

- (2) Grade, rate, or rank will be inscribed in the official abbreviated form used during the period of service in which held.
- (3) In all cases where discharge documents accompany an application, the grade, rate, or rank, when shown on the application will always be checked against the discharge document. In the event of a discrepancy, the discharge document will be overriding unless the grade on the application is lesser in degree, in which case the applicant will be consulted for clarification.
- (4) Grade, rate, or rank used must correspond to the branch of service shown.
- (5) Pay grades (e.g., O6, E-5, W-3) are not to be confused with grade, rate, or rank as used by the Armed Forces (e.g., Colonel, Sergeant, Chief Warrant Officer). Pay grades are established by law for the purpose of assuring uniformity in pay and other monetary entitlements among members of the Armed Forces. Although grade, rate, or rank is directly related to a given pay grade, only the highest grade, rate, or rank awarded is used as the appropriate title of service.
- (6) The rank of "Private" or "Ordinary Seaman" will not be shown in the inscription data for service prior to the Mexican border action.

g. War Service. This is an optional item and is included as part of the inscription data whenever specifically requested by the applicant on VA Form 40-1330 or VA Form 40-4956. The absence of any war service listing on these forms will be construed as a desire for non-inclusion.

(1) War service (one or more) will be determined from any active duty military service performed within the periods shown (decendent need not have served in the Theater of Operations related to the war service, e.g., Korea, Vietnam):

- (a) Revolutionary War. April 19, 1775–September 3, 1783.
- (b) Indian Wars. January 1790–January 1891
- (c) War of 1812. June 18, 1812–February 17, 1815
- (d) Mexican War. April 24, 1846–May 30, 1848
- (e) Civil War. April 15, 1861–August 20, 1866
- (f) Spanish American War. April 21, 1898–July 15, 1903
- (g) Mexican Border Action. May 9, 1916–April 5, 1917
- (h) World War I–April 6, 1917, through November 11, 1918, inclusive. If the veteran served with the United States military forces in Russia, the ending date is April 1, 1920. Service after November 11, 1918, and before July 2, 1921, is considered World War I service if the veteran served in the active military, naval, or air service after April 5, 1917, and before November 12, 1918.
- (i) World War II. December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946, inclusive. If the veteran was in service on December 31, 1946, continuous service before July 26, 1947, is considered World War II service.
- (j) Korean Conflict. June 27, 1950, through January 31, 1955, inclusive.
- (k) Vietnam Era. August 5, 1964, through May 7, 1975.
- (l) Multiple War Periods. When more than one period of war service is shown on the application form, each will be included, e.g., "WW II, Korea, Vietnam."
- (h) Punctuation. Not used since it does not contribute to the readability or understanding of the inscription.

NOV 19 1996

Director:

National Cemetery Area Office, Atlanta, GA

National Cemetery Area Office, Denver, CO

National Cemetery Area Office, Philadelphia, PA

Subj: Revision of the Vietnam War Period for Veterans Benefits

1. Currently, the parameters of the Vietnam war period are August 5, 1964, through May 7, 1975. On October 9, 1996, the President signed the Veterans' Benefits improvement Act of 1996, which revises these parameters for purposes of certain VA benefits.
2. Effective on January 1, 1997, the parameters of the Vietnam war period will be February 28, 1961, through May 7, 1975. However, the added period of service from February 28, 1961, to the current starting date of August 5, 1964, applies for VA benefits only if the individual served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period. Veterans who served on active duty during this period but who did not serve in the Republic of Vietnam are not included. Their service will continue to be considered under the Peace Time era.
3. Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam between the period of February 28, 1961 and August 5, 1964, may now have Vietnam indicated on the headstone or marker if they wish. Cemetery Directors must confirm that service was performed in the Republic of Vietnam during this period before authorizing the war period to be shown on the headstone or marker. Veterans who served in the armed forces during the period of August 5, 1964, through May 7, 1975 (the original war period), will continue to be authorized the inscription on the headstone or marker regardless of where their service was performed.
4. Please notify your Cemetery Directors of this issue and assure that their entries into BOSS result in appropriately inscribed headstones and markers to comply with this new law.

