

c. United States of America flags used to decorate graves are acquired at Government expense through established procurement procedures. Cemetery Directors will maintain an adequate stock of serviceable flags to decorate graves in the cemetery. It is important that these flags be protected from damage and properly stored to maximize their useful life.

d. Flags will be placed on graves in a uniform manner, usually 1 foot (.304m) in front of and centered on the headstone or marker. Depending on the number of graves to be decorated and available labor, graves may be decorated the weekend before Memorial Day and the flags should be removed shortly after Memorial Day. This will result in unilluminated flags in place during non-daylight hours; however, this is an authorized deviation from the flag code made necessary by logistics.

e. Cemetery Directors will actively promote voluntary assistance from local civic, historical or service organizations, for example: the Boy and Girl Scouts, other groups, and citizens who are interested in placing and removing grave decorating flags. Volunteers will be supervised to the extent possible to assure that flags are treated with dignity and respect and are properly placed. VA national cemetery personnel will conduct flag-related work that cannot be accomplished with assistance from volunteers.

f. After removal and before storage, flags will be inspected, dried, if necessary, and culled to remove those that are unserviceable. Unserviceable flags will be disposed of appropriately. If necessary, replacements will be ordered to assure that an adequate supply of flags will be on hand when needed. Flags will be stored in a dignified manner out of public view.

g. Small U.S. flags placed at gravesites by individuals will be removed at normal floral pickup or as necessary for grounds maintenance. Non-U.S. flags will be removed from gravesites when observed by cemetery staff, except when displayed in accordance with paragraph 8 (Flags of the Former Confederate States of America) of this directive.

8. FLAGS OF THE FORMER CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA

a. A flag of the former Confederate States of America (CSA), such as the Confederate battle flag, may be displayed only in VA national cemeteries where Confederate soldiers, sailors, or marines are interred, and only to honor the memory of those who served in the armies, navy, or marines of the CSA during the Civil War.

b. Display of Confederate flags on NCA property is limited to displays by a sponsoring organization on Memorial Day and Confederate Memorial Day in cemeteries in those States that recognize a Confederate Memorial Day. In States that do not recognize a Confederate Memorial Day, NCA may approve a "ceremonial day" in lieu of Confederate Memorial Day. The process for Cemetery Directors to follow in reviewing requests for an alternate ceremonial day is provided in soon-to-be-published NCA Directive 3170, Non-Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Ceremonies and Special Events at VA National Cemeteries.

c. A former Confederate States of America flag is to be subordinate to the United States of America flag in size and prominence of display. When displayed on graves in conjunction with the United States of America flag on Memorial Day, Confederate flags are placed 3 feet (.914m) in front of and centered on the headstone of deceased Confederate veterans. When displayed without the presence of the United States of America flag, as may be done on Confederate Memorial Day, the Confederate flag is placed 1 foot (.304m) in front of and centered on the headstone of deceased Confederate veterans.

d. The Confederate flag(s) will be displayed as follows:

(1) At VA national cemeteries where Confederate veterans are interred in individual graves, small individual Confederate grave flags may be placed on each grave on the day(s) identified in paragraph 8.b.

→ (2) At VA national cemeteries where Confederate veterans are buried in mass graves, the Confederate flag may be displayed on a separate flagpole that is subordinate to the United States of America flag on the day(s) identified in paragraph 8.b.

e. To permit broad participation on the two days identified in paragraph 8.b., display of a Confederate flag is permitted only under the sponsorship of a historical or service organization. Such display may occur only on the two days identified above, unless an exception has been granted as stated in paragraph 2.b. of this directive. Once initial display has been approved, a Confederate flag may be displayed by the sponsoring organization on the approved ceremonial day(s) on an annual basis, provided that the display is otherwise consistent with the requirements contained in this directive.

f. Requests to permit the display of a Confederate flag on a one-time basis as part of a ceremony or special event on a day other than the two days identified in paragraph 8.b. will be handled in accordance with soon-to-be-published NCA Directive 3170 – Non-Department of Veterans Affairs Ceremonies and Special Events at VA National Cemeteries.

g. The sponsoring organization will supervise the placement and removal of all Confederate grave decorating flags without cost to the United States. Removal will generally be on the same day unless precluded by logistical reasons. The sponsoring organization is responsible for the storage of Confederate flags. However, the cemetery director may, as a courtesy to the sponsoring organization, agree to store such flags if space is available and their storage does not result in any additional burden or cost to NCA.

h. Confederate flags may not be purchased with Government funds.

9. THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES POW/MIA FLAG

a. The National League of Families POW/MIA Flag (POW/MIA flag) is the congressionally designated symbol of the Nation's concern to resolve the fates of Americans taken prisoner, or missing in action, and who remain unaccounted for in Southeast Asia. As stated in 36 U.S.C. Section 902(b), the display of the POW/MIA flag on the days and locations specified by Congress serves two purposes:

(1) It serves as a symbol of the Nation's commitment to achieve the fullest possible accounting of Americans who, having been prisoners of war or missing in action, remain unaccounted for.

(2) It serves as the symbol of the Nation's commitment to achieve the fullest possible accounting of Americans who in the future may become prisoners of war, missing in action, or otherwise be unaccounted for as a result of hostile action.