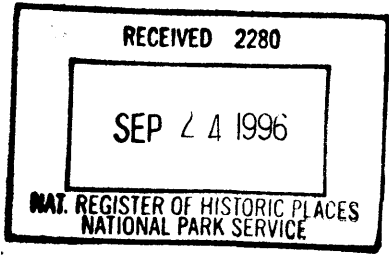


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Memphis National Cemetery  
other names/site number Mississippi River National Cemetery

2. Location

street & number 3568 Townes Avenue  not for publication N/A  
city or town Memphis  vicinity N/A  
state Tennessee code TN county Shelby code 157 zip code 37917

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally  (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Karen Anne Dupak, Historic Preservation Officer 8/28/96  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Robert L. Hygen, DSHPS 9/6/96  
Signature of commenting or other official/Title Date  
Tennessee Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
 other, (explain):  
For Signature of Keeper Date of Action  
Ma J M. [Signature] 10/30/96

Memphis National Cemetery  
Name of Property

Shelby County, Tennessee  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
1	0	sites
2	0	structures
3	0	objects
7	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Civil War Era National Cemeteries

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Funerary: Cemetery

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Funerary: Cemetery

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Colonial: Dutch Colonial

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick, Wood, Stucco

roof Asphalt

other Metal: Iron; Stone: Marble, Brick

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Military

Period of Significance

1867-1934

Significant Dates

1867

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memphis National Cemetery  
Name of Property

Shelby County, Tennessee  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 44.1

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1     
Zone Easting Northing  
2

3     
Zone Easting Northing  
4

See continuation sheet.

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Therese T. Sammartino, Staff Assistant, National Cemetery System

organization Department of Veterans Affairs date July 31, 1996

street & number 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W. telephone (202) 565-4895

city or town Washington, D.C. state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 20420

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Department of Veterans Affairs

street & number 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W. telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Washington, D.C. state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 20420

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Civil War Era National Cemeteries**

**Memphis National Cemetery  
Shelby County, Tennessee**

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The Memphis National Cemetery is located at 3568 Townes Avenue, about seven miles east of the court house, within the city limits of Memphis, in Shelby County, Tennessee. Burial sections of different sizes are separated by drives and walks. The main entrance is located at the southwest corner of the cemetery at Townes Avenue and Jackson Avenue and is protected by a double wrought-iron gate, with a pedestrian gate on each side, from which emanates a circular driveway containing the flagpole. The gates were constructed in 1950. A steel picket fence surrounds the entrance of the cemetery. A pedestrian gate is located on the northeast side of the cemetery near the eastern corner. The cemetery is enclosed by a four-foot brick wall, with tile coping, except for the area from near the flagpole to the northwest corner of the cemetery, which is enclosed by a picket fence. A chain link fence surrounds most of the perimeter wall. It appears that the main entrance was originally situated in the center of the west end until an overpass over the railroad was built (date unknown). Historical records state that passenger trains of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad stopped at a station directly in front of the main entrance. The lodge and administration/service building are located along Jackson Avenue on the west side of the cemetery.

The cemetery was established in 1867. The site for the cemetery was chosen by a board of officers consisting of Chaplain William R. Earnshaw; Brevet Lieutenant Colonel A. W. Wills, assistant quartermaster; and Brevet Major G.W. Marshall, assistant quartermaster. The first superintendent of the cemetery was John F. Carl, a discharged corporal of Company A, Fourth Regiment of Artillery, who was appointed on August 6, 1887.

Graves were originally marked with numbered stakes that were later replaced with upright marble headstones. The cemetery was closed in 1992. As of July 31, 1996, there were 35,969 graves used for the interment of 39,824 casketed remains and 169 sites used for the interment of 241 cremated remains. Interments of casketed remains in occupied graves and reserved graves, as well as interments of cremated remains, continue. As of July 31, 1996, there were 359 gravesites available (358 reserved) for the interment of casketed remains and 376 sites available for the interment of cremated remains.

