



# Operating Policies of the National Military Cemetery

of the Canadian Armed Forces



# Foreword

The National Military Cemetery of the Canadian Forces is a national focal point of honour which recognizes Canada's Armed Forces members who have served their country with distinction in war and in peace. As a national site of recognition, this cemetery is unique within Canada. Military burials are conducted in a dignified and professional manner in respect of the Military tradition, providing the due honour and homage.



These Operating Policies provide direction for the management and operation of this sacred site. They receive their authority from QR&O 24.15, DAOD 5018-3 and the most recent version of the Licensing Agreement (L.A.) between the Department of National Defense and the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation (BCF). They are to be applied in conjunction with related publications and guidance from the Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH) and the Directorate of Honours and Recognition (DHR).

The Canadian Armed Forces Liaison Officer to the National Military Cemetery is responsible for the maintenance of these policies and to recommend periodic amendments to the Director Casualty Support & management (DCSM) as required. Within this framework the following document is in effect.

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# Definitions and Acronyms

## **For the purpose of this document, the following definitions are applicable:**

- a. National Military Cemetery: That part of the National Military Cemetery managed by DND, that is, section 103 and section 109. The actual National Military Cemetery also includes sections 19, 27 and 29 managed by partner agencies.
- b. Honourably Released: Any former member of the Canadian Armed Forces who was released under Item 3 (medical), 4 (voluntary), or 5 (service complete) of article 15.01 of the Queen's Regulations and Orders.
- c. Eligible Member: Any current or former member of the Canadian Armed Forces, former services, or Merchant Navy who qualifies for interment as detailed in Defence Administrative Order and Directive (DAOD) 5018-3.
- d. Eligible Family of eligible members. This may include a:
  - (1) Spouse or common-law partner;
  - (2) Child;
  - (3) Father, mother;
  - (4) Sibling; or
  - (5) Person who has undertaken the responsibilities of a parent.

## **The following acronyms and abbreviations are used in this document:**

- a. BCF: Beechwood Cemetery Foundation;
- b. CAF TG: Canadian Armed Forces Transition Group;
- c. CAF: Canadian Armed Forces or CF;
- d. CFSG (O-G): Canadian Forces Support Group (Ottawa-Gatineau);
- e. Coord: Coordinator;
- f. COATS: Cadet Organisation Administration and Training Service;
- g. DAAG: Defence Aboriginal Advisory Group;
- h. DAOD: Defence Administrative Orders and Directives;
- i. DCSM (Manager): Directorate (or Director) of Casualty Support Management;
- j. DHH: Directorate of History and Heritage;
- k. DHR: Directorate of Honours and Recognition;
- l. LO: Liaison Officer to NMC;
- m. NMC: National Military Cemetery (sections 103 and 109 only); and
- n. QR&O: Queen's Regulations and Orders.
- o. DA: Designated Assistant



# Section 1 - General

## Mission & Vision of the NMC

### MISSION:

**101.** Honouring and providing a dignified final resting place for veterans, serving members and their loved ones, fostering a sense of remembrance and unity.

### VISION:

**102.** An established national symbol of gratitude for veterans and serving members that pays tribute to their service and sacrifices while supporting their families. The cemetery stands as a serene, respectful environment that hosts regular commemorative events. As a living tribute, NMC inspires Canadians to acknowledge and preserve the legacy of those who served.

## Beechwood Cemetery

**103.** The National Military Cemetery of the Canadian Armed Forces (NMC) resides within Beechwood Cemetery (Beechwood). Beechwood was established in 1873 and is one of the oldest and largest cemeteries in the National Capital Region, covering more than 160 acres in central Ottawa. It is renowned for its natural beauty and gardens and was declared a National Historic Site in 2001. On 23 April 2009, bill C-17 received royal assent making Beechwood the National Cemetery of Canada.

**104.** Beechwood is the final resting place for many of Canada's war heroes including Veterans from the nation's earliest campaigns, the World Wars, recent United Nations or other campaigns. Many prominent Canadians are also inhumated at Beechwood such as former Governor Generals, Prime Ministers and other important Canadian historical figures.

