

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

LEBANON NATIONAL CEMETERY, ROSTRUM

HALS No. KY-3-B

Location: 20 Highway 208, Lebanon, Marion County, Kentucky

The Lebanon National Cemetery rostrum is located at latitude 37.553466, longitude -85.267799 (North American Datum of 1983). The coordinate represents the structure's approximate center.

Present owner: National Cemetery Administration,
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Construction date: 1932

Builder / Contractor: unknown

Description: The rostrum is a raised octagonal concrete platform resting on concrete foundations. It measures 15' wide x 4' high. Its vertical surfaces are articulated by inset panels on each side, and a concrete staircase leads up onto it along one side. The rostrum features by a fence-like railing supported by eight iron-pipe corner posts.

The corner posts are the remnants of full-height pipe columns that once supported the lightweight steel framework of a eight-sided pyramidal roof. The roof was covered in standing-seam sheet metal; a spike finial or lightning rod stood at the roof's apex. A metal grille of similar construction to the railing formed a decorative screen below the eaves.

Site context: Until it was expanded in the 1980s, Lebanon National Cemetery consisted of a small, 2.38-acre triangular tract divided into geometric burial sections by grass drives. The rostrum is located about 300' beyond the end of a straight service drive that led into the cemetery from the original entrance.

History: The military cemetery outside Lebanon, Kentucky, was established in 1862 to support Civil War military camps in the district. It was designated a national cemetery in 1867. Nothing is known of early Decoration or Memorial Day observances or other ceremonies held in the grounds that might, as at other national cemeteries, have required the construction of a speaker's stand. In 1921, however, a ceremonial occasion of some kind warranted construction of a 9' x 12' wood rostrum. This structure, although intended to be temporary, survived until the early 1930s, when it was torn down to allow for the construction of the current rostrum, which was completed May 15, 1932. The new rostrum

cost \$932, but the contractor who built it for the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps has not been identified.

The roof of the rostrum was removed in 1962 or 1963. The roof supports at the corners of the rostrum were cut off at a height of 4' above the platform, threaded, and capped.

The cemetery was transferred from the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Memorial Affairs Agency to the Veterans Administration (now the Department of Veterans Affairs) in 1973. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

Sources:

Call, Lewis W. *United States Military Reservations, National Cemeteries, and Military Parks. Title, Jurisdiction, etc.* Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1907.

Holt, Dean W. *American Military Cemeteries.* 2nd ed. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2010.

Blake, Walter F. National Register of Historic Places nomination for "Lebanon National Cemetery." Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1975.

Records of the Veterans Administration, Department of Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Historical File (Record Group 15/A-1, Entry 25), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, General Correspondence and Reports Relating to National and Post Cemeteries (Record Group 92, Entry 576), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps. *Outline Description of Military Posts and Reservations in the United States and Alaska and of National Cemeteries.* Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1904.

Historian: Michael R. Harrison, 2012

Project Information: The documentation of lodges and rostrums in the national cemeteries was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), one of the Heritage Documentation Programs of the National Park Service, Richard O'Connor, Chief. The project was sponsored by the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) of the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Sara Amy Leach, Senior Historian. Project planning was coordinated by Catherine Lavoie, Chief of HABS. Historical research was undertaken by HABS Historians Michael R. Harrison and Virginia B. Price. NCA Historian Jennifer M. Perunko provided research and editorial support. Field work for selected sites was carried

out and measured drawings produced by HABS Architects Paul Davidson, Ryan Pierce, and Mark Schara.