



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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### Statement of Historic Contexts

The United States War Department developed seven national cemeteries in the period between the world wars, specifically in the years 1934-1939. The national cemeteries are: Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, San Diego, California (1934); Baltimore National Cemetery, Baltimore, Maryland (1936); Long Island National Cemetery, Farmingdale, New York (1936); Fort Bliss National Cemetery, El Paso, Texas (1936); Fort Snelling National Cemetery, Minneapolis, Minnesota (1937); Golden Gate National Cemetery, San Bruno, California (1937); and Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio, Texas (1937). While some previously existed as post cemeteries, their official designation as national cemeteries between 1934 and 1939 represented the first major expansion of the national cemetery system since the Civil War, and the first use of veterans' demographic trends to guide cemetery development. For this reason the multiple property context is defined as 1934-1939, although the origins of themes discussed in the context date to the Civil War.

### Development of National Cemeteries, 1862-1940

Congress first gave the president the authority to establish national cemeteries early in the Civil War with the passage of the Act of July 17, 1862 (12 Stat. 596):

That the President of the United States shall have power, whenever in his opinion it shall be expedient, to purchase cemetery grounds, and cause them to be securely enclosed, to be used as a national cemetery for the soldiers who shall die in the service of the country.

This legislation not only established the first national cemeteries, but also reserved space therein for soldiers who died in battle or who died while on active duty during the Civil War.<sup>1</sup> Every subsequent war—including the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II—shaped the national cemetery system. Interments include peacetime military service, as well. A combination of congressional legislation and executive orders that followed each of these wars guided its development.<sup>2</sup> Although established in reaction to an unanticipated need, and evolving on an almost ad hoc basis for its first decade, the story of the national cemeteries is one of gradually expanding benefits to veterans and their dependents.

### Civil War-Era National Cemeteries

Leading up to the Civil War, most military burials occurred upon isolated posts. Grave markers, if used at all, were usually rounded-top wooden boards with a grave number, name, or other inscription. In some cases, benevolent troops or immediate family provided a more permanent private marker. That the United States

<sup>1</sup> Department of the Army (DOA), *Data on National Cemeteries, Department of the Army, January 1970* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office [GPO], 1970), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Steere and Thayer M. Boardman, *Final Disposition of World War II Dead, 1945-51*, QMC Historical Studies, Series II, No. 4 (Washington, DC: DOA, OQMG [OQMG], Historical Branch, 1957): 25; Edward Steere, "Shrines of the Honored Dead: A Study of the National Cemetery System" (A series of six articles written by Steere, a OQMG historian), *Quartermaster Review* (1953-54): 1-2.

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Army was not prepared to meet large-scale burial needs, especially on foreign soil, became evident during the Mexican-American War, 1846-48.<sup>3</sup> The Army maintained no reliable record of the dead; more than 90 percent of the burials were unknown. In 1850-51, the United States established the American cemetery in Mexico City in which to honor the soldiers who had died three years earlier. The military reinterred the remains of 750 American soldiers from makeshift battlefield graves and placed them in the new cemetery. Not one set of remains could be identified.<sup>4</sup>

The first year of the Civil War brought the inadequacy of burial policies and practices to the forefront. General Orders No. 75 of the War Department, dated September 11, 1861, mandated the first improvement in standardized burials and burial recordkeeping. Although the act made no provision for the legal acquisition of cemetery land, the Army soon established burial plots near large hospitals. Military burials often occurred on donated land. The origin of the Soldiers' Home Cemetery in the District of Columbia came from this method.<sup>5</sup>

The July 1862 act provided the legal basis for purchasing and maintaining a system of national cemeteries. The legislation placed management responsibility for the system with the quartermasters of the local military commands and its command authority with the Office of the Quartermaster General, within the United States Army Quartermaster Department.<sup>6</sup>

Initially, many national cemeteries were located at large battle sites and in areas of troop concentrations, where many died from disease. Despite the authority to purchase land, acquisition of cemetery grounds was irregular. In the most famous case, Federal forces seized the pre-Civil War home of Confederate General Robert E. Lee early in the conflict and used a portion as a burial ground and symbol, overlooking Washington, DC. Arlington National Cemetery, named for Lee's property, Arlington, did not become official property of the United States until 1883, at the conclusion of a lengthy court case between the government and Lee's descendants.<sup>7</sup>

Many Civil War cemeteries were positioned for convenience. During and after the war, others were placed in intentionally beautiful settings. The cemetery in Chattanooga, Tennessee, for example, was located on a picturesque hill selected by General George Thomas after the Battle of Chattanooga.<sup>8</sup> By the end of the war in April 1865, there were approximately 30 national cemeteries. During the war, and for several years afterward,

<sup>3</sup> Steere, "Shrines," 3; Cemetery Program Study Team, *A Report to the Secretary of the Army on the Cemetery Expense Program of the Department of the Army* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1965), I-D-1; Dean W. Holt, *American Military Cemeteries: A Comprehensive Illustrated Guide to the Hallowed Grounds of the United States, Including Cemeteries Overseas* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 1992), 471.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Steere, *The Graves Registration Service in World War II*, QMC Historical Studies, No. 21 (Washington, DC: DOA, OQMG, Historical Branch, 1951), 3.

<sup>5</sup> Steere, "Shrines," 4; Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), *Civil War Era National Cemeteries: National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*, by Therese T. Sammartino (Washington, DC, 1994), E-4.

<sup>6</sup> Steere, "Graves Registration," 4; Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 4-5, 409, 418.

<sup>7</sup> Steere, "Shrines," 7-9.

<sup>8</sup> Steere, "Shrines," 10.

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regulations restricted burial in national cemeteries to United States soldiers who fell in battle or who died while on active duty during the war.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the national cemeteries, military circumstances resulted in the federal government's responsibility for other burials, including Confederate prisoners of war, citizens, quartermaster employees and family members. Today the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) manages 33 soldiers' lots, government lots, Confederate cemeteries, and monument sites, the majority of which are associated with the Civil War. A prominent group of early sites are the cemeteries affiliated with the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, which were operated by a 12-member Board of Managers as a parallel management system.<sup>10</sup> This group of cemeteries contributes to the associated National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers National Register for Historic Places nominations and National Historic Landmark designations.

### Expansion of Burial Benefits

Expansion of the national cemetery system continued after the Civil War. In 1865, Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs tallied burial records for only 101,736 soldiers interred in national cemeteries, or less than one-third of Union war dead. Meigs ordered that the Union dead left in the field or buried in municipal or private cemeteries be reinterred in the new national cemeteries. The Cemeterial Branch, established 1867 in the Quartermaster General's Office in Washington, DC, was responsible for this massive undertaking. By the time the reinterment program was completed in 1871, the remains of more than 315,000 Union soldiers were found, consolidated, and relocated—of which almost 60 percent were identified—within 73 national cemeteries.<sup>11</sup> Though decaying within a few years after installation, painted wooden headboards first marked graves.

Within cemetery grounds, interments were organized within burial sections identified with a number or letter; graves were numbered within each section. By design or practice, the Army initially identified burial sections to segregate officers and enlisted men, white and black soldiers, and the unknown. In proportion to the total of number of Civil War interments, relatively few contain the remains of officers. Some late 1860s plans of the national cemeteries clearly identify sections designated for "white" or "colored" enlisted men, and officers reference this situation in official correspondence. However, no written regulation or policy has been found to support any detailed plan for burial segregation.<sup>12</sup> As time passed, and burial benefits extended to greater

<sup>9</sup> Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 85.

<sup>10</sup> Donald E. Johnson, *A Study of the National Cemetery System* (Washington, DC: VA, 1974), 4-5.

<sup>11</sup> Steere and Boardman, "Final Disposition," 25-26; Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 3, 471-472; OQMG, Quartermaster Historian's Office, *Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775-1939*, by Erna Risch (Washington, DC: GPO, 1962), 466.

<sup>12</sup> Report of Lt. Col. E.B. Whitman, Superintendent of National Cemeteries, Department of Cumberland, Louisville, Kentucky, May 1869, RG 92 Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC (NAB); Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 211-49, and regarding segregated burial custom, note 43. As late as the 1934, some cemetery plans included these distinctions, such as those initially prepared for Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in Texas.; however, ca. 1947, as Fort Bliss National Cemetery, in Texas, prepared for the return of World War II dead, the superintendent explained that although separate sections existed in the

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number of Civil War veterans and spouses, gravesites were increasingly assigned regardless of rank and regiment. Race may have been a more conscience concern at national cemeteries located in southern states, but eventually the cemetery system's priority was the need to provide grave sites for veterans of 20<sup>th</sup> century conflicts.

In 1866, Congress broadened the eligibility for burial benefits. Legislation clarified ambiguous language in the 1862 act to clearly state that burial in national cemeteries was open to those soldiers who died of disease in the field and in hospitals. An Act of June 1, 1872 (17 Stat. 202) opened burial benefits to all soldiers and sailors honorably discharged from the service of the United States who might die in destitute condition.<sup>13</sup>

Veterans' eligibility was expanded again in an Act of March 3, 1873 (17 Stat. 605). The new legislation extended burial benefits to "all honorably discharged soldiers sailors or marines who served during the late war either in the regular or volunteer forces."<sup>14</sup> This change opened access to national cemeteries to all Union veterans who survived the Civil War, not just those who died destitute.<sup>15</sup> The expansion to a much greater number of potential veterans in need of grave space also led to the establishment of San Francisco National Cemetery in 1884, the first on the West Coast.<sup>16</sup>

The evolution of benefits associated with the national cemetery system was in large part due to pressure exerted by the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), a veterans' group composed of former Union soldiers and officers. Eligibility for burial in the national cemeteries continued to broaden in the years to follow, often with incremental changes that eventually became policy, and then law. In 1890, wives and widows of Civil War veterans received extended burial benefits. In 1904, minor children of Civil War veterans received the benefit, and soon after, unmarried adult daughters. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, opening up eligibility for burial did not pose a major problem, as only 3.5 percent of eligible Civil War veterans of veterans chose burial in national cemeteries. The relatively low percentage derives from the fact that many veterans lived in rural communities or had moved to the western half of the country, where they did not have ready access to a national cemetery.<sup>17</sup>

### Headstones and Markers

During the post-Civil War period, the United States Army Quartermaster Corps resolved the issue of permanent headstones and grave markers for national cemeteries, at least for a few decades. General Montgomery C.

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cemetery, from then onward, there would be "no segregation of any kind." "Army Prepares Fort Bliss Cemetery for Return of World War II Dead," [*El Paso Times?*], 1.

<sup>13</sup> Johnson, *National Cemetery System*, 1; DOA, *Data*, 1.

<sup>14</sup> Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 85; DOA, *Data*, 1.

<sup>15</sup> OQMG, *Quartermaster Support*, 467; Steere, "Shrines," 21.

<sup>16</sup> Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Steere, "Shrines," 18-21; Steere and Boardman, "Final Disposition," 26-27; Johnson, *National Cemetery System*, 1-2.

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Meigs, who did so much to develop the national cemetery system, resisted the urge to use stone markers, favoring instead the use of cast-iron blocks.<sup>18</sup>

Most others within the United States Army Quartermaster Corps did not share Meigs' view. Brevet Brigadier General James J. Dana, in charge of cemeterial operations around the capital city, preferred stone.<sup>19</sup> In 1866, he stated:

Public opinion seems to be turning to a more permanent mode of marking the graves than by wooden headboards, and I would respectfully give it my opinion that the sentiment of the nation will not only sustain the expense of marble or other permanent memorial, but... that it will be likely to demand it in a few years.<sup>20</sup>

The first legislation to address this need was the Act of February 22, 1867, which provided for a stone or iron fence around each cemetery and a small stone headstone or block for each grave.<sup>21</sup> The National Cemetery Act also authorized that disabled volunteer Union veterans should be appointed as cemetery superintendents and provided with proper housing. Finally, the act instructed that a quartermaster officer detail annually inspect all national cemeteries.

The Secretary of War adopted the first permanent headstone designs in 1873. Markers for graves of known dead were white upright marble with a rounded top measuring 4 inches thick, 10 inches wide, and 12 inches high above ground. Inscriptions on each marker included a grave number, the name of the deceased, shortened if necessary, the military rank (if higher than private), and the state or United States military affiliation (USA for Army, USN for Navy and USCT for Colored Troops), as appropriate. Stone blocks measuring 6 inches square marked the graves of unknowns. A grave number marked each. The blocks were placed 6 inches above ground, 2 feet below ground. In practice, heights varied by site. The first contracts to produce these headstones were let by December 1873. By an Act of February 3, 1879 (20 Stat. 281), Congress extended the use of these government headstones to veterans buried in private and municipal cemeteries, as well.<sup>22</sup>

This basic formula for national cemetery headstones and markers functioned from 1873 until the early years of the twentieth century. Markers were almost exclusively made of marble, though one national cemetery—Fredericksburg—used granite for a different style of upright headstone. While the original specifications did not include a recessed shield with raised letters, some government contractors produced this design at least by the 1876. Commonly referred to as the “Civil War” or “pre-World War I” headstone, this style marked veteran

<sup>18</sup> Mollan, Mark C., “Honoring Our War Dead: Evolution of the Government Policy on Headstones for Fallen Soldiers and Sailors,” *Prologue Magazine*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Spring 2003): 1, [www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2003/spring/headstones.html](http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2003/spring/headstones.html) (accessed April 14, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> OQMG, *Quartermaster Support*, 466-467.

