

**CEREMONIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS AT
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NATIONAL CEMETERIES**

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: To recertify National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Directive 3170. This directive establishes NCA's policy regarding requests for and the execution of ceremonies and special events at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries.

2. SUMMARY MAJOR CHANGES:

a. Updates applicable sections to specify that consecration activities are not considered ceremonies or special events.

b. Updates and adds responsible offices and certain responsibilities.

c. Adds references to NCA Directive 3220 and NCA Notices 2022-03 that also include policy guidance related to ceremonies and special events.

d. Adds a Non-VA Sponsored Ceremony or Special Event Recommendation to Cemetery Operations Template at new Appendix D.

e. Combines prior version Appendices A and B to remove redundant information.

f. Technical change on 02/09/25: Corrects approving authority regarding Executive Director, Cemetery Operations, (page A-3) and adds specific language regarding protection of religious beliefs (paragraph 2.e. on page 1 and page A-5).

3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: NCA, Office of Cemetery Operations, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be referred to Cemetery Operations at ncacemopsanalysts@va.gov.

4. RELATED PUBLICATIONS:

a. NCA Directive 0322, First Notice of Event (October 2, 2024)

b. NCA Directive 3220, Flags in VA National Cemeteries (August 3, 2018).

c. NCA Notice 2022-03, Interim Policy Update Regarding Flag Displays in National Cemeteries (May 6, 2022).

5. SUPERSESSSION: This publication supersedes NCA Directive 3170, Ceremonies and Special Events at VA National Cemeteries (December 15, 2017).

6. RESCISSION: This publication rescinds NCA Notice 2018-01, Protecting the Religious Beliefs of Veterans, Families, and Visitors at VA National Cemeteries (April 16, 2018).

7. RECERTIFICATION: This publication is scheduled for recertification on or before the last day of January 2029.

/s/

Matthew T. Quinn

Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs

Distribution: Electronic

**CEREMONIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS AT
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NATIONAL CEMETERIES**

1. PURPOSE/AUTHORITY:

a. This Directive establishes Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA) policy on conducting ceremonies and special events at VA national cemeteries.

b. The statutory authorities for this Directive are sections 901 and 2404, title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.).

c. The policies outlined in this Directive do not apply to the following activities, which are distinct from ceremonies and special events:

(1) Committal or memorial services for decedents; and

(2) Cemetery consecration activities, which are covered under Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations Standard Operating Procedure **41-SOP-020**, Consecration Activities at Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemeteries.

2. POLICY: It is NCA policy that:

a. All ceremonies and special events held at VA national cemeteries, whether they are VA-sponsored or non-VA sponsored, will be compatible with NCA's purpose to maintain national cemeteries as national shrines, sacred to the honor and memory of those interred or memorialized there.

b. Ceremonies or special events that commemorate or recognize individuals that served in the Confederate armed forces (army, navy or marine corps) ("Confederate Service members") will only be permitted at VA national cemeteries where these individuals are interred.

c. Ceremonies or special events that commemorate or recognize foreign individuals who served a foreign government in conflict with the United States (U.S.) will only be permitted at VA national cemeteries where these individuals are interred.

d. The display of gravesite flags or other types of flags as part of any ceremony or special event held at a VA national cemetery will conform to all requirements established in NCA Directive 3220, Flag Displays in National Cemeteries, and in NCA Notice 2022-03, Interim Policy Update Regarding Flag Displays in National Cemeteries, and paragraph 2.c.(4) in Appendix A of this Directive.

e. Cemetery directors and their staff will protect the religious beliefs of all attendees during all ceremonies and special events held at VA national cemeteries, in accordance with section 5 of Appendix A of this directive.

f. Ceremony participants may wear historic or period-replica military uniforms of the following armed forces only:

(1) U.S. Armed Forces;

(2) Foreign allied forces from the period associated with an approved ceremony or special event's commemorative intent; and

(3) At cemeteries where Confederate Service members are interred, the armed forces of the Confederate States of America.

g. Military reenactments or simulations of activities related to combat are prohibited.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. The **Executive Director, Cemetery Operations**, is responsible for:

(1) Notifying the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, through the Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations and the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, when a VA national cemetery receives a ceremony or special event request from a non-VA sponsor that:

(a) Commemorates Confederate Service members; or

(b) May otherwise be considered sensitive or controversial.