**105.** A map of Beechwood and its main points of interest for military members are found at Annex A.

## The National Military Cemetery of the Canadian Armed Forces

**106.** The National Military Cemetery of the Canadian Armed Forces was officially opened on 28 June 2001 by Her Excellency Governor General Adrienne Clarkson. It was dedicated to CAF personnel who have faithfully served their nation in times of peace and conflict at home and abroad. It is the national focal point for a grateful nation to honour those who have placed themselves in harm's way on behalf of the people of Canada. Initially, comprising of only section 103, it was a five-acre parcel of land capable of



accommodating approximately 7,000 urn and traditional casket burials. In 2003, section 109 was added, increasing its capacity to a total area to 8.29 acres and a capacity of approximately 12,000 burials.

**107.** In addition to sections 103 and 109, three of the largest veterans' burial sites in Canada are in Beechwood. At the hub of the cemetery are section 27 and the *Field of Valour*, purchased by the Department of Veterans Affairs in 1944. Over 2,400 graves are laid out around the central *Cross of Sacrifice*. A prominent corner in Section 19 contains the remains of 168 veterans and is administered by Veterans Affairs Canada. Likewise, in section 29, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission administers 235 graves.

**108.** In 2006, Veterans Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defence, and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission combined their interests at Beechwood and established a new larger National Military Cemetery. It brought together all those who died on active service, whose death was related to service, or who served honourably and have chosen to rest among their comrades in the sacred grounds of sections 19, 27, 29, 103, and (eventually) 109. To simplify this document, the title "National Military Cemetery" (NMC) will only refer to section 103 and 109, although the actual National Military Cemetery includes all five sections.

## Monuments

**109.** Located at the west entrance to NMC is the main Monument dedicated in 2001. The inscription on the front reads, "The NATIONAL MILITARY CEMETERY OF THE CANADIAN FORCES". The inscription on the back reads, "TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF CANADA'S ARMED FORCES WHO HAVE SERVED THEIR COUNTRY WITH DISTINCTION IN WAR AND PEACE". The design of the monument is based on four Canadian First World War monuments; Courcellette, Le Quesnal, Hill 62, and Passchendaele. It most closely resembles the Passchendaele monument – simple and dignified, yet imposing. The monument is made of light barre granite and weighs over 24 metric tons. This Monument is a saluting area.

**110.** A large tri-service monument was erected in 2004. This monument is made from stone of the same quarry used for the main Monument, and the style of lettering used in the engraving is identical as well. The monument is three-sided with an appropriate poem for each of the services represented on each side. This monument is not a saluting area.

**111.** A Columbarium of 384 niches for above-ground inhumation was also finalized in 2024 at the East end of section 103. The imposing and beautiful structure of 8 modules disposed around a central one can be seen as a monument, adding to the solemnity of the NMC. The standard of engraving of the niche cover plaque is similar to the headstones and also include a chosen badge.



## Visitors

**112.** Beechwood encourages visitors but is considered private property. To maintain the serenity and uniformity of the site and respect for those interred, visitors are asked to follow basic rules of conduct while at NMC:

- a. flowers and wreaths may be placed at graves or monuments but will be periodically removed by Beechwood maintenance staff. Floral items or other types of decorations may not be secured to headstones or monuments. The planting of flowers, shrubs, or other plants is prohibited.
- b. statues, vigil lights, flags, and any type of commemorative items are not permitted on graves and will be removed by Beechwood maintenance staff and disposed. Items of any kind, including photographs and other forms of tribute or remembrance, may not be affixed to headstones or markers.
- c. visitors are expected to comport themselves in a dignified and respectful manner. They shall not interfere with the preparation or conduct of any events or activities. Parking controls are to be respected.

## Policies and References

**113.** These policies are intended to provide direction on matters regarding only section 103 and 109 of the NMC. Sections 19, 27, and 29 are managed by the other partner agencies.

**114.** These policies are issued by the Director of Casualty Support Management (DCSM) and are derived from authorities in [Departmental Administrative Order and Directive \(DAOD\) 5018-3](#) and various [Queen's Regulations and Orders \(QR&O\)](#). [The Canadian Forces Manual of Drill and Ceremonial](#), and [Heritage Structure of the Canadian Forces](#) are also important references in relation to operations and management of NMC.

