RM-61

Reference Manual 61: National Cemetery Operations

Approved:

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1. Background and Purpose

NPS-61, "Guideline for National Cemeteries," (Release No. 1, November 1985) is replaced by Director's Order #61 and this Reference Manual. The purpose of this Reference Manual is to supplement Director's Order #61 (National Cemetery Operations) and provide guidance on the operation of NPS-administered national cemeteries. The guidance and procedures contained herein are consistent with NPS national cemetery regulations published at 36 CFR part12, NPS *Management Policies* 2006 and Director's Order #61.

The National Park Service currently manages 14 national cemeteries. These cemeteries are administered to preserve the historic character, uniqueness, and solemn nature of both the cemeteries and the historical parks of which they are a part.

National Cemeteries administered by the National Park Service are classified as either "active" or "closed." Active cemeteries have casket or cremation gravesites available for first interments. Closed cemeteries have no available gravesites for either casket or cremation first interments but may inter eligible family members of previously interred individuals (See section 1 of Director's Order #61 and section 3.3 of this document).

There are two active national cemeteries currently administered by the NPS: Andersonville National Cemetery and Andrew Johnson National Cemetery. Antietam, Battleground, Chalmette, Fort Donelson, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Poplar Grove, Shiloh, Stones River, Vicksburg, Yorktown and Custer National Cemeteries are closed.

2. Authority and Related Guidance

Authority to issue this Reference Manual is contained in section 4 of Director's Order #61: National Cemetery Operations, the NPS Organic Act (16 USC 1 through 4), and in delegations of authority found in Part 245 of the DOI Manual. Other specific authorities and requirements governing NPS administration of national cemeteries are found in Director's Order #61 (National Cemetery Operations), 36 CFR Part 12 (National Cemetery Regulations). National cemeteries are addressed in section 8.6.10.1 of NPS Management Policies 2006.

3. Requirements and Instructions

3.1 Operation and Maintenance of National Cemeteries as Cultural Resources

National cemeteries encompass all types of cultural resources, including sites, landscapes, structures, objects, and archival and collections items. The operation and maintenance of national cemeteries will broadly follow NPS policy and guidance for similar classes of cultural resources. These cultural resources will be identified and evaluated through appropriate and relevant reports such as historic resource studies, cultural landscape reports, cultural resource inventories, and National Register nominations. In addition, each national cemetery will have its own legislative and administrative history or be included in the legislative and administrative history of the historical park in which the cemetery is located.

Cultural resource preservation policies found in chapter 5 of NPS *Management Policies* 2006, and Director's Order #28 will be used to preserve and manage identified cultural resources. Headstones and markers will be treated in accordance with Director's Order #61: National Cemetery Operations, and with the policy and procedures contained in this Manual.

3.1.1 Minimum Planning Requirements

A. Required Documents

1. Cultural Landscape Report and National Register Documentation

In accordance with section 3.9.4 of Director's Order #61, all NPS national cemeteries must have either an approved cultural landscape report (CLR) or National Register documentation that adequately addresses the cultural landscape, identifies contributing landscape characteristics and features, and establishes criteria for analyzing the historical significance and integrity of the landscape. An approved cultural landscape report will be used to determine the historic significance of these resources and evaluate their relevance to the overall appearance of the cemetery.

2. Administrative and Legislative Histories

Each national cemetery will have its own legislative and administrative history or be included in the legislative and administrative history of the park in which the cemetery is located. This is important if the legislation establishing the national cemetery predates that of the park.

3. Interment Plan

In accordance with 36 CFR 12.5(d), each NPS national cemetery must have an approved interment plan for burial sections. This interment plan must be in keeping with the historic character of the national cemetery and be approved by the regional director. The interment plan may be included as part of a cemetery operation plan (see this Manual, section 3.1.1(B)).

4. National Cemetery Records

National cemetery records consist of original design plans, historic reports, letter books, original interment reports, records of interment, original structures, utility plans, etc. This information should be retained in the park to facilitate management. Records will be considered a permanent part of the park's history. Copies of records should be sent to other repositories or archives for safekeeping. Preservation of national cemetery documents should be a continuing process and include all subsequent plans and documents relating to the cemetery.

Each national cemetery should also maintain a history of physical development, natural changes, photographs, and administrative changes. This should reflect continuing documentation of changes by photography, records and other appropriate measures.

B. Cemetery Operation Plan

While not required by regulation or NPS policy, a cemetery operation plan is highly suggested and will provide tools that will improve cemetery operation and ensure consistent and defensible decision-making. Each park should have a cemetery operation plan, which includes, at a minimum, the following components:

- **Interment Guidance** including information such as grave excavation procedures, unique environmental conditions which affect interment operations, and best practices that will provide guidance to future superintendents, facility managers and staff.

- **Grounds Maintenance Guidance** including such information as:
  - Appropriate turf varieties based on historical or environmental considerations.
  - Acceptable height of turf.
  - Minimum required maintenance schedules (moving, weed whipping, headstone cleaning, headstone realignment, etc.) based on the local environment.
  - Trees and shrub maintenance based on CLR, local conditions, species, etc.
  - Guidance on memorial sections and commemorative monuments (See section 3.9.2(B) and 3.9.3(A) of this Manual).

- **Operational Standards and Measures**

It is important that cemetery operation plans be developed based on the desired condition of the cemetery, as required to preserve its significant historic features and cultural landscapes, and not on current staffing or funding levels.

3.1.2 Treatment and Use of Component Parts of National Cemeteries

Landscape characteristics and features, including but not limited to monuments, buildings, fences, vegetation, walls, gates, walks, headstones, viewsheds, historic circulation patterns, and general historic cemetery layout which contribute to the National Register significance of the national cemetery should be preserved.

A. Preservation Guidelines

Decisions regarding the preservation of a national cemetery will be based on an approved cultural landscape report or National Register documentation. The NPS will protect and manage the cultural resources and historic values of national cemeteries through effective research, planning, and stewardship, and in accordance with:

- NPS *Management Policies* 2006

- Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management
- The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation
- The most recent Service-wide Programmatic Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers.

B. Landscapes

A cultural landscape is a geographic area, which includes cultural and natural resources associated with an historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values[1]. A national cemetery landscape may include historically significant circulation systems, arrangement of graves, site topography, and views and vistas. Individual contributing features may also include buildings, headstones and markers, natural and ornamental vegetation, fencing and walls, pavement, water features, benches, and planters.

Landscapes in national cemeteries should be maintained to preserve the historic character and dignity of the cemetery and meet the high standards that the public expects.

C. Archeology

Although ground disturbance for the purpose of burials in accordance with an approved interment plan is considered a normal part of cemetery maintenance and operations, existing National Park Service laws, regulations and policies will be followed before grounds are disturbed for reasons other than burials. When previously unknown features are encountered during interments, proper archeological procedures will be followed in accordance with existing National Park Service laws, regulations and policies.

D. Cemetery Lodges

Historic lodges in national cemeteries will be managed in accordance with NPS *Management Policies 2006,* Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management, and Director's Order #36: National Park Service Housing Management. In accordance with NPS policy, the use of historic cemetery lodges for housing and offices is encouraged if the use contributes to the preservation of the structure.

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[1] The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes, page 4.