(2) Approving or disapproving the ceremony or special event requests from non-VA sponsors described in paragraphs 3.a.(1)(a) and 3.a.(1)(b).

(3) Coordinating the collection and provision of after-action information following any approved ceremony or special event when required by the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs or their designee.

(4) Leading decision-making on how to address non-VA ceremony or special event sponsors and/or participants who do not comply with NCA's policies or procedures established in this Directive.

(5) Approving or disapproving all requests for non-VA sponsored ceremonies or special events that commemorate or recognize one or more foreign individuals who served a government in conflict with the U.S. (reference paragraph 2.c. in Appendix A).

b. The **Deputy Director, Cemetery Operations**, is responsible for:

(1) Notifying the Director, Executive Coordination and Review Service, of any ceremony or special event request received by a VA national cemetery from a Member of Congress or their staff; and

(2) Notifying the Director, Communications and Outreach Service, of any ceremony or special event request received by a VA national cemetery from a U.S. Government, State, Tribal, local or foreign official or their staff.

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

(1) Concurring or non-concurring on their Cemetery Director's recommendation to the Executive Director, Cemetery Operations, for decision on all requests for non-VA sponsored ceremonies or special events described in paragraphs 3.a.(1)(a) and 3.a.(1)(b).

(2) Using the Non-VA Sponsored Ceremony or Special Event Request Recommendation to Cemetery Operations Template at Appendix D to make the recommendation described in paragraph 3.c.(1).

(3) Approving or disapproving all other requests for non-VA sponsored ceremonies or special events that involve the ceremonial carrying and/or discharging of blanks from firearms or cannons, to include the carrying and/or discharging historic period-replica firearms.

(4) Consulting with the Executive Director, Cemetery Operations, on actions to take when non-VA ceremony or special event sponsors and/or participants do not comply with NCA's policies or procedures established in this Directive.

d. **Cemetery Directors** are responsible for:

(1) Advising non-VA sponsors about the ceremony and special event request procedures in Appendix A.

(2) Reviewing and evaluating requests from non-VA sponsors to hold ceremonies or special events for compliance with the requirements in Appendix A.

(3) Forwarding all requests described in paragraphs 3.a.(1)(a) and 3.a.(1)(b) and recommending a decision through their District Executive Director to the Executive Director, Cemetery Operations.

(4) Using the Non-VA Sponsored Ceremony or Special Event Request Recommendation to Cemetery Operations Template at Appendix D to make the recommendation described in paragraph 3.d.(3).

(5) Forwarding all requests described in paragraphs 3.a.(5) and 3.c.(3) and recommending a decision to their District Executive Director.

(6) Approving or disapproving all other requests for non-VA sponsored ceremonies or special events.

(7) Responding in writing to requests from non-VA sponsors in accordance with the response procedures in Appendix B.

(8) Providing logistical support for approved ceremonies or special events, if requested and if the cemetery has support resources on-hand and available.

(9) Taking all necessary steps to promote the safety of staff and others present on cemetery grounds during ceremonies and special events.

(10) Monitoring ceremonies for violations of policies or regulations, in accordance with Appendix C.

(11) Submitting a First Notice of Event (FNOE) in accordance with NCA Directive 0322, FNOE, to report receipt of a ceremony or special event requested by a Congressional member or their staff, or a U.S. Government, State, Tribal, local, or foreign official.

(12) Planning and executing Memorial Day and other VA-sponsored ceremonies and special events, as appropriate.

(13) Providing an after-action report or similar information when required by the Executive Director, Cemetery Operations, or their designee.

e. The **Director, Executive Coordination and Review Service**, is responsible for relaying notification from Cemetery Operations of requests for ceremonies or special events at VA national cemeteries made by Members of Congress or their staff to VA's Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs.

f. The **Director, Communications and Outreach Service** is responsible for relaying notification from Cemetery Operations of requests for ceremonies or special events at VA national cemeteries made by U.S. Government, State, Tribal, local or foreign officials or their staff to VA's Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs.