**115.** The CAF LO to NMC is responsible for the maintenance of these policies. Any individual or organisation may submit suggestions for amendments or additions to the Manager at any time for consideration.

**116.** Requests for exceptions may be considered if extraordinary or unique circumstances can be demonstrated. The approval of any such requests will not necessarily change current policies. Requests shall be sent to the Manager in writing by mail or e-mail (see contact information at the end of this section)



**117.** To ensure that policies and decisions are equitable and in keeping with the customs and traditions of the CAF, DCSM consults with many organisations including but not limited to:

- a. [Directorate of History and Heritage](#) (DHH);
- b. [Directorate of Honours and Recognition](#) (DHR);
- c. [Chaplain General](#);
- d. Environment, Commands, Branches and Regiment; and
- e. [Beechwood Cemetery](#)

**118.** Appeals to decisions regarding eligibility or standard are to be directed in writing to DCSM (Manager). Any decision by DCSM as to the interpretation of DOAD 5018-3 or these policies shall be binding in the event of a dispute.

## Contact Information

**119.** Individuals or organisations can contact CAF TG NMC staff or DCSM for more information using the following methods:

- a. mail: Director Casualty Support Management
  - i. National Military Cemetery of the Canadian Armed Forces
  - ii. Major-General George R. Pearkes Building
  - iii. 101 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa ON K1A 0K2
- b. e-mail: [NationalMilitaryCemetery-CimetiereMilitaireNational@forces.gc.ca](mailto:NationalMilitaryCemetery-CimetiereMilitaireNational@forces.gc.ca)
- c. Website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/health-support/casualty-support.html>
- d. Telephone: NMC staff can be reached at 613-696-0117;
- e. CAF TG (Non-crisis hotline): Tel: 1-800-883-6094; or
- f. in person at Beechwood Cemetery, 280 Beechwood Avenue, Ottawa.



# Section 2 - Eligibility and Application

## Eligibility

- 201.** Eligibility for interment is restricted to those persons described in DAOD 5018-3, specifically:
- serving or honourably released members of the CAF (Regular and Primary Reserve) and former services;
  - Canadian veterans of the World Wars or Korean War (veterans of the World Wars or Korea, or members who served during peacetime or special designated areas who were in receipt of a disability pension at time of death are also eligible for burial in section 27, managed by Veterans Affairs Canada);
  - merchant navy veterans as [defined by Veteran's Affairs Canada](#);
  - Canadian Rangers and the Cadet Organisation Administration and Training Service (COATS); and
  - immediate family members of eligible members.
- 202.** Each plot may contain the remains of a maximum of two eligible deceased persons, at least one of whom must be an eligible member. When in operation, a portion of section 109 may have a limited number of plots able to accommodate more than two urns.
- 203.** Each person may only be commemorated once anywhere in the NMC, whether on a headstone, a niche cover, as an eligible military member or as immediate family.
- 204.** A former service member who is ineligible for interment because of a dishonourable release may be interred as an eligible family member if they so qualify, but no mention of military service will be permitted on the headstone, nor shall any military participation be present at the interment.
- 205.** Re-interment into NMC of eligible members or family from other locations is permitted.
- 206.** Generally, a plot will be assigned to an eligible member only if there are remains to be interred. Nevertheless, should remains be un-available due to a unique nature of death, a plot and headstone may be permitted, and an eligible family member may be interred in that plot.
- 207.** In the case of an urn burial, a minority portion of the ashes may be retained by the family if so desired. It is expected that those remaining ashes are not or will not be formally interred with a grave marker elsewhere.



**208.** Approval for interment may be subsequently withdrawn if it is determined that a service or family member's eligibility changes for any circumstance including but not limited to fraud, or receiving a dishonourable release after having an application approved while they were still a serving member. Members deemed ineligible in this fashion are responsible for recouping any previous payments made to Beechwood.

**209.** If a member or family are technically eligible, interment may still be denied or approval revoked by the Manager for any cause including but not limited to infamy.

