

## **Executive Order 13287, Preserve America FY 2011 Triennial Report**

### **Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**

As outlined in Section 3(c) of Executive Order 13287, VA provides the following report on its progress in identifying, protecting, and using historic properties in its ownership.

#### 1. Identification/Protection/Use

##### **VA-Wide - Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (OALC)**

OALC currently is undertaking two multi-year national context studies of approximately 90 medical centers. This has resulted in approximately 45 new National Register nominations that are in varying stages of review. The first national study is looking at the “second generation” hospitals – those built between the World Wars. The second study is looking at the “third generation” hospitals – those built between 1945 and about 1960. Additional nominations under these context studies are anticipated in the coming year(s).

In addition, five individual medical center National Register nominations, not associated with the context studies, have been completed in the last three years. These include the medical centers at San Francisco, CA; American Lake, WA; Columbia, SC; Mountain Home (Johnson City), TN; and Hot Springs, SD. Nominations for Fort Harrison, MT and Togus, ME medical centers are in process.

Five VA properties were designated as National Historic Landmarks (NHL) in June 2011. These include medical centers at Leavenworth, KS; Hot Springs, SD; Mountain Home (Johnson City), TN; and Milwaukee, WI; as well as the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, DC. VA National Cemetery Administration (NCA) manages approximately 468 headstones/monuments in this cemetery including Benjamin Labtrobe-designed cenotaphs.

OALC contracted for Historic American Building Survey (HABS) photo-documentation of the 11 branches of the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS) and completed measured drawings for selected buildings at Milwaukee, WI and Mountain Home (Johnson City), TN. OALC developed a series of historic preservation-focused wall hangings illustrating historic images of VA properties and is working with the Hampton City Museum to enter into a long-term loan of the archaeological collection from the medical center in Hampton. OALC is also working to secure and relocate the Pershing Hall historic collection.

Preservation plans have been prepared for the medical centers at American Lake and Walla Wall, WA and Tomah, WI.

Numerous actions have occurred to protect historic properties. In fulfillment of an agreement document stipulation, OALC stabilized the Scott Farm and the Merrick Log Cabin at Washington Crossing National Cemetery, Newtown, PA. The medical center at Batavia, NY relocated a proposed new building in order to protect and preserve two historic buildings slated for demolition. The medical center at Perry Point, MD is working on preserving the 1800s mansion and mill. The medical center at Dayton, OH is restoring one of its chapels. In addition, the medical center at Cincinnati, OH, included preservation easement deed language in a transfer document for houses at Ft. Thomas, KY. The Pacific Island Health Care System redesigned the new treatment building to protect the historic landscape at the Tripler Army Hospital in Honolulu, HI. Finally, Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) 21 changed plans to demolish the historic Marin Shipworks in Sausalito, CA, and will restore and reuse the building.

### **Veterans Health Administration (VHA)**

The VHA history office designed and produced several exhibits that were displayed at Central Office and medical centers across the country. The display topics included the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial, Civil War 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, United States Colored Troops, Native American Heritage, and Historic Preservation Month.

### **National Cemetery Administration (NCA)**

During the period since the last Section 3 report, Alton and Quincy national cemeteries in Illinois were formally listed on the National Register of Historic Places. NCA has three additional National Register nominations that are approximately 90 percent complete. These include Fort Richardson and Sitka, AK, and Fort McPherson, NE.

NCA is undertaking a multiple property submission of inter-World War national cemeteries that should result in seven individual nominations including Baltimore, MD and Golden Gate, CA. NCA also is working on eight other nominations of cemeteries that are over 50 years old but do not fall into a multiple property theme including national cemeteries at St. Augustine, FL; Black Hills, SD; Ft. Logan and Ft. Lyon, both in CO; Santa Fe, NM; Eagle Point, OR; Los Angeles, CA; and Willamette, OR.

NCA partnered with NPS to prepare 42 Historic Structure Assessment Reports documenting the conditions of many of NCA's historic superintendent lodges.

NCA contracted with Heritage Preservation, Inc., to coordinate a 2-year assessment of approximately 170 monuments. Detailed assessments

were delivered in fiscal years (FY) 2010-2011. Based on this work, NCA contracted for the repair and treatment of 80 historic monuments in its cemeteries by qualified conservators. All work commenced in FY 2009 and was largely completed in FY 2011. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 funding of nearly \$2.6 million was spent on 49 of these monuments. NCA also performed emergency conservation of the monument in the national cemetery at Bay Pines, FL after it was struck by lightning.