3.2 General Provisions

The NPS will manage national cemeteries in accordance with Director's Order #61: National Cemetery Operations, Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management, 36 CFR Parts 1-5, 7 and 12 (See 36 CFR 12.1) and NPS *Management Policies* 2006.

3.2.1 Visitation

The public will be notified of the normal operating hours of the cemetery and visitation will be encouraged.

As a means of assisting the visiting public, national cemeteries are encouraged to provide visitors with locator maps of the cemetery to enable them to find their way to a specific gravesite.

3.2.2. Visitor Standards of Conduct

In accordance with the National Cemeteries Act of 1973 (38 USC 2400 - 2410), NPS national cemeteries are shrines to the honored dead who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States.

In keeping with the honor bestowed by Congress, certain activities are prohibited in NPS administered national cemeteries.

A. General Regulations

The following activities related to visitor conduct are prohibited by either 36 CFR part 2 or part 12:

- Littering
- Disturbing or damaging natural and cultural resources
- Engaging in recreational activities, and
- Engaging in disorderly activities.

B. Cemetery-Specific Regulations

In accordance with Director's Order #61, other activities relating to visitor conduct are prohibited through the use of the superintendent's discretionary authority, as authorized by 36 CFR 1.5. These include:

- Soliciting funds
- Engaging in commercial activities
- Distributing printed matter, and
- Engaging in partisan political activity.

(See also this Order, section 3.10: Ceremonies and Special Events)

In compliance with 36 CFR 1.7, the prohibitions in section 3.2.2 above and any other discretionary cemetery-specific limits and restrictions on visitor activities must be communicated to the public through appropriate methods such as the use of signs, maps, brochures, and electronic media.

As further required by 36 CFR 1.7, any limits or restrictions imposed under the superintendent's discretionary authority must be compiled in writing as the superintendent's "compendium." Superintendents will publish their compendium on the park's public website, and will prominently post cemetery hours of operation (see section 3.2.1 of this Manual).

3.2.3 Access and Traffic Control

In accordance with 36 CFR 4.21, the superintendent may determine the maximum allowable speed of motor vehicles on roads in NPS national cemeteries. The maximum allowable speed of vehicles in national cemeteries will be posted conspicuously in compliance with 36 CFR 1.7, and be published as part of the compendium and on the park's public website (see section 3.2.2 of this Manual).

In accordance with 36 CFR 4.11, the superintendent may designate limits and conditions for the operation and parking of sightseeing or chartered buses or vehicles.

3.2.4 Floral Regulations

In accordance with 36 CFR 12.10, the placement on the grave of fresh cut or artificial flowers in or on a metal or other non-breakable rod or container designated by the superintendent is allowed at times designated by the superintendent. The superintendent should designate types of containers and times floral arrangements may be placed on graves to provide for efficient maintenance operations, protection of the resource, and acknowledgement of the needs of the next-of-kin.

In accordance with 36 CFR 12.10, the placement of permanent, in-ground flower containers in NPS national cemeteries is prohibited. Existing containers may remain until they become unserviceable.

3.2.5 Photography and Filming

Filming and photography will be permitted in national cemeteries in accordance with NPS *Management Policies* 2006 8.6.6, 36 CFR parts 5.5 and 36 CFR part 12, 43 CFR 5, and 16 USC 460*l*-6d, provided that the activities do not cause unacceptable impacts or disrupt the solemn commemorative and historic character of the cemeteries (for more information on unacceptable impacts, see NPS *Management Policies* 2006, sections 1.4.7.1 and 8.2).

A. Non-Commercial Filming and Photography

In accordance with NPS *Management Policies* 2006, a permit will not be required for a visitor's personal, non-commercial photography and filming during normal cemetery visiting hours. A permit may be required to conduct filming or photography after normal cemetery visiting hours.

B. Commercial Filming and Photography

A written permit from the superintendent is required for all commercial filming in national cemeteries (NPS *Management Policies* 2006, section 8.6.6.2). Commercial filming means filming that involves the digital or film recording of a visual image or sound recording by a person, business, or other entity for a market audience. This includes recordings such as those used for a documentary, television or feature film, advertisement, or similar project (NPS *Management Policies* 2006, section 8.6.6.2).

In accordance with 16 USC 4601-6d and 36 CFR 5.5, still photography (whether commercial or non-commercial) in NPS national cemeteries will not require a permit unless:

- It takes place at a location(s) where or when members of the public are generally not allowed;
- It uses model(s), prop(s), or other articles of commerce that are not part of the location's natural or cultural resources or administrative facilities;
- It requires the NPS to provide management and oversight to prevent unacceptable impacts;
- It interferes with normal public access and use of the cemetery.

For more information including fees, performance bonds and liability insurance requirements related to commercial filming and photography, see NPS *Management Policies* 2006, section 8.6.6.2.

3.3 Eligibility for Interment in NPS-administered National Cemeteries

The superintendent is responsible for determining eligibility, in accordance with Department of Veterans Affairs eligibility requirements, for interment in NPS-administered national cemeteries. Interment will be permitted once eligibility has been conclusively established.

In accordance with Director's Order #61, section 3.3, the regional director is delegated the authority to waive interment eligibility requirements under special circumstances upon the recommendation of the superintendent. Special care should be taken to prevent the displacement of graves that could potentially be utilized as grave space for veterans and their dependents. Waivers should be granted only in the most compelling cases and an immediate family member or a designated representative must provide written documentation of the special circumstances.

In accordance with 36 CFR 12.5(c)(3), gravesite reservations granted in writing prior to the adoption of the one-gravesite-per-family-unit restriction will be honored as long as the person remains eligible.

Burials in active cemeteries will be permitted, pursuant to applicable regulations, until available space has been filled (NPS *Management Policies* 2006, section 8.6.10.1). The expansion of a burial section is prohibited without the approval of the regional director (36 CFR 12.5(d)(3)). Expansion of a national cemetery outside of the confines of its historic enclosure is prohibited (36 CFR 12.5(d)(6)). Once cemeteries are determined to be closed, they will not be opened for additional unreserved first interments (Director's Order #61, section 3.3).

3.4 Interment Facilities and Services Provided

3.4.1 Basic Facilities and Services Provided

At the time that burial arrangements are being made, the superintendent or designee should explain to the next-of-kin or to his or her agent, the services and facilities that are rendered without charge.

Services and facilities furnished without charge include the opening and closing of the grave, and the installation of headstones and markers. All other services normally associated with interment are the responsibility of the next-of-kin, including the acquisition of grave liners or vaults.

3.4.2 Viewing of Remains at NPS National Cemeteries

Facilities for viewing remains are not provided in national cemeteries. The superintendent or the designated representative will not generally permit a casket to be opened after the hearse carrying a closed casket has entered the cemetery.

3.4.3 Military Honors

In accordance with 10 USC 1491, the Secretary of Defense must ensure that, upon request, a funeral honors detail is provided for the funeral of any veteran. Arranging for military honors is the responsibility of the next-of-kin or family of the deceased. If possible, the superintendent should, at the time the request for interment is made, notify the family or their agent that responsibility for providing or arranging for military honors lies with the family or their agent funeral director.

In accordance with 10 USC 1491(c), a funeral honors detail must, at a minimum, perform a ceremony that includes:

- The folding of a United States flag and presentation of the flag to the veteran's family, and;
- The playing of Taps

It is the responsibility of the National Cemetery Administration to provide a United States flag to drape the casket or accompany the cremated remains of a deceased veteran. These flags may be obtained from National Cemetery Administration offices and U.S. Post Offices throughout the United States with the submission of VA Form 21-2008.