The original superintendent's lodge, constructed sometime prior to 1869, was a wooden cottage, containing three rooms with a detached kitchen, and was located near the entrance gate. In 1934, a new two-story Dutch Colonial "cottage" lodge was constructed, with the first story of brick and the second story of frame and stucco. There are six rooms plus an office and basement. The front porch was remodeled in 1964 and screens replaced with glass to provide additional office space. The roof is Gambrel with a dormer across the front and is made of asphalt tile. The windows are double hung. No director has resided in the lodge since October 1992.

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Civil War Era National Cemeteries

Memphis National Cemetery  
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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Continued)**

Adjacent to the lodge are two brick buildings, constructed in 1934. The one building originally contained five garage bays. One bay door has been eliminated, and the entire bay is utilized for the administrative offices with a conference room and employee lunch room. The remaining portion of the building is part of the service area and contains the four remaining garage bays. The adjoining building located next to the garage bays contains public rest rooms, employee lockers, employee restrooms and lunch room, as well as the foreman's office. The windows are three-over-three. The roof, replaced in 1993, is asphalt shingles. A garage, 5 feet by 25 feet, with a built-up roof, was added in 1947 and is used for storage. Records do not show when the administrative offices were relocated from the lodge to their present location.

A frame and concrete pump house, 12 feet by 16 feet, was built in 1929. The roof is asphalt shingles.

A brick and concrete octagonal rostrum, 15 feet in diameter, with a tin roof, was constructed some time prior to 1929. This structure, located north of the main drive near the west end of the cemetery, was removed on May 19, 1964.

There are two commemorative monuments in the Memphis National Cemetery:

**Illinois Monument** - A sarcophagus type monument of granite and bronze showing the shrouded figure of a soldier lying in state. The monument was dedicated on October 15, 1929, with the dedication address being given by Dr. C. O. Brown, Commander of U.S. Grant Post, Grand Army of the Republic of Chicago. The monument is located in Section B of the cemetery and bears replicas of the seal of the State of Illinois and of the United States, plus the following two inscriptions:

Southwest Side

WHEN PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN CALLED  
FOR VOLUNTEERS TO DEFEND THE LIFE OF  
OUR IMPERILED NATION, THESE VALIANT  
SONS OF ILLINOIS TOGETHER WITH OTHER  
HEROES OFFERED THEIR LIVES WITH  
PATRIOTISM UNSURPASSED. WITH UNFLINCHING BRAVERY THEY FOUGHT  
THE BLOODY BATTLE OF THE GREAT CIVIL  
WAR FOR UNION AND LIBERTY. UPON THEM,  
THEREFORE, A GRATEFUL STATE BESTOWS THE CROWN OF UNDYING AFFECTION  
AND THE LAUREL OF VICTORY.

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**Civil War Era National Cemeteries**

**Memphis National Cemetery**

**Shelby County, Tennessee**

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Continued)**

Northeast Side

THIS MONUMENT ERECTED BY  
THE STATE OF ILLINOIS  
IN 1928 - TO THE GLORIOUS MEMORY  
OF THE SOLDIERS OF ILLINOIS  
WHO FOUGHT IN THE CIVIL WAR 1861-1865.

**Minnesota Monument** - This monument, erected by the State of Minnesota in 1916, is located in Section C of the cemetery. It was created by John K. Daniels, a sculptor from St. Paul, Minnesota. Daniels, a native of Norway, was a highly acclaimed artist who was noted for the versatility and spirituality of his work. He had won numerous awards and had been decorated by the King of Norway. He was selected by the Minnesota Monument Commission, a commission established by an act of the Minnesota State Legislature in 1913 to organize the construction of memorials honoring Minnesota soldiers of the Civil War who were buried in national cemeteries in several southern states. In 1915, another legislative act appropriated money to fund a monument to be erected in the Memphis National Cemetery, as well as at national cemeteries in Little Rock, Arkansas, and Andersonville, Georgia. The monument depicts a Union soldier standing bare-headed with his head slightly bowed. The figure's hands rest atop the butt of his rifle, which is inverted with the barrel resting on the ground before him. His cap is held in his proper right hand and rests against his proper left shoulder. He is dressed in a rain slicker, which billows out behind him. The base, which is made of Minnesota granite, is 106" x 95" x 95". The sculpture, made of bronze, stands 7" x 33" x 1". On the east side of the base are crossed palm fronds, followed by the inscription:

ERECTED A.D. 1916 BY THE  
STATE OF MINNESOTA.

