifically inscribed* as a “memorial” to a group of persons or an event, it will not be included in the NCA database as a memorial.

3. BACKGROUND

a. Public Law 108-422, Section 412 (see References), requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to report to Congress in December 2005, 2006, and 2007, the numbers and conditions of historic structures and properties under VA jurisdiction, including national cemeteries.

b. “Preserve America” Executive Order 13287 (see References) requires all Federal agencies to prepare a report on progress in identifying, protecting, and using historic properties in its ownership every three years. NCA reports this information through the VA Federal Preservation Office (FPO) to the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and the Secretary of the Interior.

d. The Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, has stated in writing “that the national cemeteries are, collectively, potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register” of Historic Places and that “the age of the cemetery itself is not necessarily the determining factor.” As a result, all national cemeteries and their dependent structures, such as lodges, buildings, perimeter walls, entry arches, monuments and memorials, are considered to be potentially historic regardless of age.

4. POLICY: Memorials erected in national cemeteries are considered historic as soon as they are installed. Cemetery Directors are to:

a. Report new memorials within 30 days of installation in accordance with the procedures outlined in this notice (based on Director, Office of Field Programs, memorandum dated October 27, 2004 – see References); and

b. Annually certify the numbers, names, and conditions of existing memorials and report the information to the NCA History Program, through the appropriate Memorial Service Network office, by September 30 of each year.

5. PROCEDURES

NEW MEMORIAL(S) REPORTING

a. Each Cemetery Director will complete a "New Memorial Report" (see Appendix) within 30 days of installation of any memorial within a national cemetery grounds. The original signed report should be sent to the NCA History Program in Central Office, with a copy to the appropriate MSN office and the Office of Field Programs.

b. Copies of any materials related to the memorial (e.g., offer and acceptance documents (if applicable), plans and/or other related materials, dedication ceremony program, newspaper clippings, media coverage) must be submitted along with the original of the completed "New Memorial Report" to the NCA History Program.

c. A minimum of three photographs of the new memorial must be included in the materials submitted to the NCA History Program. The three photos must include: 1) a close-up of all inscription(s), 2) a front and one-side view, and 3) a back and other-side view. Photographs may be conventional color or black and white prints or negatives or digital (in TIF or JPG format). All photographic images must be clear and in focus, and all inscriptions readable.

d. NCA shares information and photographs of sculpture/artistic memorials installed within VA national cemeteries with the Smithsonian Institution. The information is made available to the public through the Smithsonian Institution Research Information System (SIRIS) Art Inventories (see References). For new memorials that are created by an artist, or include a figure or sculpture, there are additional reporting requirements. Contact the NCA History Program for details.

ANNUAL REPORTING

a. Each Cemetery Director will complete an annual report certifying the numbers, names, and conditions of the memorials within the grounds of all national cemetery properties under his or her jurisdiction. Current listings for each cemetery are posted on the NCA public website at <http://www.cem.va.gov/> under "History," "Historic-Resource Information." The report should be submitted to the NCA History Program, through the appropriate Memorial Service Network office, by September 30 of each year.

b. NCA History Program staff will use information from the annual cemetery reports to update VA's Capital Asset Inventory database in a timely manner. The database contains information about historic assets (including memorials) maintained by station, and is used by the VA Historic Preservation Office to report on VA's heritage asset inventory.

6. REFERENCES

a. Public Law 108-422 (The Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act of 2004 (available electronically at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/plaws/index.html>)

b. Executive Order 13287 "Preserve America," signed March 3, 2003 (available electronically at <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/executive-orders/disposition.html>)

c. Director, Office of Field Programs, "New Memorials in Cemeteries" (October 27, 2004) (available electronically through the NCA Management Information System at <http://vaww.cem.va.gov/>, "History Program")

d. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places letters dated August 24, 1977, and June 12, 1981 (available from NCA History Program office)

e. Smithsonian Institution Research Information System (SIRIS), Art Inventories (available electronically at <http://sirismm.si.edu/siris/saam.htm>)

5. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Communications Management Service, History Program, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20420, is responsible for the contents of this notice.

6. RESCISSION: This notice officially rescinds Director, Office of Field Programs, memorandum "New Memorials in Cemeteries" (October 27, 2004).

7. EXPIRATION: The information contained in this notice will remain in effect until incorporated into an official directive or handbook.

/s/
William F. Tuerk
Under Secretary for
Memorial Affairs

Distribution: Electronic



NEW MEMORIAL REPORT

The original report and copies of documentary materials should be sent to VACO – NCA History Program within 30 days of installation.

Send one copy of the report to appropriate MSN office and the Office of Field Programs.

Keep one copy of report at cemetery.

Cemetery Name _____ Station No. _____

Memorial Name _____

Date Installed _____ Date Dedicated _____

Donor Name(s) _____

Cost _____ Dimensions _____

Materials _____

Artist/Designer _____ Manufacturer _____

Where is memorial located? _____

Inscription(s) _____

(continue inscription(s) on back of this page, if necessary)

Submit at least 3 photographs of the memorial (close-up showing inscription(s), front and back) along with 1 copy of plans or related documentary materials (e.g., offer and acceptance, dedication ceremony announcement/program, news clippings, media coverage). Digital images are acceptable in TIFF or JPG format.

Signature of Cemetery Director

Date _____