

Black Hills National Cemetery Basics

1. Black Hills National Cemetery opened in 1948. First interments were in September 1948 and were 7 WWII remains representing the Army, Navy & Air Force that were returned from the overseas war areas.
2. Black Hills National Cemetery is also responsible for the Hot Springs and Fort Meade National Cemeteries though they are closed to new interments. We maintain the grounds and upkeep of both sites.
3. We are registered on the National Register of Historic Places.

Cemetery Statistics and How the System Works.

1. Black Hills NC is 105.9 acres total with about 4.5 acres undeveloped at this time.
 - The Bureau of Land Management together with Senate & Congressional Leaders are working hard to finalize a 190 acre land transfer to the Cemetery but is not complete yet.
2. As of Oct 17: 28,240 burials; 20,978 casketed and 7,262 cremations (in-ground & columbaria) (20,868 Headstones)
 - There are fewer headstones than burials because we now do “double depth” interments (one on top of the other) instead of “side-by-side”. So, one headstone may memorialize two decedents information. (Veterans’ information on front and spouse’s information on reverse)
 - To date, Cremation burials are now outpacing casketed burials by a 60% to 40% ration in FY17.
 - Currently more popular for cremations to be interred in-ground versus the Columbaria Wall niches.
 - In FY2017, we accomplished 903 burials. Averaging 5-13 burials a day with 13 being max and approximately 70 per month.

- Services start at 9:00am – last scheduled time is 3:00pm
- Services are scheduled every 30 minutes, Monday – Friday.

3. Current Interment areas:

- Pre-placed Vaults – double depth concrete vault (2 caskets top/bottom)
- Upright Headstone Cremation – 5x5 site (side by side placement of 2 or more urns)
- Columbaria – above ground wall niches (fits 2 or more cremation remains depending on urn size)
- Traditional Vaults – not pre-placed; but are privately purchased vaults fitting oversize caskets and multiples (3 or more decedents)
- Memorial Headstone Section -- an “In Memory of” headstone – no actual remains interred:
 - unrecoverable remains,
 - scattered ashes, or
 - bodies donated to science

4. Space Availability: (based on current land as of 30 Sep 2017 and does not include BLM Land Transfer)

- Casket – project availability until approx. 2040
- Cremation -- project availability until approx. 2020
- Columbaria – project availability until approx. 2031

What does the VA provide Veterans and their eligible dependents for a burial in a National Cemetery?

See VA Benefits Booklet for detailed information.

http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp

1. The VA covers everything once you enter the cemetery gates.
 - Everything done outside our gates; ex: buying a casket or urn, cremation costs, service at a Funeral Home or Church, transportation to the cemetery is a the family's expense. Once the deceased enters our gates, there are no more charges.

The VA:

2. Opens and Closes the burial site
3. Headstones are provided with Front and Back engravings
4. Burial Vault— VA will provide a vault but Veteran's family can purchase a private vault
5. Perpetual care/maintenance of site
 - Visitors to our National Cemeteries will notice the immaculate upkeep and care that our NCA employees provide to our Veterans daily.
 - 100% of Black Hills National Cemetery employees are Veterans themselves; and, as we all do, take compassionate pride in caring for our passed Veterans and their eligible dependents.
6. A Funeral Home will:
 - Call National Scheduling Center to schedule
 - Coordinate Military Honors (Veterans)
 - Usually provide Flag – but family can get from Post Office

How to locate a grave

1. At the Black Hills National Cemetery:

- There is a kiosk in the foyer of the cemetery's administration building (open 24/7)
- Online: <http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/>

If you have any questions, please call us at 605-347-3830. We will be happy to provide you assistance or put you in contact with someone who can.

Black Hills National Cemetery Notable interments:

Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, Charles Windolph from the battle at Little Big Horn

Former U.S. Senator, Francis H. Case who first endorsed the concept of a National Cemetery in SD

Former S.D. Governor William J. Janklow

Brigadier General Richard Ellsworth – former Commander of Rapid City Air Base – later named Ellsworth Air Force Base in his honor.

John Bear King and Clarence Eugene Wolf Guts both native to SD and Lakota Code Talkers in the Pacific Theater during World War II.