NCA entered into an agreement with the National Center for Preservation Technology & Training, NPS, to evaluate marble cleaners in an effort to minimize damage to its historic headstones. The 3-phase study began in 2004 and was completed in 2011. The best-practice recommendations resulted in NCA's determination to use the preferred cleaner, D/2 Biological Solution (or products with similar active ingredients), rather than Daybreak, a cleaner it had used for several years.

NCA completed a 5-year project to produce large-format photographs of NCA's historic cemeteries for the Historic American Landscape Survey (HALS) program. This project documented 134 properties administered by NCA, and resulted in over 3,000 black and white and over 350 color photographs.

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Indiana Infantry Monument, also known as the Bloedner Monument, is the oldest extant Civil War monument. It was located in Cave Hill National Cemetery, KY from 1867 until 2008. Due to its deteriorating condition, NCA moved it into an indoor facility, where it was professionally conserved, before it was loaned to the Frazier History Museum in Louisville, KY for public display. A successor monument was installed in the cemetery in fall 2011.

In FY 2010, NCA commenced a HABS documentation project that will result in written histories of all cemetery lodges and rostrums, as well as measured drawings of the Finn Point, NJ lodge, and historic rostrums at national cemeteries at Fort Scott, KS and Richmond, VA.

In FY 2011, NCA completed a multi-year project undertaken by NPS's Cultural Resources Geographic Information System (CRGIS) program to conduct a GIS/GPS mapping project at the national cemetery in Alexandria, VA.

In FY 2011, NCA continued to work on a loan of artifacts recovered from the Florence Stockade archaeological excavation to a facility in South Carolina; meeting federal curation standards.

In 2010 and 2011, NCA installed wayside interpretive signs at national cemeteries at Salisbury, NC; Florence, SC; and Cave Hill, KY; two were products of mitigation agreements. In FY 2011, NCA funded a new

project of produce nearly 200 interpretive signs for installation in about 100 of its cemeteries to commemorate the Civil War sesquicentennial (2011-2015).

A total of 62 replica cast-iron Gettysburg Address tablets were distributed between 2009 and 2010 to national cemeteries that did not have them previously or where they were missing; one historic 1909 Gettysburg Address tablet was accessioned into the NCA History Collection for preservation.

In FY 2009-2011, 68 historic burial registers, over 600 cemetery Sexton reports, and other historic records were digitized. A high-resolution image file was created for each page, and these images were converted into Adobe PDF documents for ease of use. DVDs of the burial ledgers were distributed to the appropriate national cemeteries and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The majority of the burial ledgers and reports were then transferred to NARA for accessioning.

The NCA History Program staff serves as internal preservation consultants to NCA's Construction Office, project managers for History Program initiated projects, and archival managers for NCA's historic collection. In this capacity, the History staff worked with the Construction staff as part of the national cemetery at Port Hudson, LA, expansion and helped shift a decision away from expanding within a designated NHL to a less-sensitive tract, thus avoiding an adverse effect. The History Program currently is participating in reviewing draft alternatives for reuse/expansion of an historic 1934 lodge at the national cemetery at Memphis, TN, with the goal of avoiding demolition and replacement with new construction. They also advised that a proposal to re-clad a contemporary style 1976 memorial chapel at the national cemetery at Jefferson Barracks, MO, should be reconsidered, and it was resolved by using in-kind materials rather than metal siding.

From FY 2009-2011, the NCA Construction Office rehabilitated enclosing walls at 19 cemeteries. In support, the History Program provided guidance on the Section 106 process, and advised Construction staff on the correct designs/methods to adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. These cemeteries are: Mobile, AL; Barrancas and St. Augustine, FL; Beaufort, and Florence, SC; Baton Rouge, Alexandria, and Port Hudson, LA; Knoxville, TN; New Bern and Wilmington, NC; Marietta, GA; Natchez and Corinth, MS; Danville, IL; Santa Fe, NM; Leavenworth and Ft. Scott, KS; and Ft. McPherson, NE.