<sup>20</sup> Steere, “Graves Registration,” 9.

<sup>21</sup> National Cemetery Act of 1867, 14 Stat. 399, Ch. 39, (1867).

<sup>22</sup> Johnson, *National Cemetery System*, 18; Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 472; Cemetery Program Study Team, I-D-2.

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graves from both earlier and later wars, such as the U.S.-Mexican War (1846-48), the various Indian Wars (1817-1898), and the Spanish-American War (1898).<sup>23</sup> Headstones for the latter also contained the inscription “SP-AM” or a variation on the name abbreviated or written out; this distinguished them from veterans who served in the Civil War, a reference that was intentionally omitted from headstone and marker inscriptions.

Changes in headstone and marker design occurred incrementally. Early on, inscriptions were limited to the decedent’s name and rank, grave number, and state or United States military affiliation. Other information, if known, was recorded in the cemetery register. Later, the simple state and United States military affiliation was replaced with more detailed regimental information (i.e., Co. B, 1 ME Inf. for Company B, 1<sup>st</sup> Maine Infantry). Eventually birth and death dates appeared on headstones in the late nineteenth century. In 1903, the United States Army Quartermaster Corps discontinued the square blocks for unknown dead and replaced them with upright marble headstones with the inscription “Unknown U.S. Soldier.”<sup>24</sup>

### Impact of the Spanish-American War

The Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection (1898-1902) was the first conflict in which American soldiers died abroad in substantial numbers since the U.S.-Mexican War. Following this conflict, the Quartermaster Burial Corps, composed of civilian morticians, for the first time in the nation’s history, repatriated the remains of all soldiers killed in action and those who died in the service.<sup>25</sup> As a result of improved record keeping, the percentage of unknown dead continued to drop: 13.6 percent, as compared to 42 percent unknown as a result of the Civil War.<sup>26</sup> The war with Spain occurred at the end of a period of Indian wars spanning more than three decades in the western United States. Continuous wars underscored the need for more national cemeteries. In the late 1800s, as the Army abandoned unneeded military posts along the old emigrant trails, post burials were transferred to national cemeteries, including new ones at Fort McPherson, Nebraska, Santa Fe, New Mexico, and San Francisco, California.<sup>27</sup> By the close of the nineteenth century, the Army maintained 81 national cemeteries.<sup>28</sup>

Despite more recent wars, the greatest impetus for establishing new cemeteries still came from the burial needs of Civil War veterans and their families. The Spanish-American War, however, did much to heal lingering sectional divisions left over from the Civil War. It also was the first conflict for which the remains of deceased servicemen were returned to American soil for burial.

An Act of March 9, 1906 (34 Stat. 56), known as the “Foraker Bill,” provided for marking the graves of Confederate soldiers who died as prisoners of war in Federal prisons and military hospitals in the North and

<sup>23</sup> Johnson, *National Cemetery System*, 21; Cemetery Program Study Team, I-D-2.

<sup>24</sup> Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 377.

<sup>25</sup> Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 3; Steere, “Shrines,” 23-24

<sup>26</sup> Steere, “Graves Registration,” 3.

<sup>27</sup> OQMG, *Quartermaster Support*, 468.

<sup>28</sup> DOA, *Data*, 2.



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were buried near their places of confinement. The headstones were similar to those erected in the “Confederate section” of Arlington National Cemetery: white marble with pointed tops. The inscription included the soldier’s name, grade if above private, company, and regiment—just like those of Union soldiers and sailors. Use of this type of headstone extended to Confederates buried in “national, city, town, or village cemeteries” by an Act of February 26, 1929 (45 Stat. 1307). The following year, the War Department implemented regulations that authorized the inscription of the Confederate Cross of Honor in a small circle at the top center of the front above the inscription.

### Impact of World War I

Eligibility criteria for interment in a national cemetery continued to expand during the first two decades of the twentieth century. By 1908, convention allowed minor children and adult daughters of eligible veterans to be buried in national cemeteries; an Act of Congress (62 Stat. 234) secured this in 1948. An Act of March 4, 1911 (36 Stat. 1389), allowed personnel of the Revenue Cutter Service (predecessor of the Coast Guard) access to the national cemeteries if they died in service or died destitute after honorable discharge.<sup>29</sup>

The impact of World War I (1914-1918) eclipsed these turn-of-the-century changes in eligibility. The Civil War was a conflict on a massive scale that triggered the creation and development of the national cemetery system. By comparison, the subsequent frontier wars and even the Spanish-American War were minor. None of these changed the basic nature of the national cemetery system. World War I was different. The United States did not enter the war until spring 1917, but in spite of the late start, it mobilized almost 5 million men and suffered more than 250,000 casualties before the Armistice of November 11, 1918. Of these, at least 79,351 died in action or in hospitals from wounds.<sup>30</sup>

The War Department set up its Graves Registration Service shortly after the United States entered World War I, according to General Orders No. 104. The service’s efficiency and new use of dog tags ensured that unknown burials totaled only 3½ percent.<sup>31</sup> In March 1918, the secretaries of War and the Navy decided to bury American war dead in Europe during the conflict, and later repatriate the remains if practical. Initiated as a wartime expedient, the idea of honoring the war dead where they perished quickly grew in popularity. During the war and afterward, the federal government asked next of kin to choose where the deceased should be interred in perpetuity. Some 65 percent favored repatriation. The balance of in excess of 30,000 remains, including the unknown, was consolidated into eight American cemeteries: six created in France, and one each in England and Belgium.<sup>32</sup> Of these remains, more than 8,000 were buried as unknown. These European properties were not part of the domestic national cemetery system. Ultimately, 46,520 remains were returned

<sup>29</sup> DOA, *Data*, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Maj. William R. White, “Our Soldier Dead,” *The Quartermaster Review*, May-June (1930), [www.qmfound.com/soldier\\_dead.htm](http://www.qmfound.com/soldier_dead.htm) (accessed April 11, 2009),

<sup>31</sup> Steere, “Graves Registration,” 2.

<sup>32</sup> White, “Our Soldier Dead;” OQMG, *Quartermaster Support*, 694-695.

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stateside, all of them known. Of these, less than 12 percent or 5,300 individuals were reburied in national cemeteries.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the relatively small number of burials, World War I impacted the national cemetery system in two ways: religious symbols were introduced on headstones and markers, and military service resulted in a significant increase in the pool of those eligible for a burial benefit. Temporary wooden crosses, painted white, were placed on graves in the European cemeteries; relatives who traveled overseas to visit a fallen father, son, or husband liked them. Soon there was a growing demand for other religious symbols on headstones (“emblems of belief”) placed in United States national cemeteries.<sup>34</sup> When patriotic groups like the American Legion and American War Mothers took up the cause, the outcome was almost inevitable.<sup>35</sup>

The single-most important variation on government-issued headstones to-date occurred after World War I when the War Department redesigned the upright marble to distinguish these veterans from service during earlier conflicts. The first edition of this new headstone was 2 inches thick, 40 inches high, and 10 inches wide. The top was slightly rounded and a religious emblem was inscribed on the front face—a Maltese cross for those of the Christian faith and a Star of David for those of the Hebrew faith.<sup>36</sup> More than 2,000 of these headstones were placed in national cemeteries before they were determined to be unsatisfactory.<sup>37</sup> On April 26, 1922, a board composed of the Assistant Secretary of War, Chief of Staff, and the Quartermaster General approved a heftier headstone design, replaced the Maltese cross with a Latin cross for those of the Christian faith, and retained the Star of David for those of the Hebrew faith. This so-called “General type” headstone was used to permanently mark World War I burials, and conflicts to present.<sup>38</sup>

The General-type headstone has a slightly rounded top and is made of white American marble; it measures 42 inches high, 13 inches wide, and 4 inches thick. The height of each headstone measures approximately 26 inches above ground. The inscription includes name, rank, regiment, division, date of birth, date of death, and home state. The top center of the headstone has an optional emblem of belief. The number of emblem of belief

<sup>33</sup> Steere and Boardman, “Final Disposition of World War II Dead,” 27.

<sup>34</sup> Cemetery Program Study Team, I-D-2.

<sup>35</sup> Col. Frederick Van Duyne, QMC, “Erection of Permanent Headstones in the American Military Cemeteries in Europe,” *The Quartermaster Review*, January-February (1930), [www.qmfound.com/stone.htm](http://www.qmfound.com/stone.htm) (accessed April 22, 2009); Maj. Louis C. Wilson, “The War Mother Goes ‘Over There,’” *The Quartermaster Review*, May-June (1930), [www.qmfound.com/war\\_mother.htm](http://www.qmfound.com/war_mother.htm) (accessed April 22, 2009).

<sup>36</sup> Regarding the use of Hebrew rather than Jewish to identify religious faith, Deborah Dash Moore in *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (2006) explains “service identification requirements for burial and opportunities for religious observance included four choices: Protestant, Catholic, Hebrew, or ‘blank,’ signifying no religious affiliation. ‘Hebrew’ stood for ‘Jew,’ a system of classification derived from 1899 federal immigration records. [...] ‘Hebrew’ harkened back to biblical times, before the Middle Ages made ‘Jew’ a term of rebuke. ‘Hebrew’ inspired respect and suggested a common religious heritage with Christians in the Old Testament.” (73).

<sup>37</sup> Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 378.

<sup>38</sup> The War Department, and subsequently the Veterans Administration/Department of Veterans Affairs, continued to approve new emblems of belief. Johnson, *National Cemetery System*, 19-20, 25.

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options began to increase after World War II. In February 1997, with the Inclusive Inscription Policy, the NCA introduced additional inscription lines for personal messages on the headstones.

In 1923, Congress created the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) to supervise all overseas American military cemeteries. The following year, ABMC decided that the American cemeteries in Europe would have permanent marble headstones in the shape of crosses and stars.<sup>39</sup> By 1934, ABMC had taken over all management duties at overseas cemeteries from the War Department.<sup>40</sup>

The second impact of World War I, and the most significant for veterans henceforth, was the Act of April 15, 1920 (41 Stat. 552), which greatly expanded eligibility for burial in the national cemeteries. The legislation specified that all soldiers, sailors, and marines would be eligible “who served, or hereafter shall have served, during any war in which the United States has been, or may hereafter be, engaged, and, with the consent of the Secretary of War, and any citizen of the United States who served in the Army or Navy of any government at war with Germany or Austria during the World War [...]” This change opened up the national cemetery system to most of the 5 million soldiers and sailors who were mobilized during World War I.

### Impact of Urban Growth

Not only did World War I open a new demographic to be served by the national cemetery system, but it was also more likely that eligible veterans would choose to be buried in a national cemetery. This shift was due to the spectacular rise of American cities in the early twentieth century. By the 1920s, the nation passed a critical milestone in the transition from rural to urban living. In 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, only one-sixth of the nation’s population was urban, and even then most cities were relatively small; the number rose to one-third by 1890, and by the 1920s it was one-half of the nation.<sup>41</sup> Some cities were immense: New York was one of the largest in the world, Chicago was not far behind. San Francisco and Los Angeles were smaller, but growing rapidly. The concentration of veterans in and around these metropolises made it inevitable that they would seek burial in urban and suburban national cemeteries more than ever before.

In 1929, the War Department conducted a survey of its 84 national cemeteries. With an average rate of 2,779 burials per year, it estimated there was space available in the existing cemeteries to serve veterans until the year 1993. While there was plenty of room for new burials overall, most grave space was located in remote cemeteries not easily accessible to veterans. More than half of all interments system-wide occurred in just nine national cemeteries located in or near the largest cities in the United States. This pattern began with World War I, and the shortage of burial space at these locations compounded as veterans aged and began to die in large numbers. As a result, the survey recommended congressional appropriations to create new or expanded

<sup>39</sup> Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 474; Cemetery Program Study Team, I-D-2-3.

<sup>40</sup> Elizabeth Nishiura, ed., *American Battle Monuments: A Guide to Military Cemeteries and Monuments Maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission* (Detroit: Omnigraphics, 1989), 3.

<sup>41</sup> Steere and Boardman, “Final Disposition,” 27.

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national cemeteries to serve large urban centers. Seven new properties were established in the next decade.<sup>42</sup> Based on the span of time required for design and construction, the group is known as the Inter-World War national cemeteries.

Development of the Inter-World War national cemeteries came at a time of great national change, both economically and culturally. The Great Depression, which began in late 1929, deepened in the early 1930s to become the worst economic downturn experienced by the country. After Franklin Roosevelt was elected to the presidency in March 1933, his New Deal programs ameliorated the worst of the crisis for millions of Americans, but the Depression itself did not end until World War II initiated the largest public spending effort in United States history.

### Impact of Military Planning

The impact of World War I included the availability of funding for military properties. In the full mobilization of resources for World War I, the military oversaw a massive construction program for training camps, stations, and depots.<sup>43</sup> Then, the Army underwent demobilization and an extensive modernization program throughout the 1920s and 1930s. During these years, all military facilities underwent improvements bringing them up to the standards civilian communities enjoyed at the time.<sup>44</sup> Improvements include the national cemeteries founded between World War I and World War II. The War Department continued to manage a majority of national cemeteries.