## Application For Interment

**210.** Applications for interment may be submitted prior to death.

**211.** An application is made by completing a [DND 2277-E](#), National Military Cemetery of the Canadian Forces Registration Application for Section 103 and 109, found at Annex B. Forms may also be found on the Beechwood website [The National Military Cemetery | Beechwood](#) or arranged for by contacting DCSM (see contact information at the end of Chapter 1). The French version of the application form, [DND 2277-F](#) is also available.

**212.** Once the application has been completed, it may be sent to DCSM by e-mail, conventional mail or in person (see contact information at the end of Chapter 1).

**213.** Applications will be verified by DCSM to confirm the eligibility of the applicant and will be acknowledged by formal letter advising of either an approval or denial. Records held by the CAF and/or Library and Archives Canada will be consulted in accordance with the Privacy Act to confirm information.

## Approved Applications

**214.** Copies of approved requests will be forwarded to Beechwood National Military Coordinator by the NMC staff. Applicants or family members upon receiving notification of approval may then make any desired pre-need arrangements with Beechwood staff to secure a plot and headstone. The CAF is not involved in any financial or undertaking services – these elements are the sole purview of Beechwood staff. All gravesites are allocated in sequential order regardless of rank, service, unit, or personal preference.



**215.** Burial costs are borne by the Department of National Defence in accordance with Compensation and Benefits Instruction paragraph 210.20 only for those entitled members as defined in QR&O Vol I article 24.15. They are listed as serving members of the Regular and Special Forces, Reservists who die while on service, Victoria Cross recipients or, with approval of the Chief of the Defence Staff, to a deceased former member.

**216.** Burial costs, for eligible members, which are not described in QR&O Volume I article 24.15, and any costs associated with eligible family, will be borne by the applicant or their family/estate. Fees related to burials and related services are established annually based upon rates filed with the Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. An annual rate table is published and is located on the [Casualty Support website](#) and is also available by contacting DCSM.

## Dedications

**217.** Groups or families may purchase a tree and rock for dedication in memory of an eligible member. A tree dedication consists of a small boulder with a bronze plaque placed at the front of a tree selected by the family. This opportunity may be attractive to families of eligible members buried elsewhere who want their family member associated with NMC without actually being interred there. The plaque may display any inscription provided that there is a dedication to an eligible member and the content is deemed suitable by the Manager and Beechwood. Once all trees and rocks presently incorporated into the landscape plan have been designated, there will be no additional dedications.

Groups or families may purchase a tree, a rock (bolder) or a bench for dedication to a military organisation, group, association and etcetera, as approved by the Manager. Once all trees and rocks presently incorporated into the landscape plan have been designated, there will be no additional dedications. The plaque may display any inscription provided that there is a specified dedication and the content is deemed suitable by the Manager and Beechwood.



# Section 3 – Headstones

## General

**301.** This chapter outlines policies with respect to headstone dimensions, material, and engravings as well as for the columbarium niche door engravings. Patterned after headstones from the first and second world wars, the headstone's designs are controlled to ensure that a uniform standard is maintained. Provisions exist to provide some individual latitude with design and content, but the customs and traditions of the CAF remain paramount.

**302.** The policies on the elements described below applies to both the traditional headstones and columbarium door where these can be engraved. The particularities only applicable to the columbarium are described in para 336 to 340.

## Headstone Material, Dimensions, And Design

**303.** Headstones are made of light grey barre granite with a steeled finish on all sides. They are inscribed with Roman style letters 6mm (15/64 inches) in depth.

**304.** The dimensions of a headstone are:

- a. height: 1120mm (44 inches) at tallest point;
- b. height visible above surface: 813mm (32 inches) at tallest point;
- c. width: 381mm (15 inches);
- d. thickness: 76mm (3 inches); and
- e. top edge: serpentine, with 250mm (10 inch) radius and 50mm (2 inch) drop.

**305.** Headstones will be engraved only in English, French, or bilingual English/French. A Spirit name can also be added in Indigenous language (roman style letters) if the space permits.

**306.** The headstone or columbarium niche cover of serving members will be only partially engraved. Unknown details or information that can change such as post-nominals and rank will be added after release or death as determined by the applicant. This may result in additional costs determined by Beechwood.