IN MEMORY OF HER SOLDIERS  
HERE BURIED WHO LOST THEIR LIVES  
IN THE SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES  
IN THE WAR FOR THE  
PRESERVATION OF THE UNION.  
A.D. 1861 - 1865

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**National Register of Historic Places  
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**Civil War Era National Cemeteries**

**Memphis National Cemetery  
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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Continued)**

There is one Medal of Honor recipient buried in the Memphis National Cemetery:

**James H. Robinson, Private, Company B, 3rd Michigan Cavalry** - At Brownsville, Arkansas, on January 27, 1865, he successfully defended himself, single-handed against seven guerrillas, killing the leader (Captain W.C. Stephenson) and driving off the remainder of the party. Robinson died on July 26, 1864, and is buried in Section H, Grave 4131.

The numbers shown for contributing resources within the property reflect the following:

**Buildings:** Lodge

**Sites:** Cemetery

**Structures:** Gate, perimeter wall

**Objects:** Flagpole, Minnesota monument, Illinois monument

The numbers for non-contributing resources within the property reflect the following:

**Buildings:** Administration/service building

**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Memphis National Cemetery is significant under Criterion A, and is an important component of the multiple property submission of Civil War Era National Cemeteries. It is significant under Criterion A because of its association with the Civil War.

The location of the City of Memphis as one of the great commercial centers on the Mississippi River, was of considerable strategic importance to the Confederacy following Tennessee's secession from the Union in 1861. The city furnished a convenient location for military hospitals to care for a portion of the wounded and sick from the Mississippi River combat area. General hospitals capable of caring for 5,000 men were located in and around the city.



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**Civil War Era National Cemeteries**

**Memphis National Cemetery  
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**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)**

The war for the central Mississippi and the city of Memphis had become a series of actions and counteractions. Both Union and Confederate governments were desperately attempting to seize the initiative.

On April 12, 1862, Confederate lookouts watching the Mississippi River above Memphis spotted a Union steamer upriver from them, and five Confederate ships gave chase. At 8:30 the next morning, at the mouth of the Obion River, the lookouts reported more Union warships coming down the river toward them. Captain Thomas Huger signaled the Confederate ships to form line of battle, but the Union flotilla was too strong to fight. The U.S.S. *Benton*, the most powerful warship on the Mississippi River, led the way, with more Union ironclads in a line behind her. Huger decided that he could not risk a general battle against the ironclads, since his vessels were unarmored and badly outgunned. Instead, he ordered *Maurepas* and his other two gunboats back down the river, leaving the rams *General Price* and *General Van Dorn* to face the ironclads alone. The two Confederate rams reached the protection of Fort Pillow, 40 miles north of Memphis on Chicksaw Bluff and warned the fort's defenders that Union warships were approaching. Union ships came into view and continued downriver to test the Confederate defenses. Union Commander Flag Officer Andrew Foote suddenly ordered the ironclads to come about. They steamed upriver a few miles before tying up, close enough to constitute a threat to Fort Pillow.

On August 7, 1861, the U.S. War Department issued a contract to James B. Eads to build seven ironclad gunboats by February 10, 1862. The Confederates reacted to the ominous news by beginning construction on a pair of their own ironclad rams at Memphis--*Arkansas* and *Tennessee*. In mid-January 1862, Confederate Secretary of War Judah Benjamin decided to take further steps to stop the Union ironclads. On January 15, he ordered Major General Mansfield Lovell to seize fourteen steamers at New Orleans with the "intention and design...to strengthen the vessels with iron casing at the bows, and to use them at high speed to run down, or run over and sink, if possible, the gunboats and mortar rats prepared by the enemy." The two men chosen the lead the ram fleet were James E. Montgomery and J. H. Townsend.