Following the June 1919 Treaty of Versailles, American military interests declined sharply. The international community formed the League of Nations, conferences discussed disarmament, and the Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawed war as an instrument of national policy. Military funding reflected the interests of the American people and declined to pre-war levels.

By 1926, deterioration brought on by neglect of the quickly erected, temporary wooden military buildings overcame the fiscal constraint; Public Law No. 45 (44 Stat. 203) slated that 43 military installations were to be upgraded.<sup>45</sup> The modernization plan included not only permanent buildings, but also the application of the latest city-planning techniques of examining property as a whole to increase the quality of life for military personnel. The application of Garden City and City Beautiful ideals to military property is attributed to George B. Ford, an urban planner and planning advisor to the War Department between 1926 and 1930.<sup>46</sup> Under Ford,

<sup>42</sup> Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 3-4; Steere, "Shrines," 29.

<sup>43</sup> R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates, *Support and Utility Structures and Facilities (1917-1946): Overview, Inventory and Treatment Plan*, (Norfolk: Department of the Navy, Atlantic Division, 1995) 11, 12.

<sup>44</sup> Goodwin, *Support and Utility*, 11.

<sup>45</sup> Goodwin, *Support and Utility*, 17.

<sup>46</sup> United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Seattle District, Technical Center of Expertise for Preservation of Structures and Buildings, *Context Study of the U.S. Quartermaster General Standardized Plans, 1866-1942*, (Aberdeen Proving Ground: United States Army Environmental Center Environmental Compliance Division, 1997), 48.

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street and landscapes incorporated natural vistas and irregular streetscapes rather than rigid militaristic patterns and straight lines.<sup>47</sup> After Ford, others within the Quartermaster Corps took up the mantle and continued to follow urban-planning trends. Army installations for which Ford approved modernization plans at this time include Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

### New Cemetery Expansion, 1930s

Work on the new cemeteries did not begin in earnest until the New Deal era. Previously, the War Department made a number of administrative changes to the national cemetery system. For example, a new method of categorizing national cemeteries was approved May 27, 1930, which formalized classes based on size and established the type of staff and pay scale of the superintendents.<sup>48</sup>

A much bigger alteration to the system occurred in 1933, when the Army's Quartermaster Corps transferred 11 cemeteries. Up to that point, the Army managed all national cemeteries.<sup>49</sup> The 11 national cemeteries, all historically associated with Civil War battlefield properties, were transferred to the National Park Service (NPS), a bureau of the Department of the Interior, under Executive Order 6166 and reconfirmed by Executive Order 6228. President Herbert Hoover approved this transfer in the last days of his administration, and Roosevelt confirmed it.<sup>50</sup> Arlington National Cemetery remained with the War Department, but the Custis-Lee Mansion itself was turned over to the NPS.<sup>51</sup>

### Headstone and Marker Development

Another evolution within national cemetery development began in 1935 with the introduction of "flat markers" that lay flush on the ground. During the late 1920s, some new cemeteries mandated flush markers as a result of changing cemetery design. Already popular in these private and commercial cemeteries, the absence of a government-issued project to meet this need for veterans attracted the attention of legislators.

<sup>47</sup> USACE, *Context Study*, 48. Open space and community areas were focal points in the planning, yet the focus of those efforts was on house plans and appearance, circulation (sidewalks, roadways), open spaces and building setbacks, and landscaping. The relationship of the residential areas of military campuses to the cemetery grounds was not specifically addressed; however, ideas of city planning that Ford applied elsewhere included the same park-like precepts that guided cemetery design, and in this context, arguably also shaped spatial relationships, circulation patterns (pathways and roadways), and building appearance within the cemetery grounds.

<sup>48</sup> Maj. Gen. Henry Gibbins, Quartermaster General (QMG), memorandum "Classification of Long Island National Cemetery" to Assistant Secretary of War, April 28, 1937, Box 308, Folder "687 Long Island National Cemetery, NY (LINC) 1937 mc," General Correspondence "Geographical File" (GCGF) 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, Record Group 92 (RG 92), National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD (NACP).

<sup>49</sup> In 1912, QMG Department became the Quartermaster Corps (QMC).

<sup>50</sup> Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 5, 409, 423.

<sup>51</sup> Maj. L.M. Leisenring, QM Res, "The Restoration of Arlington House, as Carried Out by the OQMG," *The Quartermaster Review*, March-April (1934), [www.qmmuseum.lee.army.mil/mortuary/Arlington\\_House.htm](http://www.qmmuseum.lee.army.mil/mortuary/Arlington_House.htm) (accessed June 24, 2010).

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The topic of flat markers, especially flat bronze to be provided for veterans in private cemeteries, was the subject of a 1935 congressional hearing. Wisconsin Senator Robert La Follette (Progressive) introduced a bill (Senate Bill 1454) that would oblige the government to provide veterans with flat bronze markers in private cemeteries that required them. The bill would provide for the Quartermaster Corps to furnish bronze markers rather than stone, if requested, “for the grave of any deceased person for which the Secretary is authorized to furnish a marker or headstone.”<sup>52</sup> The testimony laid out in detail the justification for and against bronze markers. In doing so, it also provided valuable insight into the nature of the cemetery business during the Inter-World War period.

The subcommittee first wanted to know the nature of the bronze markers and standard Quartermaster Corps practice in providing them to veterans buried in private cemeteries. From this, it was determined that most bronze markers measured 12 inches by 24 inches; the markers were bolted to a concrete base that was sufficiently thick and set deep enough in the ground to avoid subsidence. The surface of the concrete foundation and the flush marker were set to be level with the ground.<sup>53</sup>

Colonel James Loubach of the Quartermaster Corps testified on the Army’s practice of providing upright headstones versus flush bronze markers. As of 1935, the federal government provided only upright marble headstones, at an average price of \$7.41 each. Loubach said that government-issued grave markers—whether destined for national or private cemeteries—were inscribed with the decedent’s name, rank, and death date. The government ordered about 30,000 headstones each year, orders that were filled by four or five contractors located nationwide. Veterans eligible for government headstones served in any war “as verified from the records of the Adjutant General’s Office.” Three marble stone markers with design types were provided based on the individual’s service: World War [later I], Civil War and the Spanish-American War, and Confederates.<sup>54</sup>

Loubach indicated that the Army’s problem began in 1927, when the government realized that a growing number of private cemeteries refused to accept upright headstones, insisting instead on bronze flush markers. The cemeteries requesting flush markers were located in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Loubach, in response to the proposed bill, said the bronze markers would be more costly than the marble headstones, and that the number of veterans impacted by this impasse was still quite small.<sup>55</sup>

John Thomas Taylor, lobbyist for the American Legion, and Mancell Talcott, chair of that organization’s national grave registration committee, provided input. The Legion supported the bill if it included an amendment to offer flat markers in materials in addition to bronze. To this end, an American Legion resolution was added to the *Congressional Record*:

<sup>52</sup> *Bronze Markers for Certain Graves: Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Military Affairs, 74<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., April 11 and 18, 1935.*

<sup>53</sup> *Bronze Markers*, 9.

<sup>54</sup> *Bronze Markers*, 1-2, 13.

<sup>55</sup> *Bronze Markers*, 2-4.

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Whereas in many communities, cemeteries have adopted general plans prohibiting the erection of headstones above the surface of the earth, and providing for the placing of such headstones flush with the surface... and whereas the United States regulations, as interpreted by the Quartermaster General's Department, provide only for the furnishing of headstones for deceased World War veterans, upon proper application, in dimensions having a length of 42 inches, thickness of 4 inches, and width of 13 inches; and whereas the regulations of certain cemeteries require the placing of headstones flush with the surface of the earth, and provide that such stones be of the following dimensions, viz: length 24 inches, thickness 4 to 6 inches, width 12 inches; and whereas it is the desire of the American Legion to cooperate with such cemeteries and to furnish headstones for deceased World War veterans, in cases where such action is necessary, that will comply with the regulations in such cemeteries; therefore, be it resolved, by the American Legion in 13<sup>th</sup> national convention assembled, that congress be memorialized to adopt regulations permitting the furnishing of headstones for deceased World War veterans of either the dimensions now prescribed, or the dimensions of, length 24 inches, thickness 4 to 6 inches, width 12 inches, at the election of the applicant.<sup>56</sup>

The American Legion had not always agreed with this plan. In previous years, the organization tried to pressure Graceland Cemetery in Chicago to accept the government-issued flush marker. This and another case, involving the Minneapolis Cemetery Company, went to the Supreme Court. The court decided in favor of the cemeteries. When the American Legion failed to change individual cemetery policies, it focused on changing the federal government's policy and product line so the graves of veterans could be marked appropriately, wherever they chose to be buried.<sup>57</sup>

The subcommittee also heard testimony from the two main cemetery organizations of that period: the American Cemetery Owners Association and the American Association of Cemetery Superintendents. The two could not have had more polarized opinions on the matter of flush bronze markers. The cemetery owners association, represented by President W.L. Halberstadt, favored the proposed bill and was probably the force behind it. Peter L. School, former president of the superintendents' association (established circa 1885) and superintendent of the Charles Evans Cemetery in Reading, Pennsylvania at the time, represented the superintendents' association. The association strongly opposed these markers.

Halberstadt represented approximately 8,000 privately owned cemeteries in the United States.<sup>58</sup> He stated that the Memorial Park movement, also known as the "non-monumental park movement," became a force in the cemetery business in the 1920s. Most of these new cemeteries forbade any grave marker that rose above ground level, often with that stipulation written into the contracts. Some of these new cemeteries allowed flat

<sup>56</sup> *Bronze Markers*, 4-8.

<sup>57</sup> *Bronze Markers*, 9-10, 27.

<sup>58</sup> *Bronze Markers*, 11.

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granite or other stone markers, but most preferred bronze. Bronze markers were almost always supported by concrete bases that were much less expensive than stone.<sup>59</sup>

The American Association of Cemetery Superintendents membership included some 500 cemetery officials from all types of cemeteries. They opposed the proposed bill in part, Scholl testified, because bronze did not adhere well to stone or concrete over time, especially when it aged over years of weather conditions.<sup>60</sup> Second, it is difficult to standardize the content of bronze, so uniformity as it aged would be difficult to achieve. It was also subject to theft. "Speculative land-sale cemeteries" [memorial park cemeteries] were the only ones pushing for the ground-level bronze plates, and the reason was extra profit.<sup>61</sup>

Testimony by leaders such as Roswell M. Austin of the Vermont-based Memorial Extension Commission, which outlined the veritable bronze marker monopoly established by some for-profit cemeteries, sealed the argument temporarily. Senate Bill 1454, which would have required the government to provide flat bronze markers to eligible veterans, failed to pass in the version discussed in the 1935 hearing.<sup>62</sup> The bill the Senate did pass that year authorized flush white marble markers for use in private cemeteries, if this style was required. These were the first flat marble markers the War Department provided to veterans beginning in 1936.<sup>63</sup>

Proponents of flat bronze markers were persistent, however, and additional hearings were held in 1937. This time, testimony was more favorable toward this material than two years earlier.<sup>64</sup> The debate in 1937 centered on providing three options for use in private cemeteries: flat stone markers, flat bronze markers, and the existing upright marble headstones. There was no provision to use flat markers in national cemeteries. Even so, the Secretary of War opposed this bill. According to Quartermaster General Henry Gibbins, as of 1937 the War Department provided flat stone or upright marble headstones to private cemeteries for veterans' graves. The controversy, mostly due to cost, was the use of bronze.<sup>65</sup>

A version of this, House Bill 985, eventually made its way through Congress but President Franklin D. Roosevelt vetoed it on August 1, 1939. Roosevelt explained his reasoning to Congress:

Under existing law, headstones of durable stone, in designs approved by the Secretary of War, are furnished upon application for the graves of men honorably discharged from the Army or who die in military service. The War Department furnishes these headstones in American white marble, in four designs, three of the upright type, and one flat marker for use on graves in private

<sup>59</sup> *Bronze Markers*, 8-9.

<sup>60</sup> *Bronze Markers*, 34-35.

<sup>61</sup> *Bronze Markers*, 21-23, 27-28.

<sup>62</sup> *Bronze Markers*, 17.

<sup>63</sup> *Grave Markers for Deceased Veterans: Hearing Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Military Affairs, 75<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., June 30, 1937.*

<sup>64</sup> *Grave Markers*, 16-19.

<sup>65</sup> *Grave Markers*, 1-3.