## Badges

**307.** Only badges that have been approved for use by the CAF and former services and verified by DHH will be engraved on headstones.

**308.** Members or their families must choose one current or former organizational badge from the following categories to be displayed at the top of the headstone:

- The CF badge
- Command, Element, or former services badges
- Branch badges
- Army corps and Regimental badges
- The Merchant Navy badge

**309.** The badge selected must be reflective of any portion of the member's nature and period of service and follow the eligibility criteria established for the use of each badge. Members are not restricted to badges they were associated with at retirement. The badge and label of the chosen badge (affiliation) shall match in accordance with DHH.

**310.** Common-to-all designs that were approved for use on headstones for First World War casualties, 1914-1921, and Second World War casualties, 1939-1947, such as the maple leaf, are not authorized for use at NMC section 103 as their design and use were conflict and date specific. Crests and other unofficial emblems are not permitted, nor are qualifications, trade, specialty, wings, rank, awards, or other similar badges. Internally designed badges such as logos may not be used. This includes but is not limited to badges or crests of ships, army divisions or brigades, health services group, and air force squadrons.

**311.** Members of support trades cannot choose the badge of a regiment or branch they supported. For example, logistics and intelligence personnel cannot choose an infantry regiment's badge although they may once have been in support of that unit.

**312.** Contact NMC for a graphic of a badge if required.

## Service Number and Rank

**313.** Regimental or service numbers and rank are engraved together on a single line.

**314.** A former member who served during the transition from regimental numbers to service numbers may choose either for engraving. Members who used the social insurance number (SIN) as a



service number may not have their SIN on a headstone. If an applicant had only a SIN as a service number, a service number may have been assigned following release, in which case that service number would be used on the headstone. If no service number was ever assigned, the NMC staff will ensure that a service number is assigned by VAC.

**315.** Ranks and designation of ranks are listed in QR&O Volume I article 3.01. Rank or designation of rank held at the time of release or death (unless exception below) will be engraved on the headstone regardless of what previous ranks the member may have held during their service. If a member had multiple periods of service, the rank at the time of the latest release will be used. Where a member is authorised to retain an acting rank on release or transfer, that rank shall be considered substantive for the purposes of this request in accordance with CFAO chapter 15 annex A para 48 and 49.

**316.** If a member dies on service with a temporary or acting rank, the temporary or acting rank held at the time of death is the legal rank to be used on the headstone.

**317.** Former ranks and designations will be used if the member ended his service during a time when applicable former regulations were in effect. In addition, historic ranks belonging to the Royal Canadian Air Force Women's Division are recognized as official ranks.

**318.** The appointment of Master Corporal as described in QR&O Volume I article 3.08 may be used if desired. Similarly, Lance appointments used prior to unification may also be used.

**319.** The post-unification naval ranks of Lieutenant and Captain will be suffixed with an (N) to distinguish them from army and air force ranks of the same name.

**320.** Ranks will be engraved in abbreviated form.

## **Name and Post-Nominals**

**321.** Normally, the name and post-nominals will appear on the same line. Should the name be too long to allow for the placement of post-nominal or there are too many post-nominals to fit onto the same line as the name, the post-nominal will be placed on a separate line below the name.

**322.** Only Legal names will be engraved on the headstone – no nicknames shall appear. Middle names may be used, replaced with initials, or omitted. Up to two lines may be used to accommodate names combined with post-nominal. For those who have changed their name due to marriage, a birth name may be used on its own or in combination with the married name.

**323.** Provided there is sufficient space, a confirmed Indigenous spirit name can be added on a line



below the name and post nominals. It can be inscribed in the indigenous language of the eligible member in standard roman style letters. Translation will be validated through the DAAG.

**324.** Only post-nominals that represent orders, decorations, and medals assigned an official abbreviation on the [Governor General's order of precedence](#) will be engraved on headstones. Other post-nominals, such as civil, academic, or religious distinctions and fellowships will not be displayed.

## Service Affiliation

**325.** The service affiliation line will be placed immediately below the name or, should post-nominal have to be placed below the name due to insufficient space, immediately below the post-nominals.

