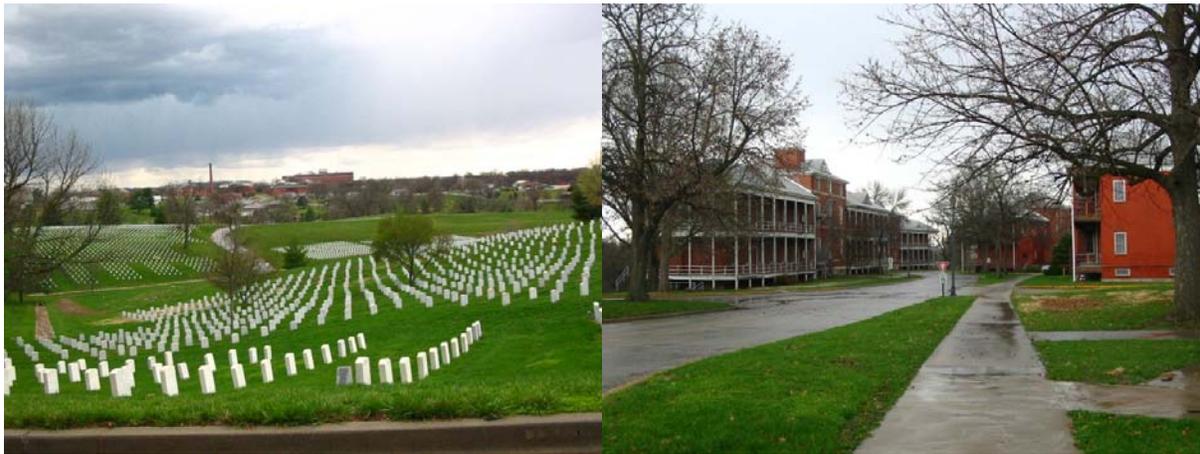




**Name of Property:** Western Branch, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS)  
**City, State:** Leavenworth, Kansas  
**Significant Dates:** 1885-1930  
**NHL Criteria:** 1  
**NHL Theme:** IV. Shaping the Political Landscape  
2. Governmental Institutions  
**Previous Recognition:** 1999 National Register of Historic Places  
1993 Historic American Buildings Survey  
**National Historic Context:** 2009 *National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers Study*

**NHL Significance:**

- Established by Congress in 1865 and ultimately encompassing eleven branches across the country, the NHDVS represents a policy of veterans' benefits that directly influenced the development of a national system for veteran health care in the United States. The NHDVS demonstrates the concern and commitment of the federal government for the well-being of the civilian soldier. The NHDVS evolved over five distinct phases, reflecting changes in policy regarding admissions and medical care before its 1930 incorporation into the Veterans Administration.



- The Western Branch represents phases three through five and the first to be established following a change in policy that dramatically broadened the standards for admission to accept veterans with non-service related disabilities.
- The Western Branch was the first constructed west of the Mississippi River acknowledging the great number of veterans in western states and territories.
- It is an outstanding example of National Homes developed by the Board of Managers, with a largely intact picturesque landscape by H. W. S. Cleveland, and contains a number of key property types. It represents the Boards' emphasis on significant buildings and designed landscapes as sources of security, peace, and comfort, instilling pride for veterans and respect for them among the general public.
- Leavenworth National Cemetery (originally the Soldiers Home Cemetery) is an integral part of the Home, providing a final benefit -- honored burial among comrades.

**Integrity:**

- The building complex and associated landscape are remarkably intact and have suffered the loss of relatively few key buildings.
- Some early buildings, service buildings, and flower gardens are gone; however, major post-1930 development has been largely relegated to perimeter locations and outside of primary viewsheds.
- The VA is engaged in rehabilitation of several buildings through the Enhanced Use Lease program.

**Owner of Property:** Federal

**Acreage of Property:** Approximately 53 acres

**Origins of Nomination:** Via an interagency agreement with the Department of Veterans Affairs Federal Preservation Office (VA FPO), and through a Cooperative Agreement with the National Council on Public History, the NPS contracted for a context study to assess significance and

develop NHL nominations.

**Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:**

- Recognition of the NHDVS as a nationally significant resource will help Americans to better understand the commitment of the federal government to its military veterans.
- The successor of this ground-breaking federal policy in veterans care is of current national interest.

**Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:** None known.

**Landmarks Committee Comments:**

**Landmarks Committee Recommendation:** Designation. Dr. Allan moved, Dr. Seale seconded; unanimous approval.

**Public Comments Favoring Designation:**

**Advisory Board Recommendation:**