4. REFERENCES:

a. 38 U.S.C. §§ 901, 2400, and 2404.

b. 38 CFR § 1.218.

c. NCA Directive 0322, NCA First Notice of Event (FNOE) (October 29, 2019).

d. NCA Directive 3220, Flag Displays in National Cemeteries (August 3, 2018).

e. NCA Notice 2022-03, Interim Policy Update Regarding Flag Displays in National Cemeteries (May 6, 2022).

f. 41-SOP-020, Consecration Activities at Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemeteries (September 21, 2021).

5. DEFINITIONS:

a. **Ceremonies or Special Events** are pre-planned gatherings to commemorate and/or honor the military service of an individual or group who served or is serving in the Armed Forces of the U.S., or persons who are interred at a VA national cemetery. Committal or memorial services for individual Veterans and consecration activities are not considered ceremonies or special events.

b. **Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery** means a property under the jurisdiction of the VA National Cemetery Administration (NCA), including all land transferred by the National Cemeteries Act of 1973 (Public Law 94-43) and all property later acquired or developed by NCA, for the purpose of interment of deceased eligible Veterans and other eligible individuals.

**NON-VA SPONSORED CEREMONY OR SPECIAL EVENT REQUEST
INFORMATION, REVIEW CRITERIA AND OTHER GUIDANCE**

1. GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR ALL REQUESTS. Non-VA sponsors proposing to hold a ceremony or special event at a specific VA national cemetery must submit a written request to the Director of that cemetery. This written request should be submitted at least 45 days prior to the proposed ceremony date. This gives NCA time to consider the request, pursue approval at the appropriate level of the organization, and coordinate any resources or assistance as required to confirm their availability for the ceremony.

a. A Cemetery Director who receives a verbal request to hold a ceremony or special event will advise the requester to submit a written request.

b. The written request must be dated and signed (email signature block is acceptable) by an official of the sponsoring organization and must contain the following information:

(1) Identity of the organization requesting to hold a ceremony or event.

(2) The start and end time (including the setup and breakdown) requested for the event.

(3) The specific location within the cemetery where the organization would like to hold the event.

(4) A summary of the purpose and nature of the event; for example, how the event would honor the memory of those interred in the cemetery.

(5) A copy of the event's agenda, including a list of proposed activities and names and affiliations of potential speakers.

(6) An estimate of the audience's size (e.g., approximate number of attendees) and information about their organizational affiliations if applicable.

(7) Any potential logistical support needs.

NOTE: While VA national cemeteries can provide logistical support to non-VA sponsors through the use of equipment the cemetery already has on-hand (e.g., folding chairs and flags), cemeteries are prohibited from renting equipment to support non-VA sponsored ceremonies and special events.

(8) The name(s) and contact information of the official(s) who is primarily responsible for organizing the event.

(9) A statement that the sponsoring organization assumes liability for actions and events that are directly related to the ceremony or special event and must hold VA harmless for any damage to property or injuries that are directly related to the ceremony.

c. Cemetery Directors will:

(1) Contact the sponsoring organization to obtain any missing or supplemental information in writing (email is acceptable), as needed to approve or disapprove.

(2) Document all contact with the sponsoring organization, including all attempts the cemetery makes to contact the organization, by detailing the date, time, name of the organization, and its representative in order to maintain a comprehensive record of all information provided or exchanged.

2. ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR CERTAIN REQUESTS:

a. Requests Involving Firearms or Cannons:

(1) Only blank rounds of ammunition may be carried or discharged on cemetery grounds as part of approved ceremonies or special events. If the requester indicates that the ceremony or special event will include the ceremonial carrying or discharge of firearms or cannons with blanks, the requester must provide an additional certification that:

(a) No live ammunition will be carried or discharged on cemetery grounds in the context of ceremonies or special events, except for the carrying of side arms and live ammunition by military personnel who are detailed to protect military Service members and their equipment during ceremonial firings, or for other official purposes as consistent with 38 CFR § 1.218(a)(13).

(b) The ceremonial carrying or discharge of firearms or cannons with blanks will be made only in the context of memorializing those buried within the national cemetery.

(c) The sponsoring organization accepts liability for any harm to persons or property resulting from the ceremonial carrying or discharge of firearms or cannons on cemetery grounds and must hold VA harmless for any damage to property or injuries resulting from such actions.