**326.** Only one service affiliation will be used, and it shall match the chosen badge. The affiliation name will be spelled out in full unless there is insufficient space in which case the authorised abbreviation will be used. The service affiliation will not be further expanded by the use of ship, battalion, squadron, trade, or other such designations.

**327.** If a badge represents more than one affiliation, only affiliations that a member had during their service may be used. For example, pre-unification naval personnel using the Royal Canadian Navy badge will be distinguished between their components of Royal Canadian Navy, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service, or Royal Canadian Navy (Reserve).

## Dates

**328.** The dates of birth and death will be engraved on the line under service affiliation. The date of death will only be engraved when a member has deceased.

## Religious or Spiritual Emblems

**329.** The religious or spiritual emblem chosen by a member or family will be placed at the base of the headstone. A religious or spiritual emblem is not mandatory and should a member or their family decline to have one, the space will be left vacant. Only one symbol may be used.

**330.** Only religious and spiritual emblems that have been authorized by the Canadian Forces Chaplain General's Office are approved for engraving on headstones. Should a member or their family make a request for an emblem not on the approved list, the request will be forwarded to the Manager for review and, where necessary, forwarded to the Chaplain General's office for consideration. The list of approved emblems is at Annex D.



## Headstone Markings For Eligible Family

**331.** The information pertaining to a family member is engraved on the lower portion of the same headstone used for the member.

**332.** If the family member is also serving or has former service, the pattern of engraving is almost identical to that of the member, that is, regimental or service number, name and post-nominals, service affiliation and date. A relationship to member phrase may be used instead of the service affiliation if no other badge engraved in the lower portion of the headstone. That space may be left blank, have one religious or spiritual symbol for both members or a badge to represent the family member's service affiliation. If so desired, a family member currently serving or with former service may be represented as a non-military member in which case, their engravings will appear as described below.

**333.** Of note, when both persons have former service, the person who will be considered the main applicant engraved on the top portion of the headstone or niche cover, remains a personal choice of the applicants or their family. It is not determined by seniority of rank, time of service, date of death or other considerations by DCSM or Beechwood.

**334.** Although post-nominals such as civil, academic, or religious distinctions and fellowships are not authorized on headstones, the use of a pre-nominal title / Professional titles for a civilian spouse's such as for a medical professional (Dr.), member of Parliament (Hon.), Quebec lawyer (Me.), French engineer (In.) or Reverent (Rev.) may be authorized. These requests will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and final approval given by DCSM.

**335.** For eligible family who are not current or former service members, a statement of the relationship to the member, accompanied by a short term of endearment, must be placed on the line immediately following the name of the family member, for example "Beloved Wife", "War Bride", "Devoted Husband" *etcetera*. The phrase must be formal, not colloquial, and the NMC Manager retains the authority to reject the chosen phrase if it is deemed unsuitable. Dates will appear after the statement of relationship, with the religious symbol (if desired) underneath that.

## Columbarium Niche Cover Engravings

**336.** The columbarium niche covers are made of light grey granite with a steeled finish similar to the headstones. They are also inscribed with Roman style letters 6mm (15/64 inches) in depth.

The niche covers dimensions are:



- a. height: 559 mm (22 inches); and
- b. width: 356 mm (14.5 inches).

**337.** To ensure a visual continuity and uniformity of the NMC, the columbarium door will also allow the space for the option of engraving up to two emblems as on the traditional headstones, thus, making the NMC columbarium unique. However, the total engraving space being smaller, the standard is also adapted accordingly:

- a. The letters size is the same for the name and post nominals (18mm);
- b. The service number and rank are engraved in the corners left and right of the badge or emblem;
- c. A minimal blank space of 20 mm will be maintained between the information of two persons;
- d. Although applicants can elect the badge of their choice amongst those they are entitled to, the service affiliation is not inscribed; and
- e. The space for statement of the relationship and terms of endearment for the next of kin is more limited than on a headstone and therefore, can't be accommodated if a second badge is engraved at the bottom portion of the niche cover.