Unless a bugler is a member of the detail, the funeral honors detail will play a recorded version of Taps using audio equipment which the detail will provide if adequate audio equipment is not otherwise available for use at the funeral.

In addition to the required elements of a funeral honors detail, the following elements may also be included:

- A firing detail of at least three in number; and
- Six uniformed body bearers or pallbearers to carry or escort the casket, hold the flag over the casket at the appropriate time and fold the flag in the prescribed manner.

Cemetery staff is responsible for lowering the American flag to half staff at least 30 minutes prior to interment and raising the flag 30 minutes after the interment.

3.4.4 Interment Flag

The interment flags used to drape the caskets of eligible deceased veterans are furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). These flags may be obtained, upon application by the family, generally accomplished by their agent funeral director, from VA stations and U.S. Post Offices throughout the United States.

3.4.5 Burial Vaults and Graveliners

The use of metal, asphalt, concrete, and other types of below ground burial vaults or graveliners purchased at private expense in national cemeteries is authorized. Contractual arrangements for the purchase of such vaults or graveliners are the responsibility of the next-of-kin with the funeral director or the vault company. NPS employees should not be involved in making these arrangements.

The cemetery will be notified by the next-of-kin prior to the procurement of the vault or liner, to ensure that the dimensions of the vault or liner can be accommodated at the cemetery. Once the vault or liner is procured by the next-of-kin, the cemetery will be notified in sufficient time so that a grave of proper size can be prepared. It is the responsibility of the contractor to furnish equipment and personnel to place the vault or liner in the grave prior to the funeral service and to place the lid cover properly after the service is concluded. Cemetery personnel should not normally assist vault installation personnel in handling privately furnished vaults or graveliners. Overnight storage of the vault or graveliner within the cemetery is not authorized.

The activities of vault installation personnel should be regulated by cemetery personnel to assure that such activities and equipment do not conflict with or detract from funeral ceremonies.

At those cemeteries where graveliners are authorized, the superintendent may provide a graveliner at government expense when the deceased has no family or the family is unable to provide a vault.

3.4.6 Pallbearers

Except in those cemeteries where pallbearers are not required, superintendents should inform funeral directors that they are obligated to provide sufficient pallbearers, if not provided by the relatives. National cemetery staff can serve as pallbearers at the superintendent's discretion.

3.5 Pre-interment Actions and Related Matters

3.5.1 Scheduling of Interments

The superintendent or designee should schedule the date and hour of all interments in a national cemetery upon receipt of a request for interment (Director's Order #61, section 3.5). Upon receipt of a request for interment, the requester will be advised that the date and time set is tentative pending official determination of eligibility and/or authorization for interment. If, however, an acceptable military discharge document is presented, a firm date and time may be established.

Under normal circumstances, the superintendent should schedule interments to allow verification of service data. Once verification is obtained by cemetery staff, the interment can be conducted. All interments should be scheduled to allow sufficient time for proper closing of the grave prior to the close of the workday.

3.5.2 Environmental Considerations

In instances where local soil or geological conditions make it impossible to excavate a gravesite deep enough to hold more than one deceased, superintendents may reserve the adjacent site for a spousal reservation.

3.5.3 Requests for Interments on Weekends or Holidays

Interments are not normally scheduled for Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays. The immediate family member or his or her designated representative should be advised that Saturday, Sunday, or holiday interments may only be made at the superintendent's discretion. When such requests are received, the following procedures should be followed:

1. Verify that the person making the request is the immediate family member or his or her designated representative.
2. Ensure that the time and date for which burial is requested actually reflects the desires of the immediate family member.

3. The NPS employee taking the request should make every reasonable effort to satisfactorily schedule the burial on a day when such burials normally are authorized. If circumstances require that an interment be scheduled on a weekend or holiday, the immediate family member will be informed that this action will require the approval of the superintendent.

3.5.4 Gravesite Assignment

Gravesite assignments will be made by the superintendent or designee in accordance with the interment plan.

3.5.6 Burial Permits

Burial permits are sometimes required in accordance with regulations established by State and local authorities. A member of the armed forces who dies while on active duty may be interred prior to receipt of a burial permit.

3.5.6 Opening the Grave

Special care must be taken to assure that graves are laid out and numbered in accordance with the cemetery operation plan. Specific guidance on excavation of graves should be included in the cemetery operation plan.

3.5.7 Accidental Damage

In the event of accidental damage to urns, caskets, casketed remains or outside containers caused by Park Service personnel, a visual inspection should be conducted immediately and a report of the incident completed by the superintendent.

A review of the events, including the extent of the damage, the timeliness of reporting and the feasibility of accomplishing quick corrective action will help dictate what steps should be taken following the accident. Following is a sequence of steps that should normally be followed by the superintendent when damage is found:

1. Notify the servicing funeral director handling the case and seek his or her advice on contacting the next-of-kin or appropriate family member. The funeral director is probably in the best position to determine the person to be contacted regarding the incident.

2. Call the next-of-kin or appropriate family member to inform him or her of the accident and the general nature of the observed damage.

3. The next-of-kin or other family member should be assured that all costs for replacing the casket and for the services of a funeral director will be borne by the Government.

4. The next-of-kin or other family member should be permitted to inspect the damage and witness the transfer of the remains to a new casket, urn, or outside container. Should the family so desire, the servicing funeral director who handled the interment will be permitted to attend.

5. A replacement casket and required mortuary service may be obtained from the servicing funeral director handling the case if costs are determined reasonable. The superintendent should contact a funeral director with due consideration of purchasing regulations.

The steps above should be used as a general guide. Modifications can be made to accommodate the circumstances in each case. It is important, however, that the specific course of action decided upon be approved by the superintendent.

A completion report of the incident should be prepared and held on file at the cemetery. This report should examine the causes of the damage and the corrective action taken to reduce the likelihood of a reoccurrence.

3.5.8 Side-by-Side Burials in a Single Gravesite

Geologic and environmental conditions sometimes make it necessary to conduct side-by-side burials. When it is necessary to make side-by-side burials in a single gravesite, extreme care should be exercised to accurately locate the sideline of the site. Where a burial vault is used in such cases, it may be necessary to encroach several inches on adjacent site(s). This is permissible provided the site encroached upon has been or will be utilized and is reflected in an approved interment plan.

3.6 The Interment

3.6.1 General

National cemeteries provide a dignified burial place and lasting memorial for veterans and their eligible family members. Interments may be conducted at the graveside or an area designated for committal services. The interment process, from the arrival of the funeral party to their departure, should be conducted in a dignified and professional manner with the interment given the highest priority.

The superintendent or designee should attend each funeral to render assistance and guidance to the funeral party. Family of the deceased are often under physical and emotional strain, and the superintendent or designee should exhibit compassion and concern to the next-of-kin and other family members. Interments should be conducted with dignity and respect even if family members or friends are not present. Specific details about the interment should be included in the cemetery operation plan.

3.6.2 Late Arrivals

If the family or next-of-kin fail to arrive for the interment service and the time of day does not permit the closing of the grave during normal working hours, the superintendent may authorize completion of the interment.