Historians have supported the lead agency, California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS), on mitigating impacts to the national cemetery at San Francisco, CA, as the result of widening Doyle Drive. CALTRANS is overseeing the rehabilitation and restoration of the historic fence and a circa 1880s cast-iron gate.

NCA successfully completed Section 106 consultation for raise-and-realign projects at particularly sensitive and historic cemetery properties. At the national cemetery at Crown Hill, IN, and a soldiers' lot at Woodland Cemetery, OH, a less invasive technique was suggested and concurred by the State Historic Preservation Office. At the national cemetery at Togus, ME, the 'West Cemetery,' which contains about 4,000 of the oldest burials from the NHDVS period is the subject of a Phase 1 headstone documentation and assessment to generate recommendations on how, or even if, these headstones can be safely rehabilitated within the Secretary of the Interior Standards. The study commenced in August 2011.

In 2011, NCA determined that it would revise its practice regarding the use of Medal of Honor (MOH) headstones for older graves. Historic headstones in national cemeteries that do not feature MOH inscription information will be retained in keeping with other NCA grave markers 50 years or older, and a second flat feature with this information will augment the grave; previously the historic stone was replaced.

## Policy

### **VA-Wide (OALC)**

VA Directive and Handbook 7545 establish the Department's historic preservation policy for identifying and evaluating historic properties and complying with various historic preservation and cultural resources laws and regulations. OALC undertook a major revision to the directive and handbook. In addition, OALC developed and presented specialized VA-focused Section 106 training to VISNs and the regional Offices of General Counsel.

## Internal Reporting

### **VA-Wide (OALC)**

VA has an annual data call to medical centers to report changes on heritage assets and any updates to the Capital Asset Inventory.

### **NCA**

NCA has the "New Monument Report" required by policy, which is due within 30 days of a cemetery accepting a new standard monument. The information is recorded in ReDiscovery software program. In addition, NCA requires an annual verification of all monuments by cemetery directors and the History Program tracks the data.

## Partnerships

### **VA-Wide (OALC)**

OALC has a partnership with NPS that allows NPS to provide historic preservation support and assistance. This included development of several travel itineraries related to NHDVS and cemeteries.

### **NCA**

In addition to that previously described, NCA partnered with multiple NPS offices over a 3-year period using interagency agreements; the Historic Preservation Training Center to prepare Historic Structure Assessment Reports of superintendent lodges; the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training to assess marble cleaners for headstones; and the Washington, DC Heritage Preservation Office overseeing HALS, HABS, and CRGIS programs which conducted documented projects of NCA historic resources.

## Challenges/Successes

OALC developed a VA-centered Section 106 training program and presented it at the following:

- Office of Construction and Facility Management (CFM) Joint Engineering Conference, 2008
- Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM), March 2009
- VISN 21, April 2009
- Office of General Counsel, June 2009
- VHA Capital Asset Managers Meeting, July 2009
- NCA Annual Leadership Conference, August 2009
- VISN 5 & 6, October 2009
- VHA Capital Asset Managers Meeting, November 2009
- VISN 21 Planners and Engineers, December 2009
- CFM Eastern Regional Office, January 2010
- VA Central Office – CFM, NCA, OAEM, February 2010
- CFM Western Regional Office, March 2010
- CFM Central Regional Office, April 2010
- Region 11 Office of General Counsel, August 2010
- CFM Joint Engineering Conference, October 2010
- VA Office of General Counsel new staff, November 2010
- VA Energy Engineers Conference, March 2011
- CFM Senior Resident Engineers, May 2011

Successful Section 106 Consultations at VA properties include:

- Alameda, CA
- Augusta, GA
- Cave Hill NC, Louisville, KY - Bloedner Monument conservation/replacement
- Crown Hill National Cemetery, Indianapolis, IN
- Denver, CO
- Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio, TX
- Great Lakes National Cemetery, Holly, MI
- Indianapolis, IN
- New Orleans, LA
- Perry Point, MD
- Port Hudson National Cemetery, LA
- San Francisco, CA - historic fence/gate rehabilitation
- Spokane, WA
- St. Cloud, MN
- St. Louis, MO
- Tomah, WI
- Tripler, Honolulu, HI
- Walla Walla, WA
- Washington Crossing National Cemetery, Newtown, PA
- Woodland Soldiers Lot, Cleveland, OH