**338.** Like for the conventional headstones, the lower portion is kept for the engraving of a religious or spiritual emblem. This is not mandatory, and this space may be left blank. The spiritual/religious emblem may also be replaced by either a badge honouring the service of the co-applicant;

**339.** As for headstones, columbarium doors will be engraved only in English, French, or bilingual English/French. A Spirit name can also be added in Indigenous language (roman style letters) if the space permits.

**340.** Examples of columbarium door layouts are shown at Annex C.

## Unauthorised Headstone Markings

**341.** When NMC was first consecrated, military oversight - to ensure renderings adhered to NMC/Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH) policies during the approval process prior to being engraved – was not yet established. This resulted in unauthorised badges/crests, incorrect affiliations, and improper terms of endearment contradictory to existing policy. This lapse has, unfortunately, led to the existence (in Section 103) of headstones containing format errors. Today, any requests for similar headstones, such as those described in this paragraph, will not be authorised. Although the NMC cannot change these headstones at this time, if there is a need to replace them, errors will be corrected



to ensure all headstones are in accordance with NMC/DHH policies to maintain the highest of NMC standards and uniformity.

## Later Changes to Headstones

**342.** Changes to headstone information, such as replacing a religious symbol with a badge, removing a divorced eligible family member name, *etcetera*, will most likely result in the whole headstone being replaced at the expense of the person requesting it and only authorized markings/engravings will be approved. Markings/engraving erroneously authorised in the past will not be reproduced on the replacement headstone. If a modification is required because of an error made by the CAF, costs to correct that error shall normally be covered by the Crown.



# Section 4 - Funerals, Burials, and Ceremonial Events

## General

**401.** This chapter outlines policies and procedures for funerals, interments, and other ceremonial activities that occur at NMC. These activities are primarily based on the *CAF Manual of Drill and Ceremonial* and the wishes of families and units.

**402.** At the NMC, three principal formats of funerals/burials are supported:

- a. Military Funeral. This ceremony may be conducted when death occurs while a member is still serving in accordance with [QR&O 24.15](#). It may also be available for former members as outlined in that reference;
- b. Military Presence Burial. This ceremony may be conducted for former members or reservists who are not entitled to a military funeral; and
- c. Civilian Burial. This format of burial is used for the interment of eligible family who were not former members.

## Elements Common to All Funerals/Burials

**403.** Funeral services and cremations may occur at locations other than Beechwood. Funerals are not to be confused with interments (burials). The [Hall of Colours and Sacred Space](#) of the Beechwood National Memorial Centre is available for funerals of serving and former eligible members (visitations).

**404.** The scattering of ashes is not permitted unless they are of eligible partial remains and pre-approval has been given by the Manager. No ceremony shall be provided.

**405.** A military or civilian chaplain is expected to conduct the funeral and/or interment ceremonies. If no religious involvement is desired, chaplains/officiants who can accommodate those wishes and provide a non-religious ceremony are available, otherwise, family members must respect the format used at military services. Chaplains who are not familiar with the ceremony are required to contact the NMC Coord or LO well prior to the service.



**406.** If inclement weather conditions exist at the time of interment, musical elements may not be available. In this case, recorded music may be provided.

**407.** The Canadian flag and CAF ensign located at the entrance of the NMC shall be flown at half-mast on the day of interment of any eligible member or family member. Both flags will be raised to full-mast upon the completion of all interments scheduled for that day.

## **Military Funeral**

**408.** In accordance with QR&O 24.15, when desired by the next of kin, and where practical, a military funeral may be accorded to deceased members currently serving in the Regular or Special Forces, members of the Reserve Force (should they die on service) and holders of the Victoria Cross. With prior approval of the Chief of the Defence Staff or such officer as he may designate, a military funeral may be accorded to a deceased serving member of the Reserve Force who did not die on service or a former member of the Regular or Special Forces.

**409.** The parent unit of the deceased member is expected to provide the personnel for the required funeral parties. Upon reporting to Beechwood, they shall be under tactical control of the NMC Coord. Where the parent unit cannot provide all elements of the funeral party, the supporting Formation, Base, Wing or CFSG(O-G) may augment funeral parties or provide other forms of support, for example, weapons, funeral stores, *etcetera*, as required.

