

## **Accountability at VA National Cemeteries**

National Cemetery Administration (NCA) interment processes are designed to ensure that those we have the honor to inter are accurately accounted for at all times. Interments within a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemetery will be marked with a permanent, correctly inscribed, Government-furnished headstone, marker, or niche cover.

Eligibility is determined upon request after a person's death, and must be confirmed before an interment is scheduled through the NCA electronic Burial Operations Support System (BOSS). National Cemetery Scheduling Office procedures are posted on the Internet at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov). The phone number is 1-800-535-1117. Gravesite assignments are made without regard to rank, ethnic or religious background, branch of service, or other factors. Interments of Veterans and eligible family members will normally be made in the same gravesite.

Decedent remains are accompanied from the moment funeral attendees are greeted until final interment action (burial, inurnment, or scattering) takes place. (The only exception is for unaccompanied cremated remains that are delivered directly to the cemetery; these are held in a designated secured area until burial.) If a committal service is scheduled, a designated individual will confirm the decedent's identity; compare the provided paperwork to the daily schedule, temporary grave marker, and casket/container label to confirm gravesite assignment; and escort the attendees to the appropriate committal shelter. Under Public Law 106-65, the Department of Defense is responsible for providing Military Funeral Honors at committal services (information available at [www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil](http://www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil)).

Prior to, or at the end of the committal service, the next of kin or representative is provided with information that includes a map showing gravesite location for visitation following the interment. Following the committal service, the decedent's remains are escorted by the designated individual to the assigned gravesite where decedent identity, gravesite assignment, and casket/container labeling are again verified. After interment the gravesite is immediately marked with a temporary grave marker, which is checked regularly until the permanent headstone/marker/niche cover is set in place.

The permanent headstone/marker/niche cover is ordered through BOSS after headstone inscription data is confirmed with the family. Headstones/markers/niche covers are inspected upon receipt for quality and inscription accuracy. Decedent information and gravesite assignment are verified again at final setting of the headstone/marker/niche cover, which normally occurs within 60 days of ordering. In addition to daily procedures that ensure accountability of interments, Cemetery Directors complete semi-annual gravesite verifications, and independent assessment teams conduct periodic visits to validate cemetery-reported data.