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Civil War Era National Cemeteries

Memphis National Cemetery  
Shelby County, Tennessee

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**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)**

To defend the South against the anticipated northern onslaught, the Confederates had fortified several points along the central Mississippi, including Island No. 10, Fort Pillow, and Fort Wright at Randolph and Fort Harris just above Memphis. At Island No. 10, Major General John Pope and Foote effectively established the Union's general strategy for reducing Confederate strongpoints on the Mississippi. Stopping the Union naval force at Fort Pillow became such a high priority that the Confederacy assigned some of its top officers to defense. Brigadier General John Villepique commanded the land defenses at Fort Pillow. Commander R. F. Pinkney, the former commander of Fort Norfolk, led the handful of wooden ships left behind.

On April 12, the Western Flotilla left New Madrid for Fort Pillow, arriving there the next day. Transports carrying Pope's 20,000 troops followed the gunboats. Pope, with Assistant Secretary of War Thomas Scott, joined Foote on board U.S.S. *Benton* at 3 p.m. to plan the campaign. They agreed that Pope would land his army above Fort Pillow to try to turn the defenses on the Confederate right. Foote, meanwhile, would put pressure on the Confederate fort with his mortar boats and gunboats. Pope decided to use the same basic strategy that had succeeded at Island No. 10. This time, Pope's engineers would dig a canal wide and deep enough for an ironclad. Foote planned to send three downriver. Thus, if the Confederates attacked either upriver or down, the Union naval force they encountered would be too strong for them. On the 15th fate, in the person of Union Major General Henry Halleck, intervened in the campaign against Fort Pillow. He ordered Pope to bring the bulk of his Army of the Mississippi to Pittsburg Landing to join U. S. Grant's and Don Carlos Buell's armies, leaving behind enough men at Fort Pillow to take action if the Confederates retreated. Pope left behind two regiments, Colonel Graham Fitch's Indiana Brigade, numbering about 1,200 men. Foote tried to develop a plan that would allow the navy to get past Fort Pillow. Fitch, on his own, tried to carry through with Pope's general plan. On the 16th, Foote received additional motivation to moving downriver quickly. Despite conflicting reports, he began to believe the Confederates would not attack him. The issue of his health came into play at the beginning of May. To assist him, Foote asked that Captain Charles H. Davis be appointed his second-in-command. Subsequently, Foote died from complications resulting from a wound just before he was to return to active duty. The night Foote left, the Confederate ram captains held another council of war and decided to attack the Union gunboat that guarded the mortar boat. At about 5 a.m., Acting Master T. B. Gregory on the mortar boat opened fire on Fort Pillow with the 13-inch mortar. At 6 they started upriver, with *General Bragg* ahead and seven more rams from the River Defense Fleet following. In the morning haze, the lookouts had trouble seeing the Confederate rams and the signal flags on the U.S.S. *Cincinnati*. On U.S.S. *Carondelet*, Henry Walke prepared for battle. *Mound City* started downriver, followed soon by *Carondelet*. Commander R. N. Stembel brought *Cincinnati* into midstream before bringing her about to move closer to the mortar boat. On board *Mortar Boat No. 16*, Gregory put the mortar in an almost

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Civil War Era National Cemeteries

Memphis National Cemetery  
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**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)**

vertical position in a vain attempt to drive off the approaching rams. Meanwhile, Stembel opened fire with his bow gun. Union officers believed, erroneously, that the fire slowed the Confederate advance. Behind *Cincinnati*, *Mound City* and *Carondelet* steamed downriver. At a range of 700 yards, Walke opened fire with *Carondelet's* bow guns. Captain H. H. Leonard directed *General Bragg* straight at *Cincinnati*. The ironclad retaliated with a point-blank broadside into *Bragg*. In the struggle, a tiller rope on the Confederate ram was severed. She drifted downriver out of the fight as the crew frantically tried to repair the damage. More Confederate rams entered the battle. Upriver came the C.S.S. *General Price* and *General Sumter*. *Price* rammed *Cincinnati* a little aft of her starboard midships. The impact turned the gunboat's stern toward *Sumter*, which rammed her at top speed.