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cemeteries where vertical monumentation is prohibited.... I object to H.R. 985... because it restricts to bronze the material which would be authorized for use in supplementing the present prescription of "durable stone." I would not object to legislation which would authorize the Secretary of War to furnish... for use on military graves in private cemeteries where stone markers are not acceptable, monuments of such design and material as may be approved by him within present unit cost limits.<sup>66</sup>

A bill authorizing federal provision of markers made of materials other than stone made its way through Congress in 1940 and became law by an Act of April 18, 1940 (54 Stat. 142). It remained clear, however, that none of these marker provisions were applicable to the national cemeteries.<sup>67</sup>

### Developing New Cemeteries

As early as the 1929 survey, the War Department recognized the need for additional burial space to accommodate the aging World War I veterans expected to die in the coming years. The War Department and most veterans' groups envisioned different solutions to this need. The general policy of the War Department was to expand existing national cemeteries, not develop new ones, according to Quartermaster General Henry Gibbins and others at a subcommittee meeting of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, held May 20, 1936.<sup>68</sup>

At the time, Senate Bill 4268 was under discussion. Almost all Minnesota legislators and veterans' groups strongly endorsed the bill, which would have authorized the Secretary of War to establish five new national cemeteries. The large, active population of veterans in the St. Paul-Minneapolis area provided a strong base to argue for new cemeteries.. As a result, one "national area" cemetery was to be established in Minnesota, and the other four were to be located west of the eastern borders of the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. None of the proposed "national area" cemeteries would be established in any state that already had a national cemetery.<sup>69</sup>

In opposing the bill, Acting Secretary of War Malin Craig stated:

...blanket authority for the establishment of a definite number of additional cemeteries, with no indication of a specific project, is not believed to be advisable. Rather, it is felt that the War Department should continue its practice of making appropriate surveys from time to time as a result of which definite decisions can be reached as to what cemeterial facilities, in addition to

<sup>66</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Veto message accompanying the Bill to Authorize the Secretary of War to Furnish Certain Markers for Certain Graves," HR 985 (August 1, 1939): 1-2.

<sup>67</sup> An Act to authorize the Secretary of War to furnish certain markers for certain graves, 54 Stat. 142, Ch. 109, (1940).

<sup>68</sup> Steere and Boardman, "Final Disposition," 28-29.

<sup>69</sup> *To Establish Additional National Cemeteries: Hearing before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Military Affairs, 74<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., May 20, 1936, 1-2, 10.*

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those now existing, will be needed and where they should be located. In order to meet the needs most economically, thought must be given to the desirability of enlarging existing facilities when the needs can be met by this expedient rather than by the establishment of new cemeteries.<sup>70</sup>

Quartermaster General Gibbins' testimony reiterated this: "The War Department preferred to expand their existing national cemeteries rather than to multiply the number of these cemeteries."<sup>71</sup> It was clear in subsequent testimony that the Secretary of War had authority to expand the national cemetery system if needed. The War Department did not feel the current need justified this bill.

Minnesota legislators and various Minnesota and national veterans' groups who unanimously backed the bill were unhappy with the government's view. Representative Paul John Kvale (Farmer-Labor), Millard W. Rice of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Dr. John E. Soper, chair of the Minnesota National Cemetery Association, and many other stakeholders lobbied for the bill. Enacted into law in 1936, it became the impetus for the first major expansion of the national cemetery system since the Civil War era.<sup>72</sup>

The following year, the Senate held hearings on a bill to establish a national cemetery in every state that did not already have one. The War Department would be required to accept lands for new national cemeteries, with the stipulation that the states in question donate or otherwise provide the land at no cost to the federal government.<sup>73</sup> The result was the Act of June 29, 1938 (52 Stat. 1223), which called for a possible 20 new cemeteries. The failure of individual states to provide the donated lands rendered this law moot. But very soon, President Roosevelt would be focused on the growing threat of another world war.

Seven new national cemeteries were authorized in the 1930s, but the actual expansion was on hold for several years while the United States became directly involved in World War II. The properties developed during the Inter-World War period were: Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, San Diego, California (1934); Baltimore National Cemetery, Baltimore, Maryland (1936); Long Island National Cemetery, Farmingdale, New York (1936); Fort Bliss National Cemetery, El Paso, Texas (1936); Fort Snelling National Cemetery, Minneapolis, Minnesota (1937); Golden Gate National Cemetery, San Bruno, California (1937); and Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio, Texas (1937). Some, like Long Island National Cemetery and Golden Gate National Cemetery, were established to supplement existing urban cemeteries that were running out of burial space. Fort Snelling was established in response to lobbying efforts by the veteran population in Minnesota, who sought a national cemetery in that part of the country.<sup>74</sup>

Although attempts were made to standardize the construction and administration of the new cemeteries, it was not always possible. As a general rule, national cemeteries took the name of their location, as with Fort Bliss,

<sup>70</sup> *To Establish Additional*, 2.

<sup>71</sup> *To Establish Additional*, 2-5.

<sup>72</sup> *To Establish Additional*, 2-5.

<sup>73</sup> *National Cemetery in Every State: Hearing before the Committee on Military Affairs*, 75<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., June 4, 1937.

<sup>74</sup> Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 4; Steere, "Shrines," 29.

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Fort Snelling, and Baltimore. This was avoided in the case of Golden Gate, since San Bruno was known on the West Coast as the home of an infamous roadhouse, and the Army considered it inappropriate to use the name.<sup>75</sup> In another location, the new name was slow to be adopted. For years, local residents referred to Long Island National Cemetery as "Pinelawn," the name of the adjacent private cemetery from which it was developed.

World War II was responsible for a huge increase in the number of veterans eligible for burial in the national cemetery system. In contrast to World War I's almost 5 million veterans, World War II generated more than 12 million. Despite the potential need represented by these numbers, the Department of the Army concluded that the majority of national cemetery interments were veterans, not active duty soldiers. This interpretation meant the burial of veterans became a civilian issue, and the Army relinquished to Congress responsibility for the creation and location of new national cemeteries.

In spite of relinquishing responsibility, the Army's need for national cemeteries remained. After the cessation of hostilities in 1945, the Department of Army developed four new national cemeteries: Black Hills National Cemetery in Sturgis, South Dakota (1948); National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii (1948); Puerto Rico National Cemetery in Bayamon, Puerto Rico (1948); and Willamette National Cemetery in Portland, Oregon (1950).<sup>76</sup> Two other properties were elevated to national cemetery status: the soldiers' lot in Alton, Illinois, was designated Alton National Cemetery (1948), and the post cemetery at Fort Logan in Denver, Colorado, was designated Fort Logan National Cemetery (1950).

By the early 1960s, 98 national cemeteries existed nationwide: the Secretary of the Army administered 84; the Secretary of the Interior oversaw 14. The Army and the Kennedy Administration were in agreement that, due to difficulties associated with locating and acquiring new land, the government would not expand the cemetery system any further. At that time, civil groups and municipalities had greater political clout than veteran service organizations, which made it increasingly difficult to purchase land.<sup>77</sup> It is notable that, with the exception of Fort Bliss National Cemetery, all cemeteries created during the 1930s were still among the most active in the system three decades later.<sup>78</sup>

The government's policy of non-expansion was formally abandoned following studies showing the need for more cemeteries. Passage of the National Cemetery Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-43), signed on June 18, 1973, provided for development of the National Cemetery System (NCS). Reflecting the federal government's recognition of veteran service organizations and the Army's acquiescence as cemetery manager, the act transferred 82 of the 84 national cemeteries to the Veterans Administration (VA). The two exceptions were among the oldest and most recognized properties: Soldiers' Home and Arlington national cemeteries. The 82

<sup>75</sup> Col. Rudolph E. Smyser, QMC, to Col. John T. Harris, QMC, OQMG, Washington, DC, March 31, 1939, Box 175, Folder "687 Golden Gate National Cemetery (GGNC) Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

<sup>76</sup> Steere and Boardman, "Final Disposition," 53; Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 4.

<sup>77</sup> Cemetery Program Study Team, I-C-6, 3.

<sup>78</sup> DOA, *National Cemeteries: A Study of Established Requirements, Including Information on Existing National Cemeteries and Requirements and Costs in an Expanded System, December 15, 1961* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1961), 1; Cemetery Program Study Team, I-A-2, 6.

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joined 21 cemeteries that the VA already administered as part of VA medical centers. Also transferred from the Army were 33 soldiers' lots, government lots, and Confederate cemeteries that dated to the Civil War.<sup>79</sup>

The act mandated that a study determine how the NCS should expand in the future. This led to a fully developed "regional concept" that was first proposed in the 1930s by veterans' organizations and others.<sup>80</sup> The regional-concept plan, initiated in 1974, called for one large national cemetery in each of the 10 Standard Federal Regions and the District of Columbia.<sup>81</sup> To achieve this, four existing facilities were redesignated as regional cemeteries and seven new cemeteries were created in the other Standard Federal Regions. By 1986, the VA achieved a primary goal: regional balance in the locations of its cemeteries to better serve veterans.<sup>82</sup>

In 1978, the State Cemetery Grant Program was created to support the development of state veterans' cemeteries.<sup>83</sup> Section 1008 of Title 38, authorized the VA to form and manage a matching-funds grant program for the creation, expansion, and improvement of cemeteries that echo the form and role of national cemeteries, but are managed by states and territories. The first two were established in 1980 in Maryland: Eastern Shore and Rocky Gap. By 1986, the VA had provided 14 such grants to other states.<sup>84</sup>

As part of the NCS transfer to VA from the United States Army Memorial Affairs Agency, many of the personnel, administrative practices, and policies moved to the civilian agency, too. When the VA was elevated to cabinet-level status in 1989, it was renamed the Department of Veterans Affairs (same VA acronym). By this date, the VA administered more than 113 cemeteries that contained in excess of 10,000 acres and 2 million burials.<sup>85</sup> In 1998, the National Cemetery System (NCS) was renamed the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) and became an official bureau within the VA.

### **Cemetery Landscape and Design, 1930s**

Formal cemeteries composed part of the American landscape since the early days of European settlement. Two distinct cemetery traditions existed in colonial America: a churchyard burial ground associated with High Church practices, particularly Anglican; and a secular cemetery tradition preferred by the Puritans, who rejected the churchyard tradition as papist. The secular burial ground tradition gradually transitioned into the Rural

<sup>79</sup> Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 5, 409; Johnson, *National Cemetery System*, 15; DVA, *Report on the National Cemetery System*, prepared in response to Public Law 99-576 (Sec. 412), Veterans Benefit Improvement and Health-Care Authorization Act of 1986 (February 1994).

<sup>80</sup> DVA, *Report on the National Cemetery System*, prepared in response to Public Law 99-576 (Sec. 412), Veterans Benefit Improvement and Health-Care Authorization act of 1986, (June 1987): i, 6.

<sup>81</sup> The Office of Management and Budget, or OMB, under President Richard Nixon created the ten Standard Federal Regions in 1974. Region I, for example, is Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont; II is New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands. The region divisions still exist today.

<sup>82</sup> Establishment of National Cemeteries. 99<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 1986. S. Rep. 99-439.

<sup>83</sup> DVA, *Report*, 1987, i, 6.

<sup>84</sup> Establishment of National Cemeteries.

<sup>85</sup> Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 5, 11-12.

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Cemetery Movement, which found favor across the nation if only because it reflected the dispersed pattern of rural settlement that characterized the early history of the country.<sup>86</sup>

David Sloane, author of *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History*, offers a compilation of the earliest cemetery types found on the American landscape to include: frontier graves, domestic homesteads, potter's fields, town cemeteries, and churchyard cemeteries.<sup>87</sup> Of these, the church burial ground, in particular, fell into disfavor. Interments clustered around the church reminded people of death and the afterlife. As society became more secularized, burials moved farther away. As the relationship between disease and hygiene was better understood in the context of growing urban populations, churchyard cemeteries, especially vault tombs, were seen as potential health hazards. Yellow fever, for example, thought to be caused by putrefaction, was feared in Eastern cities.<sup>88</sup> These factors led to the Rural Cemetery Movement, the first American effort to organize and locate the community's dead outside of a strict church setting.

"The American cemetery is a window through which we can view the hopes, fears, and designs of the generation that created it and is buried within it," Sloane said. "The most obvious clues...are found in the landscape."<sup>89</sup> Stylistic changes in American cemeteries reflected the evolution of ideas about death and its place in society.<sup>90</sup> The evolution of national cemeteries since the Civil War echoed the evolution of private cemeteries of the time from landscape design to monumentation.

### Rural Cemetery Movement

Begun in the 1830s and continuing through the 1870s, the Rural Cemetery Movement favored secular park-like facilities that were inspired by Père Lachaise Cemetery, established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1804 in Paris, France. The Rural Cemetery Movement in America began with Mount Auburn Cemetery, consecrated in 1831 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Other cities followed the trend by establishing similar cemeteries: Green-Wood (1838) in Brooklyn, New York, and Laurel Hill (1836) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Mount Auburn established the setting and standard for the Rural Cemetery Movement in the United States, as well as its method of organization. Sometimes referred to as the "Père Lachaise of America," Mount Auburn was founded by Dr. Jacob Bigelow, a Harvard Medical School professor, as a private and non-profit organization managed by trustees and superintendents. Not surprisingly, the word "cemetery," which comes from the Greek word for "sleeping place," became popular about this time as it avoided a direct reminder of

<sup>86</sup> David Charles Sloane, *Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 4-5.

<sup>87</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 4-5.

<sup>88</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 34-37.

<sup>89</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 6.

<sup>90</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 1-3, 6-7.

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death.<sup>91</sup> Rural cemeteries were created throughout the country by the 1850s, as evidenced by Oakwood in Syracuse, New York; Green Mount in Baltimore, Maryland; Elmwood in Detroit, Michigan; and Oakland in Atlanta, Georgia.