SIGNED

Roger R. Rapp

Director, Office of Field Operations

cc: 40 401A 401A1 401A2 401A3 402 402A2 402B 402B1 (2) 402B2
402C 402D3 403

bdouma:jrr 11/18/96 WATSON RAPP
g:\do39.doc (401A) (401)

MFR: Larry DeMeo and Ken Greenberg have concurred on this letter.

GENERAL INFORMATION SHEET

CLAIM FOR STANDARD GOVERNMENT HEADSTONE OR MARKER

RESPONDENT BURDEN - Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. VA cannot conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it has a valid OMB number. Your obligation to respond is voluntary, however, your response is required to obtain benefits. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to the VA Clearance Officer (005R1B), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. Please DO NOT send claims for benefits to this address.

BENEFIT PROVIDED

a. HEADSTONE OR MARKER

Only for Veterans who died on or after November 1, 1990 - Furnished for the grave of any eligible deceased Veteran. Will be provided for placement in private cemeteries regardless of whether or not the grave is already marked with a privately-purchased headstone or marker.

Only for Veterans who died before November 1, 1990 - Furnished for the **UNMARKED GRAVE** of any eligible deceased Veteran. The applicant must certify the grave is **unmarked**. **For Veterans that served prior to World War I, a grave is considered marked when a headstone/marker displays the decedent's name only, or if the name was historically documented in a related document, such as by a number that is inscribed on a grave block and is recorded in a burial ledger. For service during and after World War I, a grave is considered marked if a headstone/marker displays the decedent's name and date of birth and/or death, even though the Veteran's military data is not shown.**

b. MEMORIAL HEADSTONE OR MARKER - Furnished for placement in a cemetery only to commemorate a deceased eligible Veteran whose remains have not been recovered or identified, were buried at sea, donated to science, or cremated and the remains scattered. May not be used as a memento. Check box in block 28 and explain in block 27.

c. MEDALLION - Eligible Veterans may receive a Government-furnished headstone or marker, or a medallion, but not both. *If requesting a medallion, please use VA Form 40-1330M.*

WHO IS ELIGIBLE - Any deceased Veteran discharged under honorable conditions and any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who dies on active duty. A deceased Veteran discharged under conditions other than honorable may also be eligible. A copy of the deceased Veteran's discharge certificate (DD Form 214 or equivalent) or a copy of other official document(s) establishing qualifying military service must be attached. **Do not send original documents**; they will not be returned. **Service after September 7, 1980, must be for a minimum of 24 months continuous active duty or be completed under special circumstances, e.g., death on active duty.** Persons who have only limited active duty service for training while in the National Guard or Reserves are not eligible unless there are special circumstances, e.g., death while on active duty, or as a result of training. Reservists and National Guard members who, at time of death, were entitled to retired pay, or would have been entitled, but for being under the age of 60, are eligible; a copy of the Reserve Retirement Eligibility Benefits Letter must accompany the claim. Reservists called to active duty other than training and National Guard members who are Federalized and who serve for the period called are eligible. Service prior to World War I requires detailed documentation, e.g., muster rolls, extracts from State files, military or State organization where served, pension or land warrant, etc.

WHO CAN APPLY - Federal regulation defines "applicant" as the decedent's Next-of-Kin (NOK); a person authorized in writing by the NOK; or a personal representative authorized in writing by the decedent. Written authorization must be included with claim. A notarized statement is not required.

HOW TO SUBMIT A CLAIM

FAX claims and supporting documents to **1-800-455-7143**.

IMPORTANT: If faxing more than one claim - fax each claim package (claim plus supporting documents) individually, i.e., disconnect the call and redial for each submission.

MAIL claims to: **Memorial Programs Service (41B)**
Department of Veterans Affairs
5109 Russell Road
Quantico, VA 22134-3903

A Government headstone or marker may be furnished only upon receipt of a fully completed and signed claim with required supporting documentation.