3.6.3 Placement of Interment Flowers Delivered to the Gravesite Prior to Arrival of the Funeral Party

Interment flowers and floral pieces, which normally are delivered to the cemetery prior to the arrival of the funeral party, should be placed and arranged at the committal shelter, committal area, or adjacent to the grave by the funeral director.

3.6.4 The Funeral Procession, Committal Service and Interment

A. Duties of Cemetery Staff

The superintendent or designee should attend each funeral to render assistance and guidance to the funeral party. He or she should meet the funeral procession at a designated point within the cemetery which in the judgment of the superintendent is most suitable for that purpose to ensure safe and dignified reception. If necessary, any special instruction will be imparted to the funeral director at that time.

When graveside services are permitted, the superintendent or designee should immediately inform pallbearers and all members of the funeral party of any known or anticipated safety hazards.

B. Suspension of Cemetery Operations

All cemetery operations within the immediate area of the committal shelter and gravesite should be suspended 30 minutes prior to the scheduled funeral time and resume after the service has been completed and the funeral party has left the area. When feasible, staff should advise tour groups of interment times and request that groups avoid the funeral area.

C. Presentation of the U.S. Flag

In accordance with 10 USC 1491, the Secretary of Defense must ensure that, upon request, a funeral honors detail is provided for the funeral of any veteran, which includes folding and presenting the United States burial flag (For information about other elements of a funeral honors detail, see sections 3.4.3 and 3.4.4).

It is the responsibility of the funeral director to ensure that the flag is presented to the next-of-kin or an appropriate person. In some instances, the superintendent or designee may find it necessary to present the flag. Each branch of the military presents the flag using wording relevant to that organization. When the superintendent or designee presents the folded flag, appropriate wording should be used such as: "This flag is presented on behalf of a grateful nation in memory of the faithful service provided by your loved one."

3.6.5 Closing the Grave

Graves should be closed as soon as practicable after the interment service and before the close of business. Closing should be accomplished in a manner designed to minimize grave settling. When closure of a casket interment is not immediately feasible, a grave cover should be used to cover the grave until it can be closed. Remains should not be left unattended until the grave is closed.

Some members of a funeral party may not leave right away and may remain in the general area of the gravesite or committal shelter to observe closing operations. Cemetery employees should be aware of the need for concern and care in this operation.

There may be instances in which family members and friends wish to place flowers or other items into the grave prior to closing. Cemetery staff may offer to place items in the grave for family and friends of the deceased. For some groups, participation in the closing process may be part of cultural and religious traditions. Cemetery staff should remain with the group to ensure safety precautions are followed. Due to safety concerns, persons should not be allowed to remain at the side of the open grave.

After the grave has been closed, all floral pieces should be neatly arranged on the grave by the funeral director or park personnel.

3.6.6 Temporary Marking of the Grave

It is the responsibility of the superintendent to ensure that graves are temporarily marked immediately after closing. A standard grave marker should be placed on the grave.

3.6.7 Recording the Interment

It is essential that interments be recorded as soon as possible in the cemetery records. In accordance with Director's Order #61, interment data will be recorded on the Interment Register (VA Form 40-4982), Record of Interment (VA Form 40-4956), Burial Operations Support System (BOSS) or other appropriate method.

3.6.8 Interments Postponed Because of Weather or Weather-related Conditions and Other Emergencies

Depending on the geographical area in which they are located, national cemeteries may experience severe weather such as hurricanes, tornadoes, snow and ice, blizzards, and torrential rain.

When scheduled committal services and interments are not feasible due to conditions outside the control of the superintendent, the funeral director and the immediate family member should be notified that the interment cannot be accomplished as scheduled, and the burial must be

rescheduled for another date and time. If the remains must be returned to the funeral home from the national cemetery, it will be done so at no expense to the Government.

3.7 Cremated Remains and Group Burials

3.7.1 Scattering of Cremated Remains

Cremated remains of only eligible veterans, spouses and dependents may be scattered in national cemeteries in conformance with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations. In accordance with 36 CFR 2.62, the scattering of cremated remains is prohibited, except pursuant to the terms and conditions of a permit, or in designated areas according to conditions which may be established by the superintendent.

3.7.2 Burial of Cremated Remains

The interment of cremated remains should be treated in the same manner as other interments. Although cremated remains may be received at the national cemetery through various modes of transportation including Parcel Post, and often unattended, they should receive the same attention to detail and dignity as that afforded attended casketed remains.

A Record of Interment (ROI), Veterans Administration Form 40-4956, must be initiated and processed for buried cremated remains. Appropriate copies will be retained at the national cemetery as a permanent record of the action.

The burial of cremated remains in active cemeteries will be permitted, pursuant to applicable regulations, until available space has been filled (NPS *Management Policies* 2006, section 8.6.10.1). The expansion of a burial section is prohibited without the approval of the regional director (36 CFR 12.5(d)(3)). Expansion of a national cemetery outside of the confines of its historic enclosure is prohibited (36 CFR 12.5(d)(6)). Once cemeteries are determined to be closed, they will not be opened for additional unreserved first interments, including cremated remains (Director's Order #61, section 3.3).

3.7.3 Group Burials

When it is not possible to identify individually the remains of two or more service personnel who died while on active duty and whose identity as a group is known or partially known, the recovered remains are placed in one or more caskets, as required, for interment as a group burial in a selected national cemetery. Group burials of military personnel will be in accordance with Veterans Affairs policy.

3.8 Disinterments and Exhumations

3.8.1 Disinterment

Interments in national cemeteries are considered to be permanent and final. Disinterment and removal of remains are seldom permitted, and then only for the most compelling reasons. Prior approval of the regional director is required before any disinterment can be made (Director's Order #61, section 3.8.1). Authorized disinterments will be accomplished at no cost to the NPS. The superintendent will establish a fee designed to recover the costs associated with supervising and administering a disinterment, including the costs of opening and closing the grave and redressing any disturbed graves or headstones.

Requests for disinterment will use VA Form 40-4970 (Request for Disinterment). Requests for disinterment will only be accepted from immediate family members, defined as the deceased's surviving spouse, adult children, appointed guardian(s) of minor children, or appointed guardian(s) of the surviving spouse or of the adult children of the decedent. (In the absence of a surviving spouse and children, the decedent's parents will be considered immediate family members). The Request for Disinterment must include the signatures of all living immediate family members, and must include the person who initiated the interment, if living, even if not a member of the immediate family.

The immediate family member requesting the disinterment is responsible for making all arrangements and incurring all financial obligations related to a disinterment. These arrangements and obligations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Compliance with State and local health laws and regulations;
- Engaging a funeral director;
- Recasketing the remains;
- Rehabilitation of the gravesite according to conditions established by the superintendent;
- Providing the superintendent a notarized affidavit by each living close relative of the deceased and by the person who directed the initial interment, if living, even though the legal relationship of such person to the decedent may have changed, granting permission for the disinterment.

A special use permit must be prepared for each disinterment activity. When a disinterment has been authorized by the regional director, written notification will be sent to the requester. No action to accomplish the disinterment will be taken until authorization from the regional director has been received.

Disinterments should be supervised at the gravesite by the superintendent or his/her designated representative. Special care and concern will be shown for adjacent graves and headstones.