NOTE: The acceptance of liability involving firearms or cannons is in addition to the acceptance of liability for actions and events directly related to a ceremony or special event as stipulated in paragraph 1.a.(9) of Appendix A of this Directive.

(2) Cemetery Directors will forward all requests from non-VA sponsors that include the ceremonial carrying or discharge of firearms with blanks, with the Cemetery Director's recommendation for action, to their District Executive Director for determination and response.

b. Confederate Ceremonies or Special Events:

(1) NCA may only approve ceremonies or special events commemorating or recognizing Confederate Service members at VA national cemeteries where their remains are interred.

(2) There are no limitations on the number of Confederate ceremonies or special events that can be requested, but flags of the Confederacy can only be displayed two days per year pursuant to NCA's flag policy (reference NCA Directive 3220).

(3) The Executive Director, Cemetery Operations, is the approving official for all Confederate ceremony and special event requests, regardless of whether the request includes the ceremonial use of firearms, cannons, and/or the display of flags associated with the Confederacy.

c. Ceremonies or Special Events Commemorating Certain Foreign Individuals:

(1) NCA may only approve ceremonies or special events commemorating or recognizing foreign individuals who served a government in conflict with the U.S. if:

(2) The individuals died as prisoners of war, or died on or near U.S. soil;

(3) Their remains are interred at the VA national cemetery where the ceremony or special event is requested to occur; and

(4) Any display of the national flag of the individual's home nation and/or of the nation in whose armed forces the individual served is limited to the contemporary flag of that nation (e.g., current national flag of Germany, Italy, or Japan).

(5) The Executive Director, Cemetery Operations, is the approving official for all ceremony and special event requests to commemorate a foreign national who served a government in conflict with the U.S., regardless of whether the request includes the ceremonial use of firearms, cannons and/or the display of the contemporary national flag of their decedent's home nation.

d. Special U.S. Armed Forces Service Events: Individual Service members and commands of the U.S. Armed Forces may request to hold an enlistment, re-enlistment, retirement, or a similar ceremony for individuals currently serving in the Nation's Armed Forces or those who have made a formal commitment to engage in such service. Such ceremonies or special events generally involve the servicemember(s) along with family, friends, and fellow Service members. Such ceremonies require only minimal logistical support, and Cemetery Directors will accommodate these requests under the policies and procedures for non-VA sponsored ceremonies as outlined in this Directive.

e. Visits from Members of Congress: VA leaders must avoid any perception that VA personnel, facilities and, most of all, VA beneficiaries and their families are being used for partisan political activities. As general elections approach, it becomes more difficult to distinguish stakeholder visits from political activities when the visitors are candidates for election. Leaders are encouraged to seek the assistance of the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs and the Office of General Counsel Ethics Specialty Team when evaluating and responding to Congressional candidates and nominee requests to visit VA facilities.

3. REVIEW CRITERIA. Cemetery Directors will review all requests to hold ceremonies or special events at VA national cemeteries under their jurisdiction and recommend approval only if:

- a. The request meets all the requirements contained above.
- b. The ceremony or special event is compatible with NCA's mission to maintain the final resting places of America's Veterans and their dependents as National Shrines. In particular, the ceremony or special event must honor those who serve or have served in the U.S. Armed Forces or are interred or memorialized in that VA national cemetery.
- c. The ceremony or special event will be non-partisan and be conducted in compliance with the security and law enforcement regulations that govern public conduct at VA facilities.
- d. All requested information is provided in a timely manner, dated and signed by an officer or other official of the sponsoring organization. If the matter involves a controversial issue or falls under the events in Appendix A, paragraph 2.a. through 2.c. above, the request must be forwarded to the District Executive Director with a recommendation for action.
- e. The ceremony or special event does not conflict with or intrude upon interments or other cemetery operations and is for a date and time when the cemetery is open.
- f. The ceremony or special event will not burden cemetery staff or adversely affect cemetery resources. Cemeteries will provide minimal staff to assist, observe, and prevent the ceremony from conflicting with other cemetery operations.
- g. The ceremony or special event will not present a threat to the health or safety of cemetery staff or visitors or potentially damage the grounds of the cemetery.
- h. The ceremony or special event will be held in accordance with restrictions on activities occurring on VA property.
- i. There is no conflict with a previously approved ceremony or special event sponsored by another organization.
- j. The request was submitted within 45 days of the proposed ceremony date to allow the Cemetery Director to consider the request and coordinate resources and assistance as required and available for the ceremony.