**410.** NMC staff will assist in the coordination of manning and support. A checklist of required information is found at Annex E and will be sent to the parent unit and Designated Assistant upon notice of an upcoming funeral. The NMC Coord and CAF LO to the NMC will assist only with those funerals that are conducted at Beechwood.

**411.** As NMC is a formal and visible component of the entire CAF, units conducting a military funeral shall do so in accordance with the *Manual of Drill and Ceremonial* and those policies, and instruction provided by NMC staff (to include this document). The funeral commander or designated unit coordinator for the ceremony shall liaise directly with the NMC Coord. Any modification to the burial ceremony which conflicts with these references must be approved by CAF LO to NMC. The detailed sequence of events for both a casket and urn interment are provided as an Annex to parade instructions and are available upon request.

**412.** A Canadian flag, in accordance with the member's/family's wishes, will be presented to the next of kin. Units are responsible for providing flags, or providing funding if NMC provides a flag on a unit's behalf. Typically, the member's commanding officer or the senior officer present will present the flag.



**413.** Eligible family who are also currently serving are entitled to a military funeral even when not represented as military on the headstone.

## **Military Presence Burial**

**414.** Military presence burials are a unique honour provided at NMC for those eligible members not entitled to a military funeral. Eligible members or families may choose to have any or all of a Military Presence guard, a piper, a bugler, and/or a military chaplain. It is also offered as an alternative to a military funeral if the family wishes a more subdued ceremony. It may also be provided for remains being re-interred from another location. The detailed sequence of events for both casket and urn burials can be acquired by contacting NMC staff.

**415.** Members for a military presence burial may be provided by CFSG (O-G) or other units that are willing to provide support. Typically, the NMC employs Class B Reservists during the summer period to cover for military presence guard. The elements for a military presence may not be available in the winter months. Chaplains may be provided by the family, but they must contact the NMC Coord prior to the service to receive instructions on protocol.

**416.** No components of a military funeral as described in the *Manual of Drill and Ceremonial* will be added onto the presence burial ceremony, even if requested by the family or supporting unit. A flag will not be presented to the family or be involved in the ceremony.

**417.** The conduct of the committal service shall be limited to the necessary prayers and rites and some personal words by the officiating clergy regarding the military career of the deceased. Eulogies and personal tributes by family and friends shall not take place while the guard is present.

## **Civilian Burials**

**418.** This burial is for eligible family who were not service members, or for former service members who are not represented as military members on their headstone. It is also available as an alternative to a military funeral or military presence burial if the family wishes no formal military participation.

**419.** NMC staff does not coordinate or provide any military participation or support for these burials.

## **Hall of Colours**

**420.** The Hall of Colours, located at the Beechwood Memorial Centre and established in 2007, displays retired Colours (flags, drums) of units, regiments, and branches belonging to the Royal



Canadian Navy, Canadian Army and the Royal Canadian Air Force. Following tradition, these Colours will remain undisturbed until they naturally disintegrate over time. The area is for exclusive use of deceased members and veterans for viewings and visitations.

**421.** Units interested in laying up Colours are to contact the CAF LO to the NMC to make scheduling arrangements or get further information (see contact information at the end of Section 1).

**422.** As with military funerals, ceremonies involving the Hall of Colours must be in accordance with the *Manual of Drill and Ceremonial* and instructions provided by NMC staff. The designated unit coordinator must liaise with the CAF LO to the NMC or NMC Coord. Sample or suggested parade scripts can be made available upon request.

## Other Ceremonies

**423.** A Remembrance Day ceremony, open to the public and military spectators in uniform, is conducted annually at NMC on November 11th. DCSM coordinates and funds the ceremony. Typically, a dozen commemorative events are taking place yearly, where all are honoured and remembered. Inhumations remains the main effort and the NMC has only limited capacity to support other activities. Ceremonies or events may be conducted if approved by the CAF LO to the NMC and Beechwood Director of Marketing, Communications and Community Outreach. Support personnel is expected to be provided by the sponsoring unit.

## In Closing

The NMC staff place the utmost care to ensure our fallen and family are treated with respect and that their loved ones are also laid to rest with dignity and honour. For any clarification about these operating policies, please refer to the contact information at the end of section 1.