SIGNATURES REQUIRED - The applicant signs in block 17; the person agreeing to accept delivery (consignee) in block 22, and the cemetery or other responsible official in block 24. If there is no official on duty at the cemetery, the signature of the person responsible for the property listed in block 21 is required. Entries of "None," "Not Applicable," or "NA" cannot be accepted. State Veterans' Cemeteries are not required to complete blocks 17, 18, 22 and 23.

ASSISTANCE NEEDED - If assistance is needed to complete this claim, contact the nearest VA Regional Office, national cemetery, or a local veterans' organization. No fee should be paid in connection with the preparation of this claim. Use block 27 for any clarification or other information you wish to provide. Should you have questions when filling out this form, you may contact our Applicant Assistance Unit toll free at: 1-800-697-6947, or via e-mail at meps.headstones@va.gov.

TRANSPORTATION AND DELIVERY OF MARKER - The headstone or marker is shipped without charge to the consignee designated in block 19 of the claim. **The delivery will not be made to a Post Office box.** The consignee should be a business with full delivery address and telephone number. If the consignee is not a business explain fully in block 27. For delivery to a Rural Route address, you must include a daytime telephone number including area code in block 20. If you fail to include the required address and telephone number information, we cannot deliver the marker. The Government is not responsible for costs to install the headstone or marker in private cemeteries.

CAUTION - *To avoid delays in the production and delivery of the headstone or marker, please check carefully to be sure you have accurately furnished all required information before faxing or mailing the claim. If inaccurate information is furnished, it may result in an incorrectly inscribed headstone or marker. Headstones and markers furnished remain the property of the United States Government and may not be used for any purpose other than to be placed at an eligible individual's grave or in a memorial section within a cemetery.*

DETACH AND RETAIN THIS GENERAL INFORMATION SHEET FOR YOUR RECORDS.

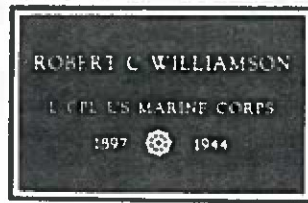
ILLUSTRATIONS OF STANDARD GOVERNMENT HEADSTONES AND MARKERS

UPRIGHT HEADSTONE
WHITE MARBLE OR
LIGHT GRAY GRANITE



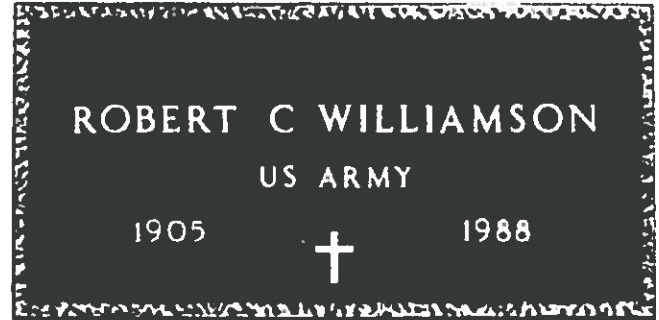
This headstone is 42 inches long, 13 inches wide and 4 inches thick. Weight is approximately 230 pounds. Variations may occur in stone color, and the marble may contain light to moderate veining.

BRONZE NICHE



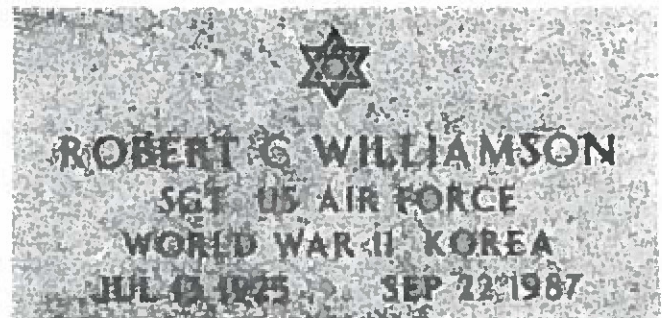
This niche marker is 8-1/2 inches long, 5-1/2 inches wide, with 7/16 inch rise. Weight is approximately 3 pounds; mounting bolts and washers are furnished with the marker. Used for columbarium or mausoleum interment. Also provided to supplement a privately-purchased headstone or marker for eligible Veterans who died on or after November 1, 1990 and are buried in a private cemetery.

