



UNDERSTANDING
SACRIFICE

Activity: Design It: Re-envisioning Main Entrances at National Cemeteries



Guiding question:

How does a national cemetery honor and memorialize all fallen heroes while creating a memorable experience for all?

DEVELOPED BY CATHERINE CHIU PHILLIPS

Grade Level(s): 6-8

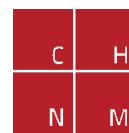
Subject(s): Visual Arts; Social Studies

Cemetery Connection: Golden Gate National Cemetery

Fallen Hero Connection: Private Esperidion A. Barratto



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New Media

Overview

Using resources from the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) and Google Maps, students will learn the purpose of the NCA, understand the components for designing the entrance to a national cemetery, and propose a new and contemporary design for the Golden Gate National Cemetery.

Historical Context

There are more than 4.1 million people, including veterans of every war and conflict, who have earned the benefit of burial in U.S. national cemeteries. In 1862, at the beginning of the Civil War, national cemeteries were first developed by the U.S. Army under the leadership of General Montgomery Meigs, Quartermaster General. In the twentieth century, the U.S. government realized the need to accommodate the memorial needs of a growing veteran population. Between World War I and World War II, cemeteries were built adjacent to veterans' hospitals. After World War II, retired General of the Army Omar Bradley took charge of the newly formed Veterans Administration (VA), which began building larger national cemeteries independent of VA hospitals to accommodate the anticipated needs of veterans close to where they lived. In 1973, the NCA was created. The U.S. Army passed control of most of these cemeteries (except for Arlington National Cemetery, the cemetery located at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and those on U.S. military posts) to the NCA. Today the NCA operates 135 national cemeteries in 40 states and Puerto Rico and makes grants to state and tribal governments for construction of veterans cemeteries at over 100 additional sites in 47 states.

“As a proud wife of a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, I strive to honor and show gratitude for all those who have served in our military branches. Similarly, the National Cemetery Administration is thoughtful in how it honors and pays homage to all veterans and their families. In our contemporary culture, how do we re-envision a cemetery that is relevant to all visitors offering a deeper connection to our fallen heroes?”
— Catherine Chiu Phillips

Phillips teaches at Olive Peirce Middle School in Ramona, CA.

Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

- Identify the purpose and mission of the National Cemetery Administration;
- Understand and identify unique qualities and requirements of the national cemetery's front entrances; and
- Create and design a proposal for the Golden Gate National Cemetery's main entrance.

Standards Connections

National Visual Arts Standard

CCR3.1.1a Apply relevant criteria from traditional and contemporary cultural contexts to examine, reflect on, and plan revisions for works of art and design in progress.

Connections to Common Core

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.2 Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Connections to C3 Framework

D2.His.13.6-8 Evaluate the relevancy and utility of a historical source based on information such as maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

Documents Used ★ indicates an NCA source

Primary Sources

National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Facilities Design Guide, (excerpts) ★

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration

<https://www.nist.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2017/04/28/NCA-FacilitiesDesignGuide-March2010.pdf>

Presidential Memorial Certificate Fact Sheet ★

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration

<https://www.cem.va.gov/docs/factsheets/pmc.pdf>

Photographs of Golden Gate National Cemetery, 2017 ★
 Courtesy of Catherine Phillips

Secondary Sources

Golden Gate National Cemetery ★
 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration
<https://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/goldengate.asp>

Materials

- Computer with projector and internet capability to access Google Maps
- Design It PowerPoint Presentation
- Cemetery Entrance Re-Design Instructions and Rubric
- Student personal computer access
- Paper, pencils, and colored pencils

Lesson Preparation

- Activity One:
 - Make a class set copy of the Mission and Background of the National Cemetery Administration and the Main Entrance Specifications.
- Assessment:
 - Divide students into pairs (can be completed independently if preferred.)
 - Make one copy of the Cemetery Entrance Re-Design Instructions and Rubric for each pair of students.
- Review the Golden Gate National Cemetery website and the Presidential Memorial Certificate Fact Sheet for background knowledge.
- Set up classroom technology and test all online resources before class.