These picturesque facilities were privately owned and park-like settings, often with family plots. Most were located on the outskirts of town on gently rolling terrain that made the most of topography incorporating designs in which curvilinear roads, irregular-shaped burial sections, and abundant trees and vegetation. Grave monumentation, typically masonry with strong vertical elements, was sculptural and ornamental.<sup>92</sup> Iron and stone fencing around family plots was discouraged or even forbidden, as at Chicago's Graceland Cemetery (1860) and Cedar Hill Cemetery (1864) in Hartford, Connecticut.<sup>93</sup>

Rural cemeteries were strikingly beautiful and thus were always popular with the public. The movement, however, contained the seeds of its own demise. Monuments grew in size and complexity in an effort to demonstrate social status. The cemeteries suffered from crowding and inappropriate behavior, and managers instituted rules intended to retain their sacred intent.<sup>94</sup> From a practical standpoint, maintenance expenses at rural cemeteries were often high, so designers of new cemeteries sought ways to cut costs. Meanwhile, the development of purely recreational urban parks, such as Frederick Law Olmsted's Central Park (begun 1850s) in New York City lessened the visitation pressure on rural cemeteries as leisure grounds.<sup>95</sup> These factors led to "lawn-park cemeteries," a more restrained landscape that overlapped with the rural aesthetic as early as 1855 and was popular into the 1920s.

### Lawn-Park Cemeteries

As the name implied, "lawn-park" cemeteries featured prominent greenswards that eschewed picturesque naturalism in favor of the pastoral: uniform green sod, linear layout, and generally formal appearance. Grave markers were more constant designs, low to the ground, and made of granite, marble, or bronze. In almost every instance, these new features had a sizable cost-savings component compared to the rural cemeteries.<sup>96</sup> Spring Grove Cemetery (1845) in Cincinnati, Ohio, was the first of this type; other examples include Oak Woods (1854) in Chicago; Lakewood (1871) in Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Swans Point (1846) in Providence, Rhode Island.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Ken Worpole, *Last Landscapes: The Architecture of the Cemetery in the West*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2003), 139-141; Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 55.

<sup>92</sup> "Developmental History of Pennsylvania Cemeteries," Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/developmental\\_history\\_of\\_pennsylvania\\_cemeteries/1879/1833\\_-1875\\_rural\\_cemetery\\_movement/279989](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/developmental_history_of_pennsylvania_cemeteries/1879/1833_-1875_rural_cemetery_movement/279989) (accessed April 19, 2011); Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 4-5, 44-49, 53.

<sup>93</sup> Pamela Bannos, "Contributing Factors in Moving the Cemetery: Rural Cemetery Movement," Hidden Truths: The Chicago City Cemetery & Lincoln Park, [www.hiddentruths.northwestern.edu/factors/rural.html](http://www.hiddentruths.northwestern.edu/factors/rural.html) (accessed April 19, 2011).

<sup>94</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 77-90.

<sup>95</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 116-119.

<sup>96</sup> "Developmental History."

<sup>97</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 4-5.

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The first lawn-park cemetery was conceived and implemented by Adolph Strauch when he redesigned Spring Grove Cemetery, beginning in 1855. To reduce the clutter of the 10-year-old cemetery, he removed most of the trees and created more lawn. Professional designers planned the rational and orderly burial sections. Lot owners had a limited say in what they could place on graves.<sup>98</sup>

William H. Locke, Jr., designed one of the best examples of this property at Pinelawn Cemetery on Long Island, New York. Established in 1902, its park-like atmosphere borrowed certain stylized elements from the City Beautiful movement.<sup>99</sup> They feature a formal layout with few ornamental decorations. General design motivation was cost efficiency and abolition of “all things that suggest death, sorrow, or pain.” In fact, the lawn-park ideal was to eliminate most grave markers unless they could be flush with the ground. The development and increasing popularity of the mechanical lawnmower, beginning in the mid-1800s, also played a role in the popularity of the lawn-park cemeteries.<sup>100</sup>

Lawn-park cemeteries remain the most common type of private American cemetery.

### Memorial Park Movement

The memorial park movement began in the early 1900s. Memorial parks grew directly from lawn-park cemeteries, continuing many of the same trends. The founder of the memorial park movement, Hubert Eaton, inaugurated the movement in 1913 with the opening of Forest Lawn in Glendale, California. Eaton’s design called for an open grassy lawn, the elimination of special family plots and monuments, and a more park-like light and airy setting.<sup>101</sup> Eaton marketed this idea, and the funeral industry supported him. In 1917, he wrote and popularized the “Builder’s Creed,” which resolved to “build Forest Lawn as different, as unlike other cemeteries, as sunshine is unlike darkness.”<sup>102</sup>

Eaton’s memorial park movement attempted to remove evidence of death from the cemetery landscape. Restrictions on family monuments and a preference for markers that were flush with the ground enhanced the park-like environment. The new cemeteries also offered a much wider array of business arrangements, including “pre-need” purchase of cemetery plots.<sup>103</sup> According to Ken Worpole in *Last Landscapes: The Architecture of the Cemetery in the West*:

<sup>98</sup> Worpole, *Last Landscapes*, 142-143; Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 2, 99, 107-109.

<sup>99</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 139-140.

<sup>100</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 110.

<sup>92</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 110.

<sup>102</sup> Richard Francis Veit and Mark Nonestied, *New Jersey Cemeteries and Tombstones: History in the Landscape* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Richard E. Meyer, ed., *Ethnicity and the American Cemetery* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1993), 237.

<sup>103</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 159.

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Eaton accelerated the trends established by Strauch, notably in rejecting the paramount visual role played by individual family monument, headstone, or tomb, in creating the cemetery presence, in carrying the parkland principle to even greater effect, almost to the point of erasing all traces of burial processes, and finally, in turning the cemetery into an aggressively marketed commercial enterprise, in full concordance with the practices and professional cultures of the real estate sales industry.<sup>104</sup>

Others quickly adopted Eaton's concepts. In a 1915 *Cemetery Beautiful* article, "The Ideal Cemetery – Memorial Park," J. J. Gordon summed up the ideal of the memorial park movement. "Few but have felt the chill that strikes the heart when standing in the office of some cemetery, even the most beautiful, and seeing the gleaming monuments, silent reminders of the shortness of life. [In the memorial park] there is no note of sadness."<sup>105</sup> To achieve that note, the memorial park required few monuments, if any.

Professionals ran memorial parks using modern cemetery-planning methods. Headstones were arranged in straight lines or were flush with the ground, an important consideration in an era that saw the first practical mechanical lawn mowers.<sup>106</sup> Small bronze plaques, set flush to the ground, marked most burial plots. The layout was simpler than the earlier lawn-park cemeteries, more standardized, and more suburban. The popularity of the memorial park system mirrored that of the suburbs in American life.<sup>107</sup>

Memorial parks became an increasingly popular driving force in the American funeral business, despite a few traditional ethnic groups such as Orthodox Christians, Chinese, and Muslims. The cultural groups were not interested in abandoning their customs.<sup>108</sup>

### Inter-World War Cemetery Design

In 1870, noted landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted advised Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs that "the main object [of the national cemeteries] should be to establish permanent dignity and tranquility," with national cemeteries becoming "sacred groves."<sup>109</sup> Cemetery design played a large role in bringing this concept into fruition. Within this context of rural cemetery, lawn-park, and memorial park plans, the parallel development of the national cemetery program produced cemetery landscapes that stand out as simple-yet-powerful designs that evoke the sense of memorialization and common sacrifice. According to Sloane:

<sup>104</sup> Worpole, *Last Landscapes*, 144.

<sup>105</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 160-161.

<sup>106</sup> Veit and Nonestied, *New Jersey Cemeteries*, 241.

<sup>107</sup> Worpole, *Last Landscapes*, 145-146; Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 2.

<sup>108</sup> Veit and Nonestied, *New Jersey Cemeteries*, 262.

<sup>109</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 115.



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The national cemeteries reinforced the retreat from Romantic sentimentality, as well as the simplification of the cemetery. Even if Americans were slow to accept identical markers, they did embrace the landscape concepts of the military cemeteries. Simplicity and grandeur were the bases of the new designs.<sup>110</sup>

A practical and aesthetic location was an important component of Inter-World War cemetery design. When discussing the location of Golden Gate National Cemetery in the 1930s, Colonel John Harris of the Quartermaster Corps reiterated the importance of providing a beautiful setting as seen from the El Camino Real. The modern, six-lane El Camino Real (Highway 101) borders the northeast edge of Golden Gate National Cemetery and follows the route of the historic California Mission Trail. Harris added:

...it is the desire of the Quartermaster General to construct more than a simple burying ground. As a matter of fact, our national cemeteries are no longer in the category of burying grounds, but are considered, and properly so, in the nature of local shrines. All of the new ones have been developed along these lines, and certainly San Francisco [Golden Gate] warrants being of equal beauty to any of the others.<sup>111</sup>

This reaffirmation of the Army's objective, to create national cemeteries that would transcend traditional burial grounds in appearance and purpose, would be achieved through landscape and building design.

The Construction Division of the Quartermaster Corps staff selected supervising architect Luther M. Leisenring to help oversee layout the new cemeteries; occasionally this work was outsourced to private landscape architects. Leisenring, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and a former associate of architect Cass Gilbert, was acting supervising architect at the Construction Division from 1930-1941, and construction architect for the War Department, Chief of Engineers, from 1944-1946.<sup>112</sup> While at the War Department he served on a team that developed standardized plans for permanent construction at United States military installations during the 1930s, "in keeping with American tradition and regional character."<sup>113</sup> He was also involved with the 1920s restoration of Arlington House, the antebellum home of Robert E. Lee in Virginia, and later oversaw the design and construction of Fitzsimons General Hospital in Adams County, Colorado.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 115.

<sup>111</sup> Col. John T. Harris, QMC, to Col. Rudolph E. Smyser, Quartermaster, Headquarters, 9<sup>th</sup> Corps Area, Presidio of San Francisco, California, November 14, 1939, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

<sup>112</sup> Col. C.C. Reynolds, QMC, memorandum "Planting and Beautification Plan - Golden Gate National Cemetery" to Construction Division, September 2, 1941, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP; Lenora Fine and Jesse A. Remington, *The Corps of Engineers: Construction in the United States*, The U.S. Army in World War II: The Technical Services (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1989), 48; George S. Koyl, ed., "Leisenring, Luther Morris," in *American Architects Directory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1962), 413-414.

<sup>113</sup> Fine and Remington, *The Corps of Engineers*, 48.

<sup>114</sup> Leisenring, "Restoration of Arlington House."

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The seven Inter-World War cemeteries share common features that have been part of national cemetery design since the Civil War, including flagpoles, lodges, entry gates, memorials, and headstones. While all of the seven cemeteries have similarities, each is distinctive as well. In size, these properties are consistently larger than their predecessors. Each originally ranged from 8 to 175 acres, based on available land in the preferred location; additional land was acquired quickly, as it became available.<sup>115</sup> At the time of nomination, the seven cemeteries range from approximately 72 to 436 acres.

The layout of each cemetery depended upon space availability and topography. In areas where terrain was level, acres were developed in rectangular parcels—i.e., at Fort Sam Houston, Fort Bliss, and Long Island—the first layouts featured roughly rectangular, lozenge-type forms. When the War Department obtained irregularly shaped parcels, layouts were adapted to the land. Golden Gate and Fort Snelling depict this flexibility in their layouts: the former's parcel is shaped like a large check mark, the latter was initially the shape of a large triangle. Interior road layouts were bisymmetrical and balanced. In contrast, rolling hills at Baltimore and steep slopes leading to immense bodies of water at Fort Rosecrans resulted in undulating and sinuous designs that complemented the natural topography.

The architectural style used at each cemetery is carried inward from the entrance structures and used throughout the property. At Fort Snelling it is the Rationalist style, and at Golden Gate it is a mix of Classicism with a Mediterranean Revival influence. The Spanish Colonial Revival is found in the buildings and structures of Fort Sam Houston and Fort Bliss, appropriate to Texas; Fort Rosecrans' Spanish Eclectic influence is common in Southern California; and Baltimore and Long Island display East Coast building trends in Federal, Tudor Revival, and Colonial Revival design.

Masonry walls, metal picket fences, or a combination of the two surround the cemeteries. Substantial gateposts and metal gates dominate the main entrance to each Inter-World War cemetery; secondary entrances for service vehicles are less prominent. The Inter-World War cemeteries all feature a primary and central flagpole area; in some places the flagpole area incorporates an ornamental plaza and memorials.

The built features of each include a superintendent's lodge to serve as the residence of the cemetery superintendent. Construction in the 1930s reflected regional- and era-specific building trends, as did military installations of period. This is a major deviation from Civil War-era cemeteries, in which uniformity was achieved through nearly identical superintendent lodges.<sup>116</sup> Four Inter-World War lodges remain in use as staff housing. Superintendent lodges at Fort Snelling, Fort Sam Houston, and Fort Bliss have been adapted into office space.

<sup>115</sup> National Cemetery Administration (NCA), "Land Survey Inventory of Federal Acreage," Quarterly Report: 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr./FY03," December 31, 2002, updated April 7, 2009, HPC, NCA, Washington, DC; DOA, "Long Island National Cemetery," pamphlet (Washington, DC: Chief of Support Services, 1971).

<sup>116</sup> Michael R. Harrison, "National Cemeteries, Superintendent's Lodges," Historical Report, 2013, Historic American Landscapes Survey, Library of Congress (DC-46).