With the Confederate boats so close, Union officers believed they finally had the opportunity to capture them. As she steamed toward the fight, *Van Dorn*, under Captain Isaac Fulkerson, made a pass at the mortar boat. At a range of 60 feet, *Van Dorn* fired two 32-pounder shells through the blinds of the mortar boat and other shells that passed harmlessly overhead. Two volleys of musket fire tore into the Union craft. *Mound City* was the first reinforcement to reach *Cincinnati*. She fired a broadside at *Sumter* without doing any damage. *Van Dorn* turned on *Mound City*, but at the last minute the ironclad veered away and the Confederate ram struck her only a glancing blow that showered the Confederate boat with splinters. With water pouring into *Mound City*, Captain A. H. Kilty ran her up onto the Arkansas shore to keep her from sinking. By then, the *Carondelet* had dropped down below the rest of the ironclads. Montgomery thought the ironclads were moving into shallow water, where the rams would be at a disadvantage. The Union forces continued to put pressure on Fort Pillow. One mortar boat continued to lob shells into the fort, but Davis now positioned two gunboats nearby as protection.

Before the war, Union engineer Charles Ellet had suggested constructing steam rams after hearing of the sinking of a ship following a collision. After Ellet wrote a pamphlet in early 1862 reaffirming the idea, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton made him a colonel and authorized him to buy river steamers and to convert them to rams. He was also authorized to refit, man and command, any number of vessels deemed in his judgment to be necessary to encounter and defeat the iron-clad rams then known to be in process of construction on the lower Mississippi River. Colonel Ellet purchased a number of steamboats at different points on the Ohio River. He took some old and nearly worn-out boats, strengthened their hulls and bows with heavy timbers, raised bulkheads of timber around the boilers, and started them down the river to Cairo. They were the U.S.S. *Dick Fulton*, *Lancaster*, *Lioness*, *Mingo*, *Monarch*, *Queen of the West*, *Samson*, *Switzerland*, and *T.D. Horner*. The Confederate fleet had come out from under the batteries at Fort Pillow, had attacked the Federal fleet of gun-boats lying near Craighead's Point, and had disabled two of them. Five of them were

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**Civil War Era National Cemeteries**

**Memphis National Cemetery**

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**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)**

immediately dispatched down the river, under the command of his son, Lieutenant Colonel Alfred W. Ellet. Work upon them was being continued as they proceeded and for several days after their arrival at Fort Pillow. The other rams followed, and about May 25, 1862, Colonel Ellet joined the fleet on board the U.S.S. *Switzerland*, and the ram-fleet was now ready for action. Immediate preparations were begun for running the batteries with the entire ram-fleet. The ram-fleet proceeded without incident to within about twenty-five miles of Memphis, where they all tied up for the night, with orders of sailing issued to each commander; instructions to be ready to round out at the signal from the flag-ship, and that "each board should go into the anticipated fight in the same order they maintained in sailing." At the first light of day (June 6), the fleet moved down the river and at sunrise the flag-ship rounded the bend at "Paddy's Hen and Chickens," and immediately after, came in sight of the Federal gun-boats anchored in line across the river, about a mile above Memphis.

The *Queen of the West* came first, followed by the *Monarch* and other rams in regular succession. The *Queen of the West* had made the land, and passed out line to make fast; the *Monarch* was closing in just above, but had not yet touched the shore. At this moment, the report of a gun was heard from around the point and down the river. It was the first gun from the Confederate River Defense Fleet moving to attack. Without delay, the *Queen* moved out gracefully, and the *Monarch* followed. By this time, gun-boats had opened their batteries, and the reports of guns on both sides were heavy and rapid. The *Queen* plunged forward, under a full head of steam, right into the wall of smoke. The *Monarch*, followed and Colonel Ellet signaled that he wanted the *Monarch* to attack the *General Price*. For himself, he selected the *General Lovell* and directed the *Queen* straight for her, she being about the middle of the enemy's advancing line. At the critical moment the *General Lovell* began to turn, and that moment sealed her fate. The *Queen* came on and plunged straight into the *Lovell's* exposed broadside; the vessel was cut almost in two and disappeared under the dark waters. The *Monarch* next struck the *General Price* a glancing blow which cut her starboard wheel clean off, and completely disabled her from further participation in the fight.

As soon as the *Queen* was freed from the wreck of the sinking *Lovell*, she was attacked on both sides by the enemy's vessels, the *Beauregard* on one side and the *Sumter* on the other. Colonel Ellet, while still standing on the hurricane-deck to view the effects of the encounter with the *General Lovell*, received a pistol-ball in his knee, and gave orders for the *Queen* to be run on her one remaining wheel to the Arkansas shore, whither she was soon followed by the *General Price* in a sinking condition.