The headstone or marker that marked the grave of the decedent being disinterred will not be shipped at Government expense to the cemetery where the remains are to be reinterred. If, however, the decedent being disinterred is to be reinterred at another location in the same national cemetery, the same headstone or marker will be emplaced at the new gravesite. If the decedent being disinterred is to be reinterred in another national cemetery elsewhere in the country, a new headstone/marker will be ordered by that cemetery.

If the disinterment takes place in an active national cemetery, the vacant grave may be reused following disinterment.

3.8.2 Directed Exhumation

A "directed exhumation" is the disinterment of remains from a national cemetery gravesite ordered by a Federal or State court of competent jurisdiction. Directed exhumations are usually ordered for purposes of an autopsy or other forensic reason. Usually the remains are returned for interment in the national cemetery. All Federal and State court orders directing exhumation will be honored and, when possible, the directed exhumation will be accomplished without cost to the NPS.

While Federal and appropriate State court orders directing exhumations will be honored, the superintendent, upon receipt of such an order, should notify the NPS regional law enforcement specialist prior to taking any action to comply with the order, and should consult with the Solicitor's Office before taking any action to comply.

The issuing court should indicate the final disposition of the exhumed remains. If the remains are to be permanently removed from the cemetery, arrangements must be made for immediate removal. If the directed exhumation takes place in an active national cemetery, the vacant grave will be reused following the exhumation. If the remains are to be reinterred in the national cemetery, the same gravesite will be used. Following the exhumation, the open grave will be covered pending reinterment or other final disposition of remains.

All exhumation activities will be coordinated with the ordering court; however, disinterment activities will be conducted under the supervision of the superintendent. NPS employees will not participate in disinterment activities except as directed by an appropriate court. The superintendent will ensure that all governing State and local laws are complied with.

The ordering court will be notified immediately in cases where damages occur to remains or containers as a result of disinterment activities. In such cases, a report of damage providing explanation of cause, circumstances and action should be prepared (For guidance on accidental damage caused by NPS personnel, see section 3.5.8 of this Manual).

Court orders and other pertinent documentation will be retained at the cemetery as a permanent record of the action.

3.8.3 Accidental Disturbance of Unmarked Remains outside the Cemetery

In accordance with Director's Order #61, section 3.8.3, unmarked human remains that are unintentionally disturbed within the park but outside the national cemetery, as a result of natural processes or maintenance activities, may be reinterred, even in closed national cemeteries, if space is available in the burial section. Remains that are unintentionally disinterred outside of the cemetery may be reinterred only in the NPS national cemetery that is associated with the national park in which the remains were disinterred. This section applies only to the accidentally

recovered remains of individuals that are presumed to have been killed as part of a military event for which the national park or national cemetery was established (see Director's Order #61, section 3.8.3).

This section does **not** authorize:

- The purposeful disinterment of human remains for any purpose, including reburial, within a national park or NPS national cemetery.
- The interment of human remains in closed cemeteries if those remains are associated with military events other than those for which the national park or national cemetery was established.

Upon discovery or report of exposed remains, park law enforcement will be contacted and the site secured, and local or state police will be contacted to establish jurisdiction. Law enforcement will retain jurisdiction of all such sites unless and until the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction determines that the site is not associated with criminal activity. Upon release of the site to the NPS, park cultural resource management staff will be notified and a qualified archaeologist will provide documentation and recommendations for the reinterment. All possible remains and associated artifacts will be turned over to the park's curator for storage until proper reinterment in the cemetery can be accomplished.

3.8.4 Accidental Disinterment within a Burial Section

An accidental disinterment is any unintentional disturbance, whether by human or natural causes, of a grave that results in the exposure of the grave's contents. Any accidentally exposed human remains will be treated with the utmost care and respect. Every effort will be made to reinter the remains and associated artifacts in the grave from which they originated (For guidance on accidental disinterments that result in damage to the casket or casketed remains, see section 3.5.8 of this Manual).

Park cultural resource management staff will be notified, as well as a qualified archaeologist, who will provide documentation and recommendations for the reinterment. All possible remains and associated artifacts will be turned over to the park's curator for storage until proper reinterment in the cemetery can be accomplished.

3.9 Headstones, Markers and Commemorative Monuments

3.9.1 General Guidance

Each new grave in NPS-administered national cemeteries will be marked with a Government-furnished headstone or marker. The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) administers the VA headstone/marker program, and furnishes Government headstones/markers to NPS national cemeteries to mark the final resting place or to commemorate the memory of an eligible veteran or group of veterans.

Private headstones are generally not permitted because of conflict with the historic character of the cemeteries. The erection of a private headstone or marker to mark a grave in lieu of a Government headstone or marker is allowed only in certain national cemetery sections in which private headstones and markers were authorized as of January 1, 1947, and only with the prior approval of the Director. The name(s) of the person(s) responsible for the purchase and erection of a private headstone or marker may not appear on the headstone or marker, or be identified elsewhere in the cemetery as the donor(s) of the private headstone or marker.

A person who requests authorization to erect a private headstone or marker will provide the following information:

- The name of the person to be inscribed upon the private headstone or marker;
- The written approval of the next-of-kin and the person who directed the burial of each person whose name is to be inscribed; and
- A scale plan depicting the details of design, materials, finish, carving, lettering and arrangement of the inscription and the foundation of the proposed private headstone or marker.

The Director's approval of a request is conditioned upon the applicant's agreement to bear all expenses of design and installation of the private headstone/marker, and the payment to the NPS of an endowment sufficient to cover the perpetual cyclic maintenance of the private headstone or marker.

The title to a private headstone or marker vests in the National Park Service upon its acceptance by an official representative of the Director.

A. Ordering the Headstone or Marker

The procedures for ordering a Government-issued headstone or marker are found in NCA Handbook 3315 (Issued August 14, 2009). For additional information about the procurement of Government-issued headstones or markers, see NCA Handbook 3315.

B. Delivery and Receipt

At NPS national cemeteries, the superintendent is responsible for ensuring inspection of Government-furnished headstones/markers for damage, quality, and inscription accuracy in accordance with the procedures specified below. The NCA Memorial Program (MPS) Program Support Unit (PSU) will handle any problems reported by NPS national cemeteries.
The MPS PSU is responsible for collecting data regarding headstone/marker quality, inscription quality and accuracy, and for filing damage claims for reimbursement for all headstones/markers ordered under existing contracts.

C. Temporary Storage

If there is a need to temporarily store accepted headstones and markers before installation, the items should be kept in a secure area. The items should be kept inside buildings if possible, or, if stored outdoors, they should be covered for protection from the weather to avoid damage or staining from packing materials.

Headstones and markers should be stored with the long side parallel to the ground. If necessary, headstones may be stored resting on the bottom edge and leaning against a wall or other substantial support at a safe and stable angle.

D. Erection or Emplacement

1. Alignment and Height

The alignment of headstones and markers, especially upright headstones, can impact the visual aesthetic and design of a national cemetery. Headstones for individual graves should be erected on the centerline at the head of the grave with the inscription facing the grave in keeping with the cemetery operation plan. They should be set plumb and aligned laterally, transversely, and diagonally or in accordance with the cemetery operation plan. Measurements should be taken from monumentation points established in keeping with the historic design concept for the cemetery.

Headstones should be set at a uniform height throughout an area and otherwise present a neat overall appearance with the inscription visible. A nominal height of 24 inches is the current VA standard of headstone setting. Minor deviations from the nominal height are permissible to provide a fair and pleasing top line and to compensate for slight ground rises or depressions within a burial section.