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The erection of chapels at national cemeteries was introduced during this era, but the practice was short lived. Two of the seven cemeteries were built with chapels: Golden Gate and Long Island. The latter was only used briefly until the building was converted to a superintendent's office in 1950.<sup>117</sup> The WPA converted part of a stable at Baltimore National Cemetery for use as a chapel in 1939, but by 1947 the chapel was transformed into an administration office. Currently, Golden Gate is one of only six national cemeteries whose grounds include an active chapel still in use for committals.<sup>118</sup> In lieu of chapels, committal shelters began to appear at Inter-World War National Cemeteries in the 1980s. The shelters serve as a centralized location for burial services in lieu of gravesite events. All Inter-World War National Cemeteries other than Golden Gate have at least one committal shelter.

The introduction of flat grave markers that lie flush with the ground was an innovation of the 1930s by the private sector that contributed to the park-like atmosphere of cemeteries. Theoretically, flat markers helped lower maintenance costs, by enabling easier mowing. Beginning in 1936, flat stone markers, 12 inches by 24 inches, were authorized for use for veterans interred in private or local cemeteries that did not allow for upright markers.<sup>119</sup>

The cremation movement also influenced Inter-World War cemetery design. This ancient burial practice was revived in the late 1800s, though it was never as popular in the United States as it was in Northern Europe.<sup>120</sup> Endorsed by the Association of American Cemetery Superintendents in the 1890s, cremation was favored by cemetery professionals as both more sanitary and more economical.<sup>121</sup> The Cremation Association of America, established 1913, promoted the use of mausoleums and columbaria.<sup>122</sup> Much later, in the 1970s-80s, the NCS followed this memorial park trend by creating "garden niches" in cemeteries. These featured small plots, usually 3 feet by 3 feet, suitable for in-ground urn burials. Columbaria were also introduced to receive urn burials.<sup>123</sup>

The Inter-World War national cemeteries contain a number of private headstones of various shapes and sizes, but the simple General-type is present in the greatest number. The largest of the government-issued uprights,

<sup>117</sup> Long Island National Cemetery, National Cemetery Historical File, Records of the Veterans Administration, Department of Memorial Affairs, Record Group 15, NAB.

<sup>118</sup> The other five are: National Memorial of the Pacific, Leavenworth, Houston, Jefferson Barracks, and Los Angeles national cemeteries. National Cemetery Administration, History Program; Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 8.

<sup>119</sup> Johnson, *National Cemetery System*, 20; Cemetery Program Study Team, I-D-3.

<sup>120</sup> Worpole, *Last Landscapes*, 161-162; Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 152.

<sup>121</sup> Brian Young, *Respectable Burial: Montreal's Mount Royal Cemetery*, photographs by Geoffrey James (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 129.

<sup>122</sup> Stephen R. Prothero, *Purified by Fire: A History of Cremation in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) 110-

111.

<sup>123</sup> Holt, *American Military Cemeteries*, 8.

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white marble, available with a longer inscription than any other product—this headstone –when multiplied by the thousands into crisp rows, exudes the grandeur, dignity, and reverence that Sloane refers to.<sup>124</sup>

Established and developed as a result of differing circumstances, each of the seven Inter-World cemeteries was created during the same period through similar processes. The army weighed proximity to veterans, land availability and cost, terrain and topography, and the presence of existing post cemeteries as key variables from which a singular place of repose and reverence would be realized while retaining a nationwide connectivity to the rest of the NCS.<sup>125</sup>

### **Rise of Veteran Service Organizations and Evolving Veteran Burial Benefits, 1860s-1930s**

Veterans' organizations have played an important role in American society since the American Revolution's Society of the Cincinnati, opened to officers of the War for Independence. The Civil War, fought with huge volunteer armies, led to the creation of a particularly powerful veterans' service group, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), open to all Union veterans, regardless of rank.<sup>126</sup> In the 1880-90s, the GAR functioned virtually as an arm of the Republican Party. The organization's connections guaranteed patronage positions for many veterans, and it lobbied tirelessly for legislation that would provide pensions to all who served more than 90 days. When the pension measure passed Congress in 1890, more than 450,000 Union veterans received pensions.<sup>127</sup>

The GAR's achievements and patriotism were considerable. The group built rest homes for veterans and their dependents. Its 1868 proclamation promoting "Decoration Day" (later Memorial Day) convinced Congress to establish this national holiday.<sup>128</sup> Its members perpetuated themselves by forming the "Sons of the GAR" auxiliary. The GAR promoted broad patriotism and reverence for the national flag by distributing flags to schools and a range of public and private buildings. The "Pledge of Allegiance" was largely a result of the GAR's efforts, as were standardized civilian procedures for saluting the flag.<sup>129</sup>

The GAR was both conservative and sectional. It condemned all forms of labor disruption and lobbied against the great Pullman strike of 1894. As an organization of men who fought for the Union Army, the GAR was also very pro-North and never officially reconciled with the South. The GAR made sure that former

<sup>124</sup> Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 115.

<sup>125</sup> Similar studies of demographic trends continue to guide the development of new national cemeteries within VA today.

<sup>126</sup> Mollan, "Honoring Our War Dead," 4.

<sup>127</sup> William Pencak, *For God and Country: The American Legion, 1919-1941* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989), 27.

<sup>128</sup> Gatherings for Memorial Day and other national holidays continues to bring veteran groups and their families together in the national cemeteries. Accommodating these ceremonies and remembrances prompted the construction of rostrums or speaker platforms in the nineteenth century, although not all are extant. Michael R. Harrison, "National Cemeteries, Rostrums," Historical Report, 2013, Historic American Landscapes Survey, Library of Congress (DC-47).

<sup>129</sup> Pencak, *American Legion*, 28-29.

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Confederate soldiers were not eligible for national pensions. In addition, for many years they blocked pensions for veterans of the U.S.-Mexican War, since most were southerners.<sup>130</sup>

The Spanish-American War changed much of the sectionalism. There were more than 134,000 veterans from the “splendid little war,”<sup>131</sup> with more as a result of the subsequent Philippine uprising.<sup>132</sup> These veterans formed the United Spanish War Veterans in 1904. In 1913, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) was founded to serve all veterans who went overseas during any of the nation’s wars. Southerners were well represented in both organizations. As a result, the new veterans’ organizations moved toward reconciliation.<sup>133</sup>

America’s involvement in World War I was a much larger effort than the Spanish-American War. Even though the United States entered the war late in April 1917, almost 5 million men joined or were drafted into the army by war’s end in November 1918. Two million went to France; of these, 60 percent, or 1.2 million, casualties resulted. The vast majority of those losses occurred in the last four months of the war, when the American contribution was instrumental in turning the tide of battle on the Western Front.<sup>134</sup> The success of the American Expeditionary Force led to the dramatic political influence of the veterans’ groups that emerged from this conflict; they would impact everything from national politics to national cemeteries.

The American Legion became the largest veterans’ group to form following World War I. The idea for the Legion was established in February and March 1919 by a small group of veterans in Paris, which notably included Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., son of the former president. The first meeting on American soil occurred in St. Louis in May of that year. The Minneapolis meeting and the first Legion parade, held on Armistice Day 1919, elevated the organization to a national stage. By 1920, the Legion had almost a million members.<sup>135</sup> To a degree, the American Legion’s huge influence rested on the organizations from which it freely borrowed; in particular, the Salvation Army, the YMCA, and even the Boy Scouts. The Legion’s motto, “For God and Country,” was borrowed from the Boy Scout oath.<sup>136</sup>

The American Legion established itself as a powerful lobbying group for veterans at different levels of government. The rapid growth of the American Legion and other veteran organizations led to an Act of April 15, 1920 (41 Stat. 552), extending the privilege of burial in the national cemeteries to veterans of all wars,

<sup>130</sup> Pencak, *American Legion*, 28-29.

<sup>131</sup> John Milton Hay, excerpt from a letter to Theodore Roosevelt, Library of Congress, 1898, <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/hay.html> (accessed September 2, 2014).

<sup>132</sup> Steere and Boardman, “Final Disposition,” 53.

<sup>133</sup> Pencak, *American Legion*, 31. Integration of the military took longer to achieve. Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces 1940-1965* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 2001).

<sup>134</sup> Samuel L.A. Marshall, *World War I* (New York: Mariner Books, American Heritage, 2001), 368-419; Michael Howard, *The First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 124-132; Steere, “Shrines,” 29; Pencak, *American Legion*, 41-42.

<sup>135</sup> Pencak, *American Legion*, xi-xii, 37-39; Moley, Raymond, Jr., *The American Legion Story* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1966), 80-81.

<sup>136</sup> Pencak, *American Legion*, 31-34.

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including World War I. Previously, Congress extended this eligibility on a war-by-war basis. This blanket entitlement led to a potential increase in the number of people eligible for burial in national cemeteries.<sup>137</sup> The Legion was also instrumental in establishing the Veterans Bureau in 1921, renamed the Veterans Administration in 1930 and Veterans Affairs in 1989. On the eve of the New Deal, the VA claimed one-fifth of the annual federal budget.<sup>138</sup>

### Veterans' Groups and National Cemeteries

The American Legion held great interest in the placement and disposition of new national cemeteries. Along with other veterans' organizations, the Legion recognized the need for new national cemeteries accessible to growing concentrations of veterans living in larger cities. As such, veterans' groups lobbied for new cemeteries close to major population centers. The locations of many of the Inter-World War national cemeteries reflect this emphasis.<sup>139</sup>

Of the seven Inter-World War cemeteries, Fort Snelling National Cemetery was the most impacted by local veterans' groups. The "National Cemetery Committee," founded in 1935 in Minneapolis, pushed relentlessly for "a national cemetery in the Northwest." The group's motto was "In Memory of the Dead. A Shrine for the Living."<sup>140</sup> The Disabled American Veterans of the World War, Minnesota Marine Club, Sons of Union Veterans, and the Eagles Lodge joined the American Legion in its lobby for a nearby national cemetery.<sup>141</sup> With state congressional leaders backing the endeavor, Congress approved the act establishing Fort Snelling National Cemetery on June 23, 1936 (49 Stat. 1888), amended the following year.<sup>142</sup> The dedication ceremony, held on July 14, 1939, attracted 6,000 attendees as well as a long list of veterans' groups: The American Legion (5<sup>th</sup> District), American Legion Auxiliary (5<sup>th</sup> District), Ladies of the GAR, Women's Relief Corps, VFW, VFW Auxiliary, Sons of Union Veterans, and the United Spanish War Veterans.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Steere, "Shrines of the Honored Dead," 28.

<sup>138</sup> Pencak, *American Legion*, xii.

<sup>139</sup> Steere, "Shrines of the Honored Dead," 27.

<sup>140</sup> John Elford Soper, Chairman, National Cemetery Committee, to Maj. Gen. Henry Gibbins, QMG, Munitions Building, Washington, DC, March 18, 1938, Box 580, Folder "293.8 Fort Snelling National Cemetery (FSNC) 1938 hb;" GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

<sup>141</sup> Soper to Gibbins, March 18, 1938; Congressman Ernest Lundeen, 3<sup>rd</sup> District, to the Secretary of War, Washington, DC, August 1, 1936, Box 583, Folder "687 Fort Snelling, Minn. 1936 Vol. I," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92; NACP; Curt C. Smith, Company Clerk, Minnesota Marine Club, State Headquarters, to Maj. Gen. Henry Gibbins, QMG, U.S. Army, Washington, DC, March 9, 1938, Box 583, Folder "687 Fort Snelling, Minn. 1936 Vol. I," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

<sup>142</sup> Maj. John R. Holt, Introductory Remarks Made at Dedication of Fort Snelling National Cemetery, July 14, 1939, Box 583, Folder "687 Fort Snelling, Minn., Vol. V, July to Dec. 1939 hb," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP; Steere and Boardman, "Final Disposition," 28.

<sup>143</sup> List of Organizations Invited to Participate in Exercises (Dedication of Fort Snelling National Cemetery, July 14, 1939), Box 583, Folder "687 Fort Snelling, Minn., Vol. V July to Dec. 1939 hb," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP; "National Cemetery Dedication, 6,000 Attend," *The All-Veterans' News*, August 1939, 1.

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Veteran service organizations were actively involved in the startups of other Inter-World War cemeteries, too. The list of groups that contributed to the foundation of Fort Bliss National Cemetery was almost as long as that for Fort Snelling. Due to its southern locale, however, participants also included Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy.<sup>144</sup> At Golden Gate National Cemetery, local groups advised on the proposed location. Many veterans favored development of the cemetery on the east side of San Francisco Bay, in or near Oakland, which was expected to grow dramatically in the future; the Quartermaster Corps preferred the San Francisco side.<sup>145</sup> While the veterans were involved and provided general input here, the Quartermaster Corps rarely consulted with them on the details.<sup>146</sup>

Quartermaster Corps correspondence indicated that sometimes they felt there could be too much veteran involvement at times. Colonel John Harris, for example, warned about competing interests at the Fort Snelling cemetery dedication ceremonies:

The only thing to guard against is rivalry between veteran organizations. Usually, when this exists, and I understand it exists in Minneapolis, to some extent, it is necessary for the Army to sponsor and really conduct the exercise in order that there will be no fighting between these organizations.... It is natural that each organization wants to out-do the other and appear to be the "big guys" in the assembly. That was particularly true when the new Long Island National Cemetery was dedicated—and we had the Adjutant General direct the Commanding General of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps Area to conduct the exercises.<sup>147</sup>

Illustrating this point, in 1939 the American Gold Star Mothers of the World War requested that the Army name a main road in Long Island National Cemetery in honor of their president, Mathilda Burling. Not only had she worked for veterans and Gold Star mothers, but she also helped secure a \$250,000 appropriation for the initial purchase of land for the cemetery.<sup>148</sup> The Quartermaster Corps rejected their request.

