

**Some Died Young, Some Died Old****Locating Military Burials**

By **RON DARRAH**, Central District Director

Over the past 250-plus years of our national history, millions of our direct and collateral ancestors have served in the military forces guarding our country.

One of our common tasks as family historians is locating the burial sites of these ancestors.

Some of these ancestors died in battle, some died of disease, and some lived to advanced old age, but the military touched all their lives and that can furnish clues for their final resting places.

Unfortunately, there is not a centralized, one-size-fits-all place we can go to find the answers we need — and doesn't that sound familiar! There are, however, important places where we can find some major parts of the puzzle, and I have attempted in the following pages to list the most important ones.

**National Cemetery Administration**

The NCA, part of the Department of Veterans Affairs, manages 120 national cemeteries, and traces its roots back to 1862, when President Lincoln established the national cemeteries for Civil War dead.

Following that war the government conducted an extensive recovery program that moved the remains of over 300,000 wartime burials from scattered sites to the national cemeteries. So, if family lore has Uncle Joe buried on an island off South Carolina, it may actually no longer be true.

If you visit the NCA website at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov), you



Old soldiers await their meal  
at the Marion Veterans Home in Grant County.

can find a list of all their cemeteries, or you can write to them:

Minton-Capehart Federal Building  
575 N Pennsylvania St  
Indianapolis IN 46204

and request publication VA-NCA-IS-1, which contains the list as well as a lot of other good information.

The NCA cemeteries often contain burials from multiple wars from the Civil War through the latest Iraq conflict, and frequently the burials occur many years after the war service. I have an uncle who served in World War I and was buried in the Little Rock National Cemetery in 1966.

The NCA, which has the largest group of military burials, will do a free search for up to ten names if you write to them. You will have to provide:

1. Full Name of Veteran
2. Date and Place of Birth
3. Date and Place of Death
4. State from which Veteran entered service, and
5. Military Service Branch.

Write to:

US Dept of Veterans Affairs  
National Cemetery Administration (402B)  
Burial Location Request  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington DC 20420

Several other categories of burials are in the NCA list,



Veterans grave markers stand at attention  
at Marion National Cemetery in Grant County.

including Public Health Officers, World War II Merchant Mariners, and some spouses and children of veterans. If you have a missing wife, don't overlook these cemeteries.

Indiana contains three cemeteries managed by the NCA: Crown Hill National Cemetery in Indianapolis; Marion National Cemetery in Marion; and New Albany National Cemetery in New Albany. Information on these is available in the above website.

Incidentally, the Marion site contains three Medal of Honor recipients — Sgt. Henry HYDE of the Indian Wars, and Seaman Nicholas IRWIN and Lt. Jeremiah KUDER of the Civil War.

### **National Park Service National Cemeteries**

The Department of the Interior, through the National Park Service, manages 14 national cemeteries, all but one of which is related to a Civil War battlefield park. The exception is the Custer National Cemetery in Montana.

Only two of the NPS cemeteries are still active, Andersonville in Georgia and the Andrew Johnson in Tennessee.

The NPS plans to list all the burials in their cemeteries as part of the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Database, but currently the only cemetery up and running is the Poplar Grove Cemetery at Petersburg, VA. Take a look at this material on the NPS website at [www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/cemetery](http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/cemetery).

Indiana has 277,220 veterans listed in the CWSS database, but there are no NPS cemeteries in Indiana. The NPS does have a list of Andersonville Prison records that contains the names of 1,743 Indiana soldiers.

## **Department of the Army National Cemeteries**

The Army still manages two national cemeteries, the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery in Washington, D.C., and Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA. The Arlington website is [www.arlingtoncemetery.org](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.org)

## **State Veterans Cemeteries**

A number of states maintain cemeteries for the burial of their own veterans, and a list of these is available at the NCA website listed above or in Publication VA-NCA-IS-1.

Indiana maintains two sites of this type: the Indiana State Soldiers Home Cemetery in West Lafayette and the Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Madison.

A partial transcription of the West Lafayette cemetery is available online by Adina Dyer of the Tippecanoe County Genealogical Society at [www.rootsweb.com/~intippecc/SoldiersHmCem.htm](http://www.rootsweb.com/~intippecc/SoldiersHmCem.htm).

## **American Battle Monuments Commission**

The ABMC manages 24 permanent American burial grounds on foreign soil, which contain 124,917 U.S. war dead. If you visit the ABMC website at [www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov), you can search all of these sites online.

The information you may find should be similar to this sample entry that I found: Floyd E. PARKS, Pvt., US Army, 36685513, 115<sup>th</sup> Inf. Rgmt., 29<sup>th</sup> Inf. Div., From Indiana, Died July 29, 1944, Buried at Plot C Row 13, Grave 41, Ardennes American Cemetery, Neupre, Belgium, Awarded Purple Heart.

If you find a relative in an ABMC cemetery, you can write to them and they will send you a photo of the headstone or plaque. Write to:

American Battle Monuments Commission  
Courthouse Plaza II, Suite 500  
2300 Clarendon Blvd.  
Arlington, VA 22201

### **Grand Army of the Republic**

The GAR maintained records that often identified the burial locations of veterans in local church, city, and private cemeteries. Many headstones marked with a "GAR" inscription indicate these graves. The United Daughters of the Confederacy performed many of these same tasks for southern veterans. Their website is: [www.hqudc.org](http://www.hqudc.org).

### **Burials Pre-Dating National Cemeteries**

#### **French and Indian War**

Most of these are unidentified and are buried in scattered locations. Don't forget that many of these men, such as George Washington, also served in the Revolution and had only their later service recognized.

You should do a web search for the numerous Colonial lineage societies and tap into their records.

#### **Revolutionary War**

Both the DAR and the SAR have done wonderful work in locating these veterans, and both the DAR Library in Washington DC and the SAR Library in Louisville have extensive burial listings. The SAR has produced a CD-ROM titled, "SAR Revolutionary War Graves Register," which is available in many genealogical libraries

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as well as from the SAR. See their website at [www.sar.org](http://www.sar.org).

### **War of 1812**

The War of 1812 seems to be a largely forgotten little war and many veterans' graves are lost and also forgotten. Most of the known veterans are in local cemeteries and are frequently not identified as to veteran status. See if they received a pension, find where the last pension check was sent, then check local records.

The National Society, Daughters of 1812, at [www.usdaughters1812.org](http://www.usdaughters1812.org) can perhaps help you with these burials.

### **Mexican War**

This is another largely ignored small war, but the ABMC list above contains two cemeteries in Mexico that contain burials from this war. Do not forget that many Mexican War veterans served again in the Civil War and were buried only with their Civil War service recognized.

The Descendants of Mexican War Veterans at [www.dmwv.org](http://www.dmwv.org) has an active Veterans Graves Registry Project.

### **Indian Wars**

Much of this service was composed of scattered skirmishes all over the country, depending on the year, and much of it was highly disorganized and unrecorded. Try to find out if the service was state militia or regular Army; perhaps locate a pension and see where the checks went.

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