When the standard flat granite marker is used in old burial sections, it should be set on the historic alignment and grade.

2. Realignment

When general realignment or resetting headstones is scheduled in areas where there are older types of markers, they should be set in accordance with the historic plan and prototype of the cemetery, in accordance with an approved cultural landscape report and/or the cemetery operation plan.

E. Headstone Cleaning

Each cemetery should identify an appropriate headstone and marker cleaning regimen in the cemetery operation plan. This cleaning regimen will be based on environmental considerations such as humidity, biological growth rates, tree cover and vegetation, precipitation and other factors that influence the frequency of cleaning necessary to maintain an appropriate appearance.

The natural surface of headstones and markers will be retained. Headstones and markers should be cleaned to remove objectionable accumulations, such as bird droppings, mud, tire or hose markings, grass stains, residue from trees, fungus, and so forth. The toning or patina of the stone should not be purposefully removed. In cases where spot or partial cleaning may change the patina or tone of the headstone or marker, the headstone or marker should be cleaned in its entirety so as to present a uniform appearance.

The following headstone cleaning guidance was developed by the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT). The NCPTT is required by law to develop and distribute preservation and conservation technologies to evaluate and conserve historic resources. The following recommendations for headstone cleaning are the result of research and testing by the NCPTT and represent the current best practices for headstone cleaning.

1. Test Patches

Each cemetery should conduct cleaning test patches, usually less than 6 inches by 6 inches, in unobtrusive locations on the headstone or marker type to be cleaned. The purpose of the test patch is to determine the gentlest, most effective method to remove soiling from the headstone or marker type. Several cleaning methods are generally tested side by side.

2. Cleaning Methods

Cleaning should be undertaken with the mildest, least abrasive method. Improper cleaning can lead to acceleration of deterioration or loss of original materials. Always begin by reviewing the Materials Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for any chemical product to be used. The MSDS may be found by searching online or by contacting the manufacturer or distributor. The MSDS contains important chemical information and necessary safety precautions needed for use of the product.

NEVER USE the following cleaning methods:

- **Household bleach or other oxidizing cleaners**, such as pool shock treatment. These products may chemically react with the stone surface and leave soluble salts in the pores of the stone which will lead to decay. Check the label of the cleaner or the MSDS for active cleaning ingredients. If the products contain sodium hypochlorite (NaClO), sodium perborate, sodium percarbonate, sodium persulfate, tetrasodium pyrophosphate, calcium hypochlorite or urea peroxide, do not use them for cleaning the headstone. For example, Daybreak® cleaner contains 14% sodium hypochlorite and is not recommended.
- **Strong acids**, including muriatic acid, hydrochloric acid, or others. These chemicals are too harsh and may dissolve the stone surface. Because they are corrosive, they can also be hazardous to workers.
- **Strong bases**, such as concentrated ammonia, sodium hydroxide, calcium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, or others. These cleaners may be aggressive on the surface of the stone and may be hazardous to workers.

- **Harsh mechanical devices** such as sand blasting, high-pressure power washers, or power tools such as sanders or drills equipped with a wire brush. These techniques remove the original material of the grave marker.

The following **RECOMMENDED** methods are arranged in order, starting with the least abrasive:

A. **Basic water cleaning methods:** Advantages of these methods are that they are mild and can be easily implemented by volunteers. The disadvantages include the time necessary to clean a large number of markers as well as the need for large quantities of fresh water. These methods are not effective in removing heavy soiling or stains.

   a.) **Water with Soft Brushes** (Brushes should have soft natural or synthetic bristles. The bristle should be soft enough to use on an automobile paint finish).

   b.) **Water with Mild Cleaner** (a diluted liquid dishwashing detergent without additives, such as Dawn, Palmolive, or others. Stay away from cleaners that have additional additives such as Dawn® Plus Oxi, etc.). Soak the stone liberally with water at least 30 minutes before applying the cleaner. Spray the cleaner on a manageable area and use a soft natural bristle brush, working from the bottom up in small, circular motions. Keep the stone surfaces wet while cleaning. Rinse thoroughly with fresh water.

   c.) **Nebulous Sprays:** Application of intermittent mist spray under low pressure to dampen the surface. Dirt is removed through differences in drying rates of the soiling and the substrate. Swelling of the soiling generally loosens its attachment to the substrate. Optimal water pressure, time cycles, and duration of the cleaning technique should be determined during preparation of cleaning test patches. Advantages of this cleaning technique are its gentleness and the ability to remove heavy soiling. Disadvantages include the use of copious amounts of water, the need for custom built equipment, and the possibility of erosion or undercutting of foundations if the area is not properly drained.

   d.) **Low-Pressure Water washing:** Washing the surface with low jet pressure, below 300 pounds per square inch (psi) at 4-6 gallons per minute (gpm) using a 45 degree fan type nozzle, for water soluble dirt and chemical compounds. Water pressure above 300 psi is considered high pressure and is not appropriate for historic materials. Optimal water pressure and wand distance are to be determined during preparation of cleaning test patches. Note that most commercial pressure washing systems operate at significantly higher pressures than those recommended. Use of a pressure regulator to reduce pressures may be needed. While water washing can be time efficient, the method requires well-trained staff to use the technique effectively without damaging the grave marker. Also, the method may not remove stains from the stone.

B. **Cleaners:** Non-ionic detergents or surfactants, such as Triton® X100 or Kodak® Professional Photo-Flo 200 Solution, among others. Non-ionic detergents are detergents in

which the molecules do not ionize in aqueous solutions. Dish washing liquids are frequently non-ionic detergents. Appropriate cleaners should be gentle and have a neutral pH (7) or one close to the pH of the stone. (For example, the pH for marble is around pH 10, thus the cleaner may be a pH of 9-10.) Application is the same as described for mild cleaners, section I(2)(a)(i) above. Non-ionic detergents remove soiling but they may not remove stubborn stains or biological growth.

C. **Biocides:** Biocidal cleaners are available for use on stones that have significant biological growth. Biocides are usually added to a non-ionic detergent to kill existing biological growth, such as algae, mildew, moss, and lichen. Most biocidal additives also help to keep bio-growth from returning to the stone for an extended period of time.

Recommended biocidal cleaners include Cathedral Stone Products® D/2 Biological Solution and Enviro Klean® BioWash, or other cleaners that contain quaternary ammonium compounds. Follow directions as specified by the biocide manufacturer, making sure to rinse thoroughly. It is important to know that stone cleaned with biocides should lighten over the next few days. The advantage of a biocidal cleaner is that it helps remove a wide range of soiling including biological growth. The disadvantage is that the cleaners are more expensive than other products on the market.

3.9.2 Memorial Headstones and Markers

A. General

In accordance with 38 USC. 2306, memorial headstones or markers may be used to commemorate any eligible veteran whose remains: (1) have not been recovered or identified, (2) were buried at sea, (3) were donated to science, or (4) were cremated and the remains scattered. Memorial headstones or markers may be placed in areas reserved by the superintendent for this purpose as identified in a cultural landscape report, cemetery operation plan or other formal planning document. Superintendents may authorize the placement of memorial headstones and markers in memorial areas of both active and closed national cemeteries.