Procedure

Activity One: Introduction to National Cemetery Administration (45 minutes)

- Project the Mission and Background of the National Cemetery Association statement and read it aloud. Ask students:
 - *Why were the national cemeteries created? What purpose do they serve?*
 - *Who can be buried there?*
 - *Why do you think some veterans choose to be buried there?*

- *Do you know anyone buried in a national cemetery?*
- Project the Design It PowerPoint presentation to students. Read the mission statement and show the related images (slides one through five).
- Direct students to take notes and discuss each component of the mission statement.
 - **Teacher Tip:** The grave site shown is that of Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, who served as Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet, during World War II. Review the Presidential Memorial Certificate Fact Sheet to learn more about these certificates and how family members can request them.
- Distribute one copy of the Main Entrance Specifications handout to each student.
- Direct students to read and annotate the Main Entrance Specifications independently.
 - *Ask students, How do the main entrance requirements fulfill the mission of the NCA?*
- Project the image of the Main Entrance at Golden Gate National Cemetery (slide 6 in the Design It PowerPoint). Review the criteria and help students identify the required elements (architectural or landscape feature, gates, curbs, transition area, Department of Veterans Affairs Seal, name of the Cemetery). Ask students,
 - *How does this entrance denote the cemetery as a place of significance and dignity without overpowering the visitor?*
 - *How does the entrance use landscaping and color?*
 - *What historical and traditional symbols indicate this is a “national shrine”?*
 - *Do you think this entrance is representative of the men and women buried here? Why or why not?*
- Direct students (working as a class or in small groups) to use Google Maps to virtually explore Golden Gate Cemetery to see various elements as described in the NCA Facilities Guide, especially focusing on the front entrances. This will allow students to understand the layout and the significance of its design.
- Direct students to the Golden Gate National Cemetery website to learn more about the location and the people buried there.

Assessment: Re-Design the Entrance (60 minutes)

- Divide students into pairs.
- Distribute one copy of the Cemetery Entrance Re-Design Instructions and Rubric to each pair.
- Review the instructions and check for understanding.
- Provide pencils, paper, and colored pencils for the student’s initial sketch.
- Encourage each student to brainstorm separately and then discuss and combine their best ideas for their submitted proposal.
 - **Teacher Tip:** If desired (and if time permits) students can project their designs to the class and pitch their proposal with a spoken component.

- The Cemetery Entrance Re-Design Rubric can be used to score this assessment.

Methods for Extension

- Students with interest regarding the national cemeteries can read more regarding the guidelines in honoring those killed in conflicts and the veterans who survived these conflicts.
- Teachers can create a class blog and include all student proposals.
- Students can create a new headstone, marker, or medallion providing new and relevant alternatives to the existing designs. Click here to learn more: <https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330.pdf>.

Adaptations

- Teachers can adapt the project to local national cemeteries to provide relevancy to the students.

Mission and Background of National Cemetery Administration

National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Facilities Design Guide, March 2010

(excerpt)

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration

"The mission of the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) is four-fold: to provide burial space for veterans and operate and maintain the 114 Department of Veterans Affairs national cemeteries as national shrines; to provide headstones and markers for the graves of veterans; to provide Presidential Memorial Certificates; and to administer the State Cemetery Grants Program assisting states to build or improve state-owned cemeteries for veterans."

"President Lincoln, on July 17, 1862, signed legislation which authorized the creation of 14 national cemeteries, "...for the soldiers who shall die in the service of the country." These cemeteries were the beginning of what is known as the National Cemetery Administration. From 1862 to 1973, these cemeteries were operated by the Department of the Army. Today, the NCA of the Department of Veterans Affairs oversees 114 national cemeteries in the United States and Puerto Rico."

Main Entrance Specifications

National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Facilities Design Guide, March 2010 (excerpt)

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration

"The primary importance of the main entrance to the national cemetery is to create for each visitor a sense of arrival at a special place. The Entrance Area to the national cemetery should be an architectural or landscape architectural feature that portrays the significance and dignity of a national cemetery without overpowering the visitor. The design should incorporate landscaping, such as trees and low maintenance plantings. The use of color in plantings should be considered in the design solution. The entrance is symbolic of an entrance to a national 'shrine' and provides a link to historical or traditional national cemetery 'entrance gates' without directly imitating their form. The entrance area design and use of materials should be consistent with other cemetery structures."

"Some method of restricting vehicular access is desirable. Gates, if they are an integral part of the design, or a chain, are useful for this purpose. Provide double width entrance, divided for traffic control at the 'entry gate', if not for the entire length of the entrance road. Utilize traffic control as necessary to provide safe entrance from the approach road. Provide vertical curbing or other barrier to keep cars from driving over plantings. Changes in color, texture, and size of paving material will provide a feeling of transition for visitors arriving or departing the cemetery."