4. VA WILL NOT REVIEW PROPOSED SPEECHES OR ORATIONS

a. The procedures stated below seek to ensure Cemetery Directors and their staff responsible for reviewing and approving ceremonies and special event requests do not engage in improper prior restraint of speech.

b. Cemetery Directors and cemetery staff will not request submission of proposed remarks, orations, prayers, and other forms of expression from ceremony organizers, speakers, clergy, or other participants, nor review such documents if provided voluntarily.

c. If ceremony organizers, speakers, clergy, or other participants submit speeches or other items for review prior to a ceremony or special event, the Cemetery Director or cemetery staff will not review or comment on the items but must return the unsolicited material as soon as possible to the submitter, along with a copy of 38 CFR 1.218 and a cover letter that affirmatively notes that the documents were not reviewed for compliance with the regulation and reiterates the responsibility of presenters to abide by the regulation.

d. Cemetery Directors and their staff will monitor remarks as they are given during special events or ceremonies and take appropriate action on any non-compliance, in accordance with Appendix D.

5. PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS:

a. It is NCA policy that cemetery directors will ensure to the maximum extent possible that all appropriate public areas of the cemetery, including committal shelters, chapels, benches, and burial sections may be used by the family of the deceased for contemplation, prayer, mourning, or reflection.

b. Additionally, cemetery directors and staff will protect religious beliefs of cemetery visitors during VA sponsored ceremonies and special events and during non-VA sponsored ceremonies and special events as follows:

(1) Ceremonies or special events to honor military service, whether sponsored by VA or a non-VA entity, may include religious prayers, recitations, or orations.

(2) For VA sponsored ceremonies conducted in VA national cemeteries, NCA will seek to foster religious tolerance and inclusion when selecting speakers and developing an agenda. Cemetery directors may consult with VA chaplains on effective ways to promote these goals.

(3) When reviewing non-VA sponsored ceremonies or special events for approval, cemetery directors will do so without regard to the inclusion or exclusion of any particular faith tradition in the proposed ceremonies or events.

(4) Cemetery directors will not review speeches or prayers for religious content in advance of any ceremony or special event, whether sponsored by VA or a non-VA entity.

(5) Cemetery directors will not condition a speaker's participation in a VA sponsored or non-VA sponsored special ceremony or event at the cemetery on abstaining from religious speech or expression.

RESPONSE PROCEDURES

1. APPROVED REQUESTS

a. The Cemetery Director has the authority to approve ceremony and special event requests from non-VA sponsors if they determine that a proposed ceremony or special event is appropriate to NCA's mission to honor Veterans' service, except for determinations on requests that are specifically reserved for the District Executive Directors or the Executive Director, Cemetery Operations, as described in paragraphs 3.a.(1)(a) and 3.a.(1)(b) and 3.a.(5) and 3.c.(3) of this Directive.

b. If the Cemetery Director determines that a request, which the Cemetery Director has the authority to approve or disapprove, conforms to the requirements in this Directive, or if the Cemetery Director receives approval from a District Executive Director or the Executive Director, Cemetery Operations, the Cemetery Director will approve the request in writing to the sponsoring organization. The approval letter must be on cemetery letterhead, dated and signed by the Cemetery Director or responsible designee, and include the following information.

(1) The approved date and timeframe for the ceremony or special event.

(2) Information on the type of assistance, if any, the cemetery staff will provide, such as seating, use of a public address system, traffic control, and clean-up.

(3) Information on types of assistance the cemetery will not provide, if applicable (NCA cannot rent equipment to support a request from a non-VA sponsor).

(4) Requirements for the condition in which the cemetery grounds must be left after the event.

(5) The name and telephone number of the cemetery staff member who will be the point of contact for the sponsoring organization.