B. Memorial Sections

Memorial sections will be identified in the cemetery operation plan or cultural landscape report. When new memorials are authorized within the memorial section, or the memorial section is expanded, this will be updated in the cemetery operation plan. In no event, however, will a memorial section be expanded if such an expansion would cause a national cemetery to go beyond the confines of its historic enclosure (see 36 CFR 12.5(d)(6)).

C. Application

Applications for a memorial headstone or marker must be submitted by the immediate family members of the decedent to be memorialized to the superintendent of the cemetery in which the memorial is to be placed.

Applications received from other close family members will be honored if there is evidence the family member is acting in behalf of immediate family members. Whenever an application is submitted by a surviving family member distantly related to the decedent, the application will be considered if proof of the decedent's service is officially established. Memorial markers requested for veterans who served prior to World War II will be considered on the basis of proof of service, as well as other factors.

When a private memorial or marker has been erected in a national cemetery, and the next-of-kin desires to inscribe thereon the name and appropriate data pertaining to the eligible family member of the deceased whose remains will not be interred, such inscription may be accomplished with the prior approval of the superintendent. Appropriate commemorative data may be inscribed when space permits. The words "In Memoriam" or "In Memory Of" are mandatory elements of such an inscription.

Approval of a request for a memorial marker or headstone is conditioned upon the applicant's agreement to bear all expenses of design and installation of the headstone or marker, and the payment to the NPS of an endowment sufficient to cover the perpetual cyclic maintenance of the memorial headstone or marker. The title to the marker or headstone vests in the National Park Service upon its acceptance.

3.9.3 Commemorative Monuments

A. Authorization

Commemorative monuments may be erected only in accordance with 36 CFR 12.9, and in keeping with section 9.6 of NPS *Management Policies* 2006. All commemorative monuments must be approved by the Director (36 CFR 12.9) and new commemorative works will not be approved in Civil War parks, except where specifically authorized by legislation (NPS *Management Policies*, section 9.6.2).

In those Civil War parks where there is legislative authorization to erect commemorative works, superintendents must prepare a plan to control their size, location, materials, and other factors necessary to protect the overall integrity of the park (NPS *Management Policies*, 9.6.2). This plan should be included in the cemetery operation plan.

Upon recommendation of the superintendent and concurrence by the regional director, approval may be granted by the Director of the National Park Service when the monument will be designed, fabricated, installed, and maintained at no cost to the NPS. Commemorative monuments must conform to the type, size, materials, design, and specifications prescribed for the historic design of the cemetery section in which it is proposed for installation.

In accordance with 36 CFR 12.9, a person requesting authorization to erect a commemorative monument must submit such a request to the Director. The Director's approval should be obtained prior to fabrication of the commemorative marker since approval for installation is

conditioned upon compliance with other specifications and all applicable provisions of 36 CFR 12.9.

An applicant for authorization to erect a commemorative monument must include the following information in the application:

- A list of the persons to be memorialized and the other data desired to be inscribed on the monument; and
- A scale plan depicting the details of the design, materials, finish, carving, lettering and the arrangement of the inscription proposed for the commemorative monument.

The Director may not approve a commemorative monument that bears an inscription that includes the name of the person(s) responsible for its purchase or installation.

The title to a commemorative monument vests in the National Park Service upon its acceptance by an official representative of the Director.

B. Specifications

The Director may only authorize a commemorative monument that conforms to the type, size, materials, design, and specifications prescribed for the historic design of the individual cemetery section in which it is proposed for installation.

C. Expense

Approval of a request for a commemorative monument is conditioned upon the applicant's agreement to bear all expenses of design and installation of the monument, and the payment to the NPS of an endowment sufficient to cover the perpetual cyclic maintenance of the monument. The title to the commemorative monument vests in the National Park Service upon its acceptance (36 CFR 12.9(d).

3.9.4. Repair and Replacement of Damaged Headstones

In accordance with Director's Order #61, all national cemeteries must have an approved cultural landscape report or National Register documentation that determine which features, including headstones, contribute to its historical significance. Absent such documentation, all headstones in national cemeteries will be treated as historic objects, and will be preserved whenever feasible.

Repair and reinscription of historic headstones will be considered before replacement. Replacement of historic headstones, whether private or government-furnished, is the least preferred alternative.

A. Headstone Replacement Criteria

The preservation of historic headstones and markers in their existing state will always receive first consideration (see NPS *Management Policies* 2006, section 5.3.5). Replacement of headstones and markers is only allowed when the level of deterioration or damage to the historic headstone precludes repair, when they no longer provide the identity of the deceased, or do not convey the appropriate sense of dignity and decorum befitting their intended purpose.

In accordance with NPS *Management Policies 2006,* section 5.3.5, there are a number of considerations prior to the replacement of irreparably damaged historic headstones or markers. These include the:

- Significance, condition and interpretive value;
- Research potential;
- Treatment alternatives; and
- Concerns of interested groups and individuals.

Prior to replacing irreparably damaged headstones, park staff must document the appearance and condition of the headstones or markers that are in need of replacement. This documentation must be shared with the appropriate State or tribal historic preservation office or certified local government (Management Policies 2006, section 5.3.5).

Headstone and markers that are determined to be damaged beyond repair will be replaced in-kind with new headstones that, to the extent feasible, match the old in composition, design, color and texture (see Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties including Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes, 1996, p. 40).

Replacement headstones and markers must be consistent with the historic character of the cemetery and with the visual appearance of the portion of the cemetery in which they are installed. Historic headstones will be replaced in kind and will contain only information consistent with that which was standard at the time the original stone was issued (For guidance on errors of fact, see section 3.9.5 of this Manual).

B. Disposition of Damaged or Deteriorated Headstones and Markers

Damaged or deteriorated headstones or markers may be cultural resources, and the method of disposal of these objects must be evaluated as part of the planning process prior to replacement. If it is determined that repair is not feasible, then the two options available are curation and destruction. The determination to curate or destroy headstones and markers should be reached using the approved cultural landscape report or National Register documentation to determine the historical significance of the headstones or markers. Decisions concerning the disposition of damaged or deteriorated headstones or markers must be made using professional judgment to determine the significance, interpretive value and research potential of the headstone or markers.

1. Destruction of Damaged Headstones

If the superintendent determines that a headstone or marker is not eligible to be curated, then it will be destroyed in a manner that obliterates the inscription and prevents reuse. The preferred method of destruction is to break or crush the headstone into small pieces, taking care to thoroughly destroy any identifying information.

Debris resulting from the destruction of headstones may be disposed of or reused for other purposes. Superintendents should reuse or dispose of headstone debris in such a way that eliminates the potential for collection, theft or unauthorized reuse of the materials for any purpose. Cemetery managers and staff should recognize the sensitivity of the public and veterans groups, and reuse the debris in ways that prevent the appearance of disrespect or impropriety on the part of the NPS.

In accordance with NPS *Management Policies* 2006, section 10.2.4.6, the sale of headstones, portions of headstones or debris resulting from the destruction of headstones is prohibited. Headstones slated for destruction may not be given to individuals, institutions, or family members. Headstones and markers furnished by the government remain the property of the U.S. Government and cannot be used for any purpose other than to mark the grave of a veteran or other eligible decedent.