### **Impact of the Great Depression and the WPA Programs on National Cemeteries, 1930s**

<sup>144</sup> Organizations Participating in the Dedication Exercises (Fort Bliss National Cemetery, March 17, 1940), Box 53, GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

<sup>145</sup> Congressman Albert E. Carter, 6<sup>th</sup> District, California, to Maj. Gen. Henry Gibbins, QMG, War Department, February 16, 1938, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. II 1938," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP; California Assemblyman Arthur H. Breed, Jr. to Hon. Albert E. Carter, House Office Building, Washington, DC, February 9, 1938, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. II 1938," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

<sup>146</sup> Watson B. Miller, National Director, The American Legion, to QMG, War Department, Washington, DC, December 6, 1940, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

<sup>147</sup> Col. John T. Harris, QMC, Assistant, to Maj. John R. Holt, Quartermaster, Fort Snelling, MN, June 17, 1939, Box 583, Folder "687 Fort Snelling, Minn., Vol. V, July to Dec. 1939 hb," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

<sup>148</sup> A.M. Woods, Secretary, American Gold Star Mothers of the World War, to Mr. Spence, Superintendent, Pinelawn Cemetery, November 22, 1939, Box 307, Folder "611 Long Island National Cemetery 1941," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

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After the sacrifices associated with World War I, the exuberant 1920s was a period of economic expansion and social decadence. The decade ended with the Great Depression, triggered by the stock market collapse in late 1929. President Herbert Hoover and his Republican administration immediately recognized the seriousness of the situation. In spite of understanding the implications, the administration was not willing to spend the vast sums of money needed to jumpstart the economy. As the national economy spiraled downward into the early 1930s, the government did fund a few large-scale projects to help ease the staggering rate of unemployment. While most relief programs occurred in the West, however, the highest rates of unemployment were located in the Eastern cities. In any case, Hoover's efforts were insufficient to make a real difference. During the 1932 presidential election, Democratic candidate Franklin Roosevelt promised a "New Deal" for the American people, and this implied a much more active government role in economic affairs. Roosevelt defeated Hoover by a landslide.

### FDR and the New Deal

After his inauguration in early March 1933, Roosevelt began "the 100 Days." During this period, the Democratic-controlled Congress passed a series of measures with dizzying speed. They included: bank reforms that guaranteed deposits; stock market securities laws; the end of Prohibition and the gold standard; the Agricultural Adjustment Act, which established farm-price supports; the Farm Credit Act, which protected farmers from foreclosure; creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Civilian Conservation Corps; and finally, the keystone of the early New Deal—the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA)—which established the Public Works Administration (PWA).<sup>149</sup>

These early reforms introduced the two largest relief programs: the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) and the PWA. Two great administrators of the New Deal headed the new programs: Harry Hopkins ran FERA, and Harold Ickes headed PWA. Although both men remained loyal to Roosevelt, they maintained a personal rivalry throughout this period.<sup>150</sup>

The PWA funded major construction projects that were contracted out to private firms on the open market. In contrast, FERA began as a direct grants program. After reorganization, FERA picked up control of the Civil Works Administration (CWA). CWA provided emergency short-term work relief through public improvement. By January 1934, the CWA employed more than 4 million people in the construction of roads, schools, and other public projects. Even so, Roosevelt never really liked the CWA since he considered it too much like

<sup>149</sup> William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940* (New York: Harper-Torch Books, Harper and Row, 1963), 41-61.

<sup>150</sup> Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes: The First Thousand Days, 1933-1936* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), 287.



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direct relief. Just two months later, in March 1934, the CWA was terminated in favor of a new system.<sup>151</sup> Hopkins, in the meantime, had spent \$2 billion and had acquired the nickname, “minister of relief.”<sup>152</sup>

On May 27, 1935, the Supreme Court struck down the NIRA as unconstitutional. With unemployment still at approximately 20 percent, this blow inaugurated another round of government programs known as the Second New Deal. Associated laws included: the National Labor Relations Act, which guaranteed the right of labor to bargain collectively; the Wealth Tax of 1935, which taxed the rich with estate taxes, gift taxes, and capital stock taxes; the Rural Electrification Program; and the Social Security Act.<sup>153</sup>

Relief programs were also overhauled. Ickes’ popular PWA was untouched. But this was not the case with FERA, known pejoratively as the “dole program.”<sup>154</sup> The Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935 replaced FERA with the Works Progress Administration (WPA).<sup>155</sup> Still administered by Hopkins and focused on basically the same tasks, the WPA was better structured to build highways, bridges, and other large infrastructure projects. The WPA worked in conjunction, and through cost-matching agreements, with state and local governments. The WPA also returned to the states the responsibility to provide relief to those who could not work, rather than assume that role directly.<sup>156</sup>

The popular WPA was also the largest New Deal program. By the time the program was shut down during World War II, more than 8.5 million individuals had been on its payroll, realizing more than 1.4 million different projects.<sup>157</sup>

To ensure that the WPA and PWA missions did not overlap, Hopkins and Ickes agreed in 1935 that projects valued at \$25,000 or more would be the responsibility of Ickes’ PWA; projects under that amount belonged to Hopkins’s WPA. Later, Hopkins broke up larger programs to get them under his threshold.<sup>158</sup> This administrative decision impacted what projects could be done and how labor was distributed, including that that would occur in the national cemetery expansion program.

Between 1935 and 1943, the WPA program expended almost \$5 billion, an amount greater than the entire annual federal budget under Hoover. The WPA created some 3.5 million jobs, with annual expenses of around \$1,100 to \$1,200 per person. A 1936 spending increase led to an attempt to rein-in spending the following year, causing a sharp recession in fall 1937. The WPA was back to full-force in 1938 and remained powerful

<sup>151</sup> Katie Louchheim, ed., *The Making of the New Deal: The Insiders Speak* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 176-177.

<sup>152</sup> Alonzo L. Hamby, *For the Survival of Democracy: Franklin Roosevelt and the World Crisis of the 1930s* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 257.

<sup>153</sup> Leuchtenburg, *Roosevelt and the New Deal*, 145-166; Hamby, *Survival of Democracy*, 261-262.

<sup>154</sup> Hamby, *Survival of Democracy*, 261-262.

<sup>155</sup> In 1939, the name was altered to Works Projects Administration (same acronym, WPA).

<sup>156</sup> Ickes, *Secret Diary, 1933-36*, 287.

<sup>157</sup> Louchheim, *Making of the New Deal*, 177.

<sup>158</sup> Hamby, *Survival of Democracy*, 277.

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throughout the Great Depression.<sup>159</sup> Hopkins, whose program was accused of corruption and inefficiency, remained unapologetic. Historian Alonzo Hamby described Hopkins and his work:

Huge sums had been filtered through 48 state organizations to millions of people. Some of it would stick to fingers, some would be poorly spent, some would go to people who didn't really need it. That was the way the world worked. The greater good was served nonetheless.<sup>160</sup>

Complacency as demonstrated by Hopkins rarely generated positive feedback in Congress. The PWA maintained better press than the WPA. Ickes thought WPA was too inefficient and similar to direct relief. After a few high-profile scandals in 1938, Congress grew unhappy with the WPA.<sup>161</sup> Republicans saw the WPA as the "vote army" of the Democratic Party, with charges of political patronage and favoritism. Many feared it might become a career choice rather than a source of temporary work. By August 1939, the WPA payroll contained some 1.9 million individuals, making it the single-largest employer in the country; by comparison, all other federal -works programs combined employed 1 million persons.<sup>162</sup>

One WPA problem, and the source of many scandals, was its decentralized organization. After the problems perceived with FERA, the WPA filtered money into many small programs. Projects processed through state administrators with minimal ties to top WPA officials in Washington, DC. Even with its faults, though, the WPA remained popular. Hamby writes, "After mid-1935, the WPA, more than any other program, was the face of the New Deal."<sup>163</sup> At that time, too, it would also prove the vehicle for improvements to the national cemeteries.

### WPA and National Cemeteries

When the first New Deal programs were established in 1933, the War Department managed more than 60 national cemeteries. The vast majority dated to the years during and immediately after the Civil War. Because these properties required regular upkeep and standardized improvements, they were suitable for New Deal labor projects. Many lodges and outbuildings were 50 years old or more, and due for modernization or rehabilitation. Enclosure walls needed repointing, and larger vehicles necessitated wider entries to the cemeteries. New service buildings were required to support daily operations. Headstones required raising and realignment. Landscapes and vegetation needed regular maintenance and horticultural care.

Established in late 1933, the CWA activated the first New Deal programs to benefit national cemeteries. Laborers working through the CWA rehabilitated lodges, constructed outbuildings, raised and realigned

<sup>159</sup> Hamby, *Survival of Democracy*, 257-258, 277, 418.

<sup>160</sup> Hamby, *Survival of Democracy*, 258.

<sup>161</sup> Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, Volume II: The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), 438, 499-501.

<sup>162</sup> Hamby, *Survival of Democracy*, 418-419.

<sup>163</sup> Hamby, *Survival of Democracy*, 279-80.

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headstones, and engaged in landscape improvements in at least 28 national cemeteries during only a few months. Always intended to be a temporary measure, the CWA was dissolved in spring 1934. National cemeteries again hosted New Deal projects after the WPA was established in 1935. WPA programs consisted of both projects supplying funding only as well as projects supplying both labor and funding. Similar to but smaller in scale than CWA work, many WPA projects could be completed within a year. The project designs supported day- to -day cemetery operations and fall into three broad categories:

- 1) New construction. In many national cemeteries, the WPA constructed buildings and structures to support daily cemetery operations. A single, multi-purpose building to serve as a garage, tool house, and comfort station was constructed at multiple sites. Overall, WPA labor constructed at least 21 support buildings and structures. At Alton National Cemetery, the WPA completed a rostrum and at Los Angeles National Cemetery, WPA labor constructed an administration building-chapel. In a handful of cemeteries, including Annapolis National Cemetery, WPA labor demolished existing nineteenth-century support buildings and structures before beginning new construction projects.
- 2) Repair, expansion, and modernization of extant buildings and structures. By 1935, many national cemetery buildings needed to be upgraded. At the City Point National Cemetery lodge, for example, WPA labor installed new window screens, replaced and repaired gutters and downspouts, and painted the exterior woodwork. At Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, WPA workers renovated the 1872-built rostrum. The WPA repaired and improved buildings in at least 24 national cemeteries.
- 3) Landscape improvements. National cemetery grounds required regular maintenance, including headstone raising, realigning, and cleaning; repair of drainage systems; repointing enclosing walls and rebuilding gate posts; and repairing walkways and roadways. At Grafton National Cemetery, for example, WPA laborers realigned, raised, and washed headstones, engaged in tree surgery, constructed a drainage ditch, and repaired a water pipe. At least 28 national cemeteries benefited from similar landscape improvement projects, including Culpeper National Cemetery and Cypress Hills National Cemetery.

WPA labor participated in the development of six of the seven Inter-World War national cemeteries at varying levels. The program's timing and mission seemed a perfect fit with the undertaking of national cemetery construction in the mid -to- late 1930s; Americans gained jobs and the country fulfilled its goal of new burial space. By the early 1940s, Congress had dramatically reduced the size and scope of the WPA, and the reductions are reflected in the few projects at Golden Gate and Fort Rosecrans in California, and even fewer at Fort Bliss. Records show that WPA labor was not involved at Fort Sam Houston. The WPA presence was especially relevant at Baltimore, Fort Snelling, and Long Island national cemeteries.

In Maryland, the federal government purchased the 72.2-acre "Cloud Capped" estate on the western edge of the City of Baltimore, straddling the boundary with Baltimore County. The first section of the Cloud Capped mansion was constructed in approximately 1810; over the years, substantial additions dwarfed the original

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dwelling, and outbuildings erected circa 1895 enhanced the estate. In September 1936, the United States government purchased the Cloud Capped estate to create Baltimore National Cemetery. It was completed through multiple WPA projects; the first and largest included construction (reconstruction) of a superintendent's lodge using material salvaged from the original historic mansion, the renovation of outbuildings including a cottage, and landscaping activities.<sup>164</sup> Between 1936 and 1938, the Army expended more than \$400,000 on WPA improvements at Baltimore.

As at Baltimore, the WPA crews worked at Fort Snelling National Cemetery almost from the beginning. As early as August 1936, cemetery authorities contacted the WPA administrator for St. Paul, Minnesota.<sup>165</sup> On March 30, 1938, the WPA provided \$200,000 to fund the relocation of burials from the old post cemetery, which dated to the 1820s, and reinterment at the new 113-acre national cemetery.<sup>166</sup> The Fort Snelling work, in which 100 to 125 day laborers dug burial trenches, continued into October 1939; the men were not responsible for actual reburials.