"Cemetery identification is a component of the entrance area. The entrance area must incorporate the following elements in its design:

- The Department of Veterans Affairs Seal, or insignia, at least two feet in diameter;
- The words "(NAME) National Cemetery," in lettering sufficient to be seen from the public street (approach road)."

"The design shall also include unobtrusive lighting of the cemetery name."

Cemetery Entrance Redesign Instructions

You have been commissioned by the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) to redesign the entrance to Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, California. Your goal is to work with a partner to design a new entrance for the cemetery. Your design needs to meet all of the requirements for the main entrance and create a piece of art that will welcome a visitor and remind those passing by that this location is a national shrine honoring the veterans and family members who rest here. Your final product must include:

- A sketch of your proposal, with the required elements neatly labeled.
- A written description that describes how your proposed main entrance is unique, current, and relevant while fulfilling the standards described by the NCA.

Cemetery Entrance Redesign Rubric

| | Advanced | Proficient | Basic | Emerging |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Knowledge of Main Entrance Specifications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Confidently applies knowledge of the project's purpose. -Confidently applies thorough understanding of the topic. -Confidently applies lesson-specific vocabulary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Applies knowledge of the project's purpose. -Applies a broad understanding of the topic. -Applies lesson-specific vocabulary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Shows basic knowledge of the project's purpose. -Shows a basic understanding of the topic. -Shows some use of lesson-specific vocabulary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Demonstrates a limited knowledge of the project's purpose. -Demonstrates a limited understanding of the topic. -Includes little or no use (or incorrect use) of lesson-specific vocabulary. |
| Application of knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Excels in interpreting the NCA requirements. -Artwork shows proficiency and creativity (innovation, unique, or inspiration) -Written material effectively expresses the artist's ideas, thoughts, and feelings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Applies skills and strategies in the interpretation of the NCA requirements. -Artwork shows reasonable proficiency and creativity. -Written material expresses the artist's ideas, thoughts, and feelings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Demonstrates basic abilities in the interpretation of the NCA requirements. -Artwork shows some proficiency in technique. -Written material effectively expresses a basic representation of the artist's ideas, thoughts, and/or feelings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Demonstrates limited abilities in the interpretation of the NCA requirements. -Artwork is of poor quality denoting a lack of effort. -Written material fails to effectively express the artist's ideas, thoughts, and/or feelings. |
| Artistic Awareness and Personal Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student is personally engaged and shows high level of interest. -Student shows initiative, enthusiasm, and commitment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student is fully engaged. -Student shows willingness to continue to develop his or her potential. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student participates in the assignment. -Student shows some self-discipline and self-motivation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student minimally engages in the assignment. -Student shows little interest and personal engagement. |

Design It PowerPoint Presentation

National Cemetery Administration (NCA)

Mission and Background

Mission

1. To provide burial space for veterans and operate and maintain the 114 Department of Veterans Affairs national cemeteries as national shrines.



Golden Gate National Cemetery, July 14, 2017
Courtesy of Catherine Phillips

Design It PowerPoint Presentation cont.

Mission

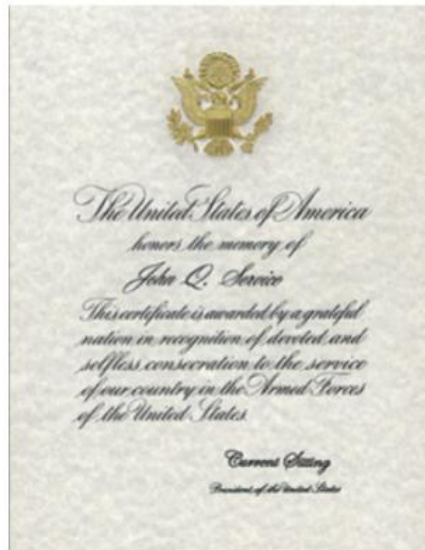
2. To provide headstones and markers for the graves of veterans.



Golden Gate National Cemetery, July 14, 2017
Courtesy of Catherine Phillips

Mission

3. To provide Presidential Memorial Certificates.



Presidential Memorial Certificate Fact Sheet (Sample)
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration

Design It PowerPoint Presentation cont.

Mission

4. To administer the State Cemetery Grants Program assisting states to build or improve state-owned cemeteries for veterans.

Golden Gate National Cemetery Main Entrance