2. Curation of Historically Significant Headstones

Superintendents are not required to curate damaged historic headstones which have been replaced, but selected headstones and markers that have been determined to be historically significant may be curated in accordance with Director's Order #24: NPS Museum Collections Management, NPS Museum Handbook and chapter 5 of NPS *Management Policies* 2006, if historic headstones and markers are included in the park's approved Scope of Collections Statement.

3.9.5 Errors of Fact

Non-historic headstones or grave markers with errors of fact may be replaced upon the request of an immediate family member, their authorized representative, or other individual with written consent of the immediate family members.

If there is indisputable evidence that there are errors of fact on historic headstones, these may be corrected as a part of headstone replacement after appropriate consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, and other interested parties, in accordance with the Programmatic Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Historic headstones may not be replaced for the purpose of correcting errors of fact. Historic headstones should be replaced in kind, with the information on replacement headstones restricted to that which was standard on the stone being replaced. Additional information should only be added to replacement headstones if it is consistent with the type and amount of information present on other historic headstones in the same section.

3.10 Ceremonies and Special Events

A. Authority

In compliance with regulations published at 36 CFR 12.4, " [c]onducting a special event or demonstration, whether spontaneous or organized, is prohibited except for official commemorative events conducted for Memorial Day, Veterans Day and other dates designated by the superintendent as having special historic and commemorative significance to a particular national cemetery. Committal services are excluded from this restriction."

B. General

National Cemeteries provide the setting for patriotic services and ceremonies honoring those thousands of veterans interred therein as well as those buried elsewhere. The principal occasions for such observances are Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Superintendents may also designate other occasions when other special ceremonies or services are conducted.

Each national cemetery superintendent has an opportunity and a responsibility to further exhibit community leadership by inspiring and encouraging a renewed public awareness of our deceased veterans on Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

C. Memorial Day

1. General

Memorial Day is the most important patriotic holiday of the year in a national cemetery. In accordance with 4 USC 6(d), the flag of the United States will be flown at half staff until 12:00 noon and at full staff after 12:00 noon on Memorial Day.

2. Memorial Day Grave Decorating Flags

It is customary in every national cemetery to decorate each grave with a small U.S. flag on Memorial Day. To ensure that the flags are in place on Memorial Day, the task of placing them on the graves may be started a day or so in advance, depending upon the number of graves in the cemetery and the number of persons who will do the work.

The flags should be removed from the graves as soon as practicable following Memorial Day. If the flags are wet from rain, they should not be removed until they are dry.

In the case of a "group burial" grave, which is marked by only one headstone, monument or marker, only one flag will be placed on the grave.

Flags will be placed on the graves in an upright position one foot in front of and centered with the headstone or marker.

D. Confederate Memorial Day

In national cemeteries located in those States which officially set aside a specific day as Confederate Memorial Day, the superintendent is authorized to permit any sponsoring group to decorate the graves of Confederate veterans who lie within those cemeteries with small Confederate flags.

Permission may be granted provided the sponsoring groups agree in writing:

- To provide, place and remove the flags at no expense to the Federal Government.
- To absolve the Government of any responsibility for the loss of or damage to such flags.
- Confederate flags used on these occasions will be no larger than the U.S. flags used to decorate graves, and the staffs to which the Confederate flags are attached will not exceed the length of the staffs of the U.S. flags.
- Confederate flags will be placed on the grave in an upright position one foot in front of and centered with the headstone or marker, except as provided for in the paragraph below.

On Memorial Day, as observed nationally, when the graves are decorated with U.S. flags, the graves of Confederate veterans, in addition to the U.S. flag, may also be decorated with a Confederate flag. Under such circumstances, a Confederate flag will be placed three feet in front of the center of the headstone or marker and the height of the flag when positioned on the grave must not exceed that of the U.S. flag on the grave. There is no authority for the purchase of Confederate flags for decorating graves. Only the U.S. flag will be flown on the cemetery flagpole (see Director's Order #61, section 3.11 and this Manual, section 3.11(D)).

Confederate flags will not be flown on any cemetery flagpole (see Director's Order #61, section 3.11).

E. Veterans Day

Veterans Day is a national holiday observed annually on November 11. The date derives from the date of the signing of the World War I armistice in 1918. Veterans Day is significant to all veterans and service organizations, and national cemeteries provide an appropriate setting for patriotic ceremonies or services honoring living and deceased veterans.

As with Memorial Day, the superintendent should take positive steps to encourage and assist local veterans' organizations in planning and staging some form of a ceremony in the cemetery in honor of veterans.

F. Other Special Ceremonies and Services

National cemeteries are established as national shrines in tribute to the gallant dead who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States. Such areas are protected, managed and

administered as suitable and dignified burial grounds and as significant cultural resources. As such, the authorization of activities that take place in national cemeteries is limited to those that are consistent with applicable legislation and that are compatible with maintaining the solemn commemorative and historic character of these areas.

In addition to Memorial Day and Veterans Day, there are other significant dates in the year which may provide an occasion for holding a special ceremony in a national cemetery.

G. Avenue of Flags

An "Avenue of Flags" is the display of a multiplicity of U.S. burial flags usually arrayed on both sides of the principal avenue or drive that leads from the main entrance or gate into the cemetery. They may, however, be displayed elsewhere within the cemetery when a different location is considered more suitable.

The "Avenue of Flags" display may be arrayed on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. It may also be arrayed on any other day which may include Flag Day and Independence Day, at the discretion of the superintendent. The views of local veterans and civic organizations should be considered.

3.11 Flags

A. General

The flag of the United States will be displayed at all national cemeteries each day of the year during the hours the cemetery is open. In those cemeteries where flagpoles are illuminated, the flag may be flown 24 hours a day.

The flag of the United States will be brought to half staff 30 minutes before the start of the first committal service of the day, and returned to full staff 30 minutes after the last service is completed for the day.

On Memorial Day, the flag of the United States will be flown at half-staff until 12:00 noon and full staff after 12:00 noon (4 USC 6(d)).

B. POW/MIA Flag

The POW/MIA flag will be flown in accordance with 36 USC 902 (Pub. L. 105-85, section 1082) on the following days:

- Armed Forces Day (the third Saturday in May).
- Memorial Day (the last Monday in May).
- Flag Day (June 14).

- Independence Day (July 4).
- National POW/MIA Recognition Day (the third Friday in September)
- Veterans Day (November 11).

The POW/MIA flag may be flown throughout the year if the superintendent determines that it is appropriate.

C. Placement of Flags on Graves

Superintendents may authorize the placement of small, consistently sized U.S. flags on each grave in honor of Memorial Day and other dates as designated by the superintendent. The U.S. flags will be placed on the graves in an upright position one foot in front of and centered with the headstone or marker (see this Manual, section 3.10(C)(2)). These flags should be removed from the graves as soon as practicable following Memorial Day.

D. Confederate Flags

In national cemeteries located in States which officially set aside a specific date as Confederate Memorial Day, the superintendent may permit a sponsoring group to decorate the graves of Confederate veterans with small Confederate flags. In these circumstances, Confederate flags will be placed in addition to the U.S. Flag. Confederate flags will be placed three feet in front of the center of the headstone or marker and the height of the flag when positioned on the grave must not exceed that of the U.S. flag on the grave. Confederate flags will be removed from the graves as soon as practicable following the designated Confederate Memorial Day. The acquisition and placement of these flags will be at no cost to the National Park Service. Confederate Flags will not be flown on any cemetery flagpole (see Director's Order #61, section 3.11).