In 1940, Fort Snelling National Cemetery secured a large WPA project for further development and improvements, such as grading, road-surface preparation; installation of water mains, storm drains, and catch basins; and general landscaping. The estimated number of laborers averaged at 204.<sup>167</sup> In spite of the massive assistance available, according to the superintendent, working with the WPA was a challenge. He wrote to the Quartermaster General:

My experience with the WPA projects operating in the cemetery since last spring has been such that I shall be glad when the present project is completed...I would decidedly not approve of another WPA project for this cemetery unless it was under the jurisdiction of Major Holt and myself instead of the Post WPA Officer. I could cite a page full of instances that cause me to come to this conclusion.<sup>168</sup>

In 1938, a WPA project at Long Island National Cemetery realized a shelter house and comfort station, as well as installation of a sewer line, manhole, and septic tank. In addition, 76 acres of the cemetery's original 175-acre tract were cleared of vegetation and fire breaks created. The cast-concrete rostrum (demolished in 1960) and sidewalks were also completed using WPA funding. The Construction Division of the Office of the

<sup>164</sup> "Baltimore National Cemetery", Official Project Number 265-25-8000, WPA Project Folders, (microfilm roll 210, Box 552), Records of Works Projects Administration (WPA), Record Group 69 (RG 69), NACP.

<sup>165</sup> Lundeen to Secretary of War, August 1, 1936.

<sup>166</sup> Maj. M.E. Halloran, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, Adjutant, Headquarters, Fort Snelling, Minn., to Commanding General, 7<sup>th</sup> Corps Area, Omaha, NE, March 30, 1938, Box 580, Folder "293.8 FSNC 1938 hb," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

<sup>167</sup> "Fort Snelling National Cemetery", Card 50028, OP165-2-71-22, Registry Number 602042, Letter-No. E-112, WPA Project Folders, Records of WPA, RG 69, NACP.

<sup>168</sup> Supt. Harvey Olson to John T. Harris, QMG, December 11, 1939, Folder 687, FSNC, GCGF 1936-1945, Entry 1892A, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

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Quartermaster General designed the rostrum.<sup>169</sup> By 1939, approximately 30 acres as developed by WPA labor contained around 2,000 burials.

Major Charles F. Smith, who served as the engineer in charge of Long Island National Cemetery at the time, reported the breakout of WPA labor employed there. Nearly 500 individuals fell into five categories: 364 unskilled workers, 52 intermediates, 39 professional/technical individuals, 27 skilled laborers, and 11 work superintendents or foremen.<sup>170</sup> Yet the programs at Long Island were always understaffed.<sup>171</sup>

At the 161.6-acre Golden Gate National Cemetery, in 1939, a \$200,000 WPA project included the construction of the entrance, lodge, and utility buildings.<sup>172</sup> At the same time, plans were underway to construction a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp supporting another New Deal make-work program near the national cemetery. The CCC not only involved the Departments Agriculture, Interior, and Labor, but also depended on logistical leadership and mobilization provided by both the regular and reserve Army. WPA officials assumed the cemetery would utilize some of the CCC labor.<sup>173</sup> In 1940, with 63 acres scheduled for grading and grass seeding, WPA authorities complained that cemetery officials used their own workers for this general maintenance work.<sup>174</sup> The complaint may have been moot, since Lieutenant General Leslie Groves, who oversaw CCC construction projects, reported that most WPA funding at the cemetery paid to transport laborers to and from San Francisco, 14 miles away.<sup>175</sup> Munson Brothers, a general contractor, constructed the lodge and entrance gate based on design by A.H. Thrush. WPA activity as suggested by a photograph of the gate under construction, with a WPA sign posted nearby, is misleading. In actuality, WPA labor was removed from this project prior to its completion, due to unsatisfactory work.<sup>176</sup>

Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery used less WPA assistance than the other cemeteries, due in part to its small 8-acre size. A proposal for a WPA-funded project dating to 1938 included wording for interior road resurfacing, raising curbs, constructing rock-lined gutters, and installing concrete collars around headstones and

<sup>169</sup> Charles F. Smith, memorandum "Final Narrative Report, Emergency Appropriation Act 1937 (Federal Project)," to QMG, Washington, DC, July 2, 1938, Box 306, Folder "600.1 Long Island National Cemetery (reports) 1937-1939," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

<sup>170</sup> Chief Field Engineer Henry Dumary, memorandum "Inspection – Pinelawn National Cemetery (sic), O.P. 713-2-168 F.A. 31237," to Clarence W. Post, Deputy Administrator – Chief Engineer, November 20, 1939, Box 306, Folder "600.1 LINC (reports) 1937-1939," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92; NACP.

<sup>171</sup> Capt. Robert S. Beard, QMC, memorandum "W.P.A. Labor," to QMG, Washington, DC, April 19, 1938, Box 306, Folder "600.1 LINC (reports) 1937-1939," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General (OQMG), RG 92, NACP.

<sup>172</sup> Harris to Smyser, November 14, 1939.

<sup>173</sup> J. H. Kane, San Mateo County Engineer (for M. A. Grant, County Engineer), to Maj. Gen. Albert J. Bowley, Presidio, San Francisco, May 11, 1939, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. III 1939," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

<sup>174</sup> Col. C.C. Reynolds, QMC, to the Constructing Quartermaster, San Francisco and Vicinity, Fort Mason, CA, October 30, 1940. Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. IV 1940 H.I.," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

<sup>175</sup> L. R. Groves, Jr., memorandum "New National Cemetery at San Francisco" to General Gregory, August 28, 1940, Box 175, Folder "687 GGNC Vol. IV 1940 H.I.," GCGF 1936-1945; Records of the OQMG, RG 92; NACP.

<sup>176</sup> Lt. Col. Engmann Anderson to Quartermaster, 9<sup>th</sup> Corps Area, Fort Douglas, UT, January 21, 1942, Folder 600.1, Golden Gate National Cemetery, GCGF 1936-1945, Entry 1892A, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

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a sprinkler system. The proposal sought funds in the amount of \$15,000.<sup>177</sup> Though records do not clearly indicate if this project was completed, researchers did identify a \$30,000 award for WPA project No. 513-2-365. This award included much of the same work specified in the former proposal. One of the pre-conditions for the effort was to provide sufficient workers for the project. As local relief authorities were not able to meet this pre-condition, the WPA did not authorize the award in full.<sup>178</sup>

The few WPA projects that occurred at Fort Bliss National Cemetery focused upon landscape improvements within the original 60-acre tract and construction of enclosing walls.

Overall, the WPA provided much of the labor and funds required to develop most of these national cemeteries, especially after 1935. The WPA program continued to take a major role in the New Deal mission until its decline after America became involved in World War II. The war guaranteed employment for almost everyone who wanted a job. The WPA was no longer needed by the time Congress abolished it in 1943.

### Summary

The 1930s saw the first major expansion of the system of national cemeteries since the Civil War-era as a result of the confluence of historical, demographic, and economic factors that shaped the decade of the Great Depression. The character, scale, and features of these seven properties—categorized as Inter-World War national cemeteries—were the first modern designs in which the sacrifice of thousands of veterans is captured in an honorific and serene landscape. A blend of traditional and new forms, and functionality, from memorialization to operational maintenance, were achieved in the built landscape of these cemeteries. Although arranged individually to best suit the needs of each property, they reflect a nationwide unity of purpose in appearance and sentiment.

During the second half of the twentieth century and first decade of the twenty-first, veterans' burial benefits waxed and waned as a national priority. Some national cemeteries nearly ran out of burial space until new space-saving memorial products or additional acreage became available to alleviate the problem. This period also saw the federal management of most national cemeteries move from a military to a civilian function. In 1973, the U.S Army transferred 82 national cemeteries and ancillary soldiers' lots to the Veterans Administration/Department of Veterans Affairs. Since then, burial activities have been sustained at several Inter-World War cemeteries through alterations to original landscape layouts or built features such as roads/walls; elsewhere, large new tracts are acquired and developed into burial sections that reflect the popular designs of the era. Some outdated building types were retired, such as superintendent lodges; other new features have been introduced as memorialization practices evolve, including the columbaria walls and memorial walkways.

<sup>177</sup> Col. John T. Harris, QMC, memorandum "Improvement of Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery" to Quartermaster, 9<sup>th</sup> Corps Area, Presidio of San Francisco, CA, August 6, 1938, Box 514, Folder "687 Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery (FRNC), Vol. III, 1937," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

<sup>178</sup> Col. Rudolph E. Smyser, QMC, Quartermaster, note to QMG, Washington, DC, August 11, 1938, Box 514, Folder "687 FRNC, Vol. III, 1937," GCGF 1936-1945, Records of the OQMG, RG 92, NACP.

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**Associated Property Types**

**Description**

The establishment of Baltimore, Fort Bliss, Fort Rosecrans, Fort Sam Houston, Fort Snelling, Golden Gate, and Long Island national cemeteries during the years between World Wars I and II marked the first major expansion of the system of national cemeteries since the Civil War. These seven cemeteries, constructed during the same period of time, share similar design aesthetics. At each cemetery is a lodge built as a residence for the cemetery director. Grand entrances and substantial fencing articulate the boundaries of all seven cemeteries. The architectural styles at each reflect a combination of federal design trends of the time period and regional surroundings. While differences in topography and land availability at each site resulted in various layouts, each cemetery features several burial sections—all labeled for location identification of interred individuals.

**Significance**

The Keeper of the National Register previously deemed the seven Inter-World War national cemeteries eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The 2011 Clarification of Policy places the period of significance for each cemetery from its first burial to the present.<sup>179</sup> These properties were created in response to the needs of a growing veteran population during the early twentieth century; and they are nationally significant under Criterion A, for their association with the expansion of the system of national cemeteries. Continuing and expanding upon memorial efforts established during the Civil War and the first national cemeteries, these Inter-World War cemeteries are symbolic displays of the continuing sacrifices of the United States military. The Clarification of Policy indicates that all national cemeteries are considered exceptionally significant and eligible for listing in the NRHP regardless of age, and that all buildings, structures, and objects located within the boundaries of national cemeteries are considered contributing elements to each national cemetery regardless of age.<sup>180</sup>

**Registration Requirements**

In order to qualify for this multiple property nomination, a national cemetery must have been established between the years 1934 and 1939. The only properties qualifying for inclusion in this multiple property submission are Baltimore National Cemetery, Fort Bliss National Cemetery, Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, Fort Snelling National Cemetery, Golden Gate National Cemetery, and Long Island National Cemetery.

<sup>179</sup> Keeper of the National Register, “National Register Eligibility of National Cemeteries – A Clarification of Policy” (National Register Statement of Policy, Washington, DC, September 8, 2011).

<sup>180</sup> Keeper, “Clarification.”

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### Geographical Data

All Inter-World War national cemeteries are located in the United States of America within the boundaries specified in their enabling legislation. There are seven Inter-World War cemeteries: Baltimore National Cemetery in Baltimore, Maryland; Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, California; Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Fort Bliss National Cemetery in Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, Texas; Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale, New York; and Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego, California.



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### Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

The multiple property (MP) listing of NCA national cemeteries designed and developed between the two World Wars (1934-1939) arose from NCA's interest in documenting the impact of New Deal-era programs on its properties in support of NCA's responsibilities under Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Former NCA historian Alec Bennett first prepared the draft nomination for Baltimore National Cemetery. Thereafter, in 2008-2012, VA outsourced a project to New South Associates, Inc. (historians Kristie L. Person, Staci Richey, Mark Swanson) to develop the thematic MP context and nomination documentation for the other six cemeteries. The Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery nomination will also serve as mitigation for an Adverse Effect finding related to construction at that cemetery; VA contractor Hardy-Heck-Moore contributed to this document.<sup>181</sup> In 2014, VA again contracted with New South Associates, Inc. to finalize the MP context and all nominations. Representing the NCA History Program, United States Department of Veterans Affairs, former historian Hillori Schenker and historian Virginia Price oversaw and contributed to the final phase of this project; senior historian Sara Amy Leach provided oversight and edited drafts throughout the project.

Historians documented each cemetery with photographs, and they analyzed and inventoried layout, design, architecture, structures, and objects. Primary and secondary sources were consulted at each cemetery and local repositories, as well as documentation maintained in the NCA History Collection. The bulk of the primary records associated with national cemeteries remain in the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA): Washington, DC (I), and College Park, MD (II).

Analysis of these seven cemeteries focused on the most prominent connective element: date of establishment. Authorized and developed in years of peacetime between World Wars I and II, the historic integrity of these seven properties remains intact. Four historic contexts define these properties: 1) development of national cemeteries, 1862-1940; 2) cemetery landscape and design, 1930s; 3) rise of veteran service organizations and evolving veteran burial benefits, 1860s-1930s; and 4) impact of the Great Depression and the WPA programs on national cemeteries, 1930s.

<sup>181</sup> Programmatic Agreement Between the United States Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration and the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the Expansion of Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, Texas (signed February 18, 2009); Memorandum of Agreement Among the United States Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and Texas State Historic Preservation Officer for the proposed Phase II Improvements to the Historic Section of Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio, Texas (Signed June 27, 2014).

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