(6) The following, in its entirety, must be included in all approval letters that pertain to ceremonies involving persons interred in national cemeteries: "Pursuant to title 38, United States Code, section 2403(c), all national cemeteries shall be considered national shrines as a tribute to our gallant dead. National cemeteries are non-public forums, and ceremonies must be commemorative in nature and reflect upon the service of the individuals who rest in our cemeteries. Therefore, we expect that the remembrance of their sacrifice will be the focus of any non-partisan remarks made by various speakers during the (insert name of activity). NCA advises that all visitors to National Cemeteries conduct themselves in a manner appropriate for activities occurring at a national shrine and that the decorum of the cemetery and the dignity of those who are buried within its grounds is reflected at all times in the actions of all participants at a ceremony, in accordance with 38 CFR § 1.218, Security and law enforcement at VA facilities."

(7) A statement that appropriate conduct is expected from all participants at the ceremony or special event, in accordance with [38 CFR § 1.218](#), Security and Law Enforcement at VA facilities. Cemeteries will provide a copy of the current regulation to the requestor.

NOTE: Cemetery Directors may obtain a copy of the most recent version of the regulation by sending a request to NCA's Policy and Regulatory Service at nca42eaction@va.gov.

c. The Cemetery Director will retain a copy of the signed approval letter in the cemetery's official records.

2. DISAPPROVED REQUESTS

a. If a Cemetery Director determines that the request for a ceremony or special event, which they have the authority to approve or disapprove does not conform to the requirements set forth in this Directive, or if the Cemetery Director receives a disapproval from the District Executive Director or Executive Director, Cemetery Operations, the Cemetery Director must prepare a denial letter that includes the following information:

(1) Reasons and bases for the disapproval.

(2) Steps the sponsoring organization would need to take for this or future requests to be approved.

b. The Cemetery Director will submit a draft of the disapproval letter and any background information to the appropriate District Executive Director or through the appropriate District Executive Director to the Executive Director, Cemetery Operations.

c. Cemetery Directors must send the final disapproval letter to the requestor once a response is received from the District Executive Director (or from the Executive Director, Cemetery Operations, through the District Executive Director) to issue the disapproval letter.

d. The final denial letter must be on cemetery letterhead, dated and signed by the Cemetery Director or responsible designee.

e. The cemetery must keep a copy of the signed approval or denial letter as the official record copy and is required to send copies to the appropriate District Executive Director.

CEREMONY MONITORING PROCEDURES

1. Cemetery Directors or their supervisory designee must monitor approved ceremonies and document any actions that occur in violation of 38 CFR § 1.218(a)(14), including but not limited to coarse utterances, violent or threatening words, abusive language, partisan commentary, and other forms of restricted speech, including symbolic speech (e.g., unapproved placards, banners, or foreign flags).
2. Cemetery Directors and cemetery staff will allow an approved ceremony to continue despite non-compliance with 38 CFR § 1.218(a)(14) unless the non-compliant conduct poses a threat to public health and safety (e.g., use of fighting words that incite or threaten an immediate breach of peace, injury, or confrontation). If necessary, Cemetery Directors may request assistance from law enforcement as described in 38 CFR § 1.218(c).
3. Cemetery Directors will use notes taken during or immediately following the ceremony or special event to report non-compliance issues following the First Notice of Event (or “FNOE”) process. The Executive Director, Cemetery Operations, will assist Cemetery Directors and District Executive Directors in determining the appropriate action(s) to be taken regarding any violation(s).

**NON-VA SPONSORED CEREMONY OR SPECIAL EVENT RECOMMENDATION TO
CEMETERY OPERATIONS TEMPLATE**

PART I – Questionnaire *(To be completed by the cemetery director or their designee)*

1. Cemetery Name:

2. Sponsoring Organization:

3. Sponsoring Organization’s Point of Contact

Name:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Mailing Address (optional):

4. Ceremony/Event Date:

Is this a weekday?: **Yes** **No**

If “No,” please specify the weekend day: **Saturday** **Sunday**

5. Ceremony/Event Purpose

5a. Confederate Ceremonies/Events. Is the primary purpose to commemorate or recognize Confederate Service members (soldiers, sailors or marines)?

Yes **No** *If “Yes,” go to next question. If “No,” go to item 5b.*

Are there Confederate Service members interred at the cemetery where the sponsoring organization is requesting that the ceremony/event take place?

Yes **No** *Go to next question. (If “No,” NCA may deny the request.)*

Does the request include the display of one or more Confederate flags in accordance with NCA Directive 3220? **Yes** **No** *If “Yes,” go to next question. If “No,” go to item 6.*

If “No,” go to item 6.