FLAT MARKERS
BRONZE



This grave marker is 24 inches long, 12 inches wide, with 3/4 inch rise. Weight is approximately 18 pounds. Anchor bolts, nuts and washers for fastening to a base are furnished with the marker. The base is not furnished by the Government.

LIGHT GRAY GRANITE OR WHITE MARBLE



This grave marker is 24 inches long, 12 inches wide, and 4 inches thick. Weight is approximately 130 pounds. Variations may occur in stone color; the marble may contain light to moderate veining.

NOTE: Civil War Era headstones - In addition to the headstone and markers pictured, two special styles of upright headstones are available for those who served with Union Forces during the Civil War or for those who served in the Spanish-American War, and another for those who served with the Confederate States of America during the Civil War. Requests for these special styles should be made in block 27 of the claim. It is necessary to submit detailed documentation that supports eligibility. Inscriptions on these headstone types are intentionally limited to assure historic accuracy. For example, only rank above 'Private' was historically authorized; emblems of belief and the words 'Civil War' are not provided.

INSCRIPTION INFORMATION

MEMORIAL HEADSTONES AND MARKERS (remains are not buried). The words "In Memory Of" are mandatory and precede the authorized inscription data. The words "In Memory Of" are only inscribed when remains are not available.

MANDATORY ITEMS of inscription at Government expense are: Legal Name, Branch of Service, Year of Birth, Year of Death, and for State Veterans and National Cemeteries only, the section and grave number. Branches of Service are: U.S. Army (USA), U.S. Navy (USN), U.S. Air Force (USAF), U.S. Marine Corps (USMC), U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF), and other parent organizations authorized for certain periods of time; and special units such as Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASP), U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS), and National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Different examples of inscription formats are illustrated above. More than one branch of service is permitted, subject to space availability.

OPTIONAL ITEMS are identified on the claim in boxes with bold outlines. These items may be included at Government expense if desired. Optional items include month and day of birth in block 5A, month and day of death in block 5B, highest rank attained in block 7, awards in block 9, war service in block 10, and emblem of belief in block 12. War service includes active duty service during a recognized period of war and the individual does not have to serve in the actual place of war, e.g., Vietnam may be inscribed if the Veteran served during the Vietnam War period, even though the individual never served in the country. Supporting documentation must be included with the claim if you wish to include the highest rank and/or awards.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS may be inscribed at Government expense if they are requested on the initial claim and space is available. Examples of additional items include appropriate terms of endearment, nicknames (in expressions such as "OUR BELOVED POPPY"), military or civilian credentials or accomplishments such as DOCTOR, REVEREND, etc., and special unit designations such as WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS, ARMY AIR CORPS, ARMY NURSE CORPS or SEABEES. All requests for additional inscription items should be stated in block 27, and are subject to VA approval. No graphics, emblems or pictures are permitted except available emblems of belief, the Medal of Honor, and the Southern Cross of Honor for Civil War Confederates.

RESERVED SPACE for future inscriptions at private expense, such as spousal or dependent data, is allowed if requested in block 27 and if space is available. Only two lines of space may be reserved on flat markers due to space limitations. Reserved space is unnecessary on upright marble or granite headstones as the reverse side is available for future inscriptions.

INCOMPLETE OR INACCURATE INFORMATION ON THE CLAIM MAY RESULT IN ITS RETURN TO THE CLAIMANT, A DELAY IN RECEIPT OF THE HEADSTONE OR MARKER, OR AN INCORRECT INSCRIPTION.



RODMAN E. SERLING
TEC5 US ARMY
WORLD WAR II
DEC 25 1924 JUN 28 1975

The headstone is a rectangular granite slab set in a cemetery. It is heavily decorated with numerous coins of various denominations and colors (blue, red, silver) scattered across its surface. On the left side, there is a small white ceramic teapot with a blue handle and a yellow body featuring a family illustration. A small American flag is placed on the top edge of the stone. The surrounding area is covered with dry, brown autumn leaves and some green plants. A larger American flag is visible in the upper right corner of the frame.