Select the type of flag display requested based on the proposed date of the ceremony/event. Only one type can be selected.

Federal Memorial Day (last Monday in May) *If selected, go to item 6.*

Confederate Memorial Day (observed as a state holiday in some southern states) *If selected, go to item 6.*

In-Lieu of (ILO) Confederate Memorial Day *If this type is selected, the following questions must be answered:*

Has another organization already displayed one or more Confederate flags as part of an approved ceremony/event within the same fiscal year as the ceremony/event currently being requested? **Yes** **No**

If “Yes,” Provide the following information (Note, NCA may deny the request): The name of the sponsoring organization and date for the approved ceremony/event with a Confederate flag display that has already occurred at this cemetery in the same fiscal year:

If “No,” Answer the following question: Has more than one organization submitted a request for a ceremony/event with a Confederate flag display that is currently under review for decision? **Yes** **No** Go to item 6. (If “Yes,” also refer to NCA Directive 3170 Appendix A, Paragraph 2.(b).)

- 5b.** Briefly describe the sensitive or potentially controversial nature of the requested ceremony/event that requires it to be approved or disapproved by the Executive Director, Cemetery Operations:
- 6.** Ceremony/Event start and end time (including setup and breakdown):
- 7.** Estimated number of attendees:
- 8.** Ceremony/Event location within the cemetery:
- 9.** Did the sponsoring organization submit a signed and dated request in writing (email is acceptable) to the cemetery at least 45 days in advance of the proposed ceremony/event date? **Yes** **No**

Did this request include the following required files?:

- A copy of the ceremony/event agenda, including all planned activities and the names and affiliations of any potential speakers. **Note:** “TBD” is not an acceptable entry for planned activities or potential speakers. **Yes** **No**
- An affirmative statement that the sponsoring organization assumes liability for all actions and events that are directly related to its requested ceremony or special event and that it holds VA harmless for any damage to property or injuries that are directly related to the requested ceremony or special event. **Yes** **No**

- 10a.** Does the ceremony/event request include the ceremonial carrying and/or discharge weapons (includes firearms and cannons)?: **Yes** **No** If “Yes,” go to next question. If “No,” go to item 11.

Did the sponsoring organization submit the part of their written request involving the ceremonial carrying and/or discharging of weapons (including firearms and

cannons) at least 45 days in advance of the proposed ceremony/event date?

Yes No Go to next question. (If “No,” NCA may deny the request.)

Did this part of their request include the following certification information regarding the carrying and/or discharge of weapons on cemetery property?:

- *“The sponsoring organization certifies that no live ammunition will be carried or discharged on cemetery grounds in the context of ceremonies or special events with the exception of the carrying of side arms and live ammunition by military personnel who are detailed to protect military service members and their equipment during ceremonial firings, or for other official purposes as consistent with 38 CFR 1.218(a)(13); and that the carrying or discharge of firearms or cannons with blanks will be made only in the context of memorializing those buried within the national cemetery.”*
- *“The sponsoring organization accepts liability for any harm to persons or property resulting from the carrying or discharge of firearms or cannons on cemetery grounds and must hold VA harmless for any damage to property or injuries resulting from such actions.”*

Yes No Go to next question. (If “No,” NCA may deny the request.)

10b. Provide the date the cemetery director provided the sponsoring organization with

VA Standards of Conduct pursuant to 38 CFR Section 1.218:

11. Name and email address of the Cemetery Director or their Supervisory Designee who will monitor the ceremony/event if approved:

Part II – Attachments (To be included with this document)

- Dated and signed written request by the sponsoring organization.
- Copy of the event’s agenda, including the proposed activities and names and affiliation of potential speakers. “TBD” is not acceptable.

Part III – Recommendation and Record of Decision

I recommend that the Executive Director, Cemetery Operations, APPROVE / DISAPPROVE (*select one*) this CEREMONY / SPECIAL EVENT (*select one*) request.

(Executive) Director's Name
(Executive) Director, Cemetery

() CONCUR w/Recommendation () NON-CONCUR

Executive Director's Name
Executive Director, District

() APPROVE Request () DISAPPROVE

Executive Director's Name
Executive Director, Cemetery Operations