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Civil War Era National Cemeteries

Memphis National Cemetery

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**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)**

The *Monarch*, as soon as she could recover headway after her conflict with the *General Price*, drove down upon the *Beauregard*, which vessel, after her encounter with the *Queen of the West*, was endeavoring to escape. She was thwarted by the *Monarch* coming down upon her with a well-directed blow which crushed in her side and completely disabled her from further hope of escape. Men on the deck waved a white flag in token of surrender, and the *Monarch* passed on down to intercept the *Little Rebel*, the enemy's flag-ship. Leaving the *Little Rebel* fast aground, the *Monarch* turned her attention to the sinking *Beauregard*. The *Beauregard* was towed by the *Monarch* to the bar, where she sank to her boiler-deck and became a total loss.

The *Jeff. Thompson* burned and blew up with a tremendous report; the *General Bragg* was secured by gun-boats before the fire gained headway, and was saved. The *Van Dorn* alone made her escape and was afterward burned by the enemy at Liverpool Landing. Two other rebel boats were burned at the same time--the *Polk* and the *Livingston*.

At the battle of Memphis, there were no firearms on board the ram-fleet except a few short carbines and some pocket-revolvers; Colonel Ellet's reliance was upon the prow of his vessel. The enemy concentrated their fire upon the *Queen of the West* and the *Monarch*, but their missiles passed harmlessly by. Not a man sustained the slightest injury except Colonel Ellet, whose fatal wound was received from a pistol-ball. The battle of Memphis was, in many respects, one of the most remarkable naval victories on record.

The Memphis National Cemetery was not established until two years after the close of the Civil War. It was at one time known as the Mississippi River National Cemetery. This was a most appropriate designation in recognition of the fact that a very large number of the initial burials in the cemetery were the remains of members of the Union forces who participated in the battles and engagements during the early years of the war, which contributed to eventual control of the Mississippi River by the forces of the United States. Following the close of the war, reinterments were made in Memphis National Cemetery from wartime burial sites along the Mississippi from Hickham, Kentucky to Helena, Arkansas. Bodies were removed from original burial grounds in and around the city of Memphis; from the Elmwood Cemetery; the line of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad to La Grange in Fayette County; the line of the Memphis and Ohio Railroad to Humboldt in Gibson County, Tennessee; and from all the intermediate and adjacent country; from both banks of the Mississippi River; from Hickman, in Fulton County, Kentucky on the north, to Helena, Phillips County, Arkansas, on the south, including those on Island Number 10 and the cemetery at Fort Pillow.

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**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)**

Memphis National Cemetery is the burial place of many of the victims, known and unknown, who perished in one of the nation's most tragic maritime disasters--the explosion and burning of the Mississippi River steamboat, U.S.S. *Sultana*, during the night of April 26, 1865. This ship, a well-known river craft, had limited cabin space for from 75-100 passengers and by law could carry 376 persons including crew. The ship left New Orleans on April 21, 1865, with stops scheduled upriver at Vicksburg, Memphis, Cairo, Evansville, Louisville, and Cincinnati. The Vicksburg landing was made on April 24 to take on passengers and cargo. At Vicksburg, a huge throng of Union soldiers lately released from Confederate prison camps anxiously awaited the arrival of the *Sultana* which was to take them to Cairo, Illinois, from which point they would make their way to their respective homes. An estimated 1,800 to 2,000 crowded on board the ship. The men were so eager to go on board that the authorities decided to delay making out muster rolls until after the ship had left Vicksburg. A leaking boiler had been hastily repaired at Vicksburg, and the overloaded steamer pressed on upriver towards Memphis, bucking river currents reinforced by heavy spring rains. Memphis was reached on the evening of April 26, and there some of the returning soldiers disembarked and went out to view the sights of the town while the ship was readied for the trip upriver. A few of the men missed the boat when it set out after more repairs had been made to the boilers. As the *Sultana* pushed on through the night to a point above Memphis near the group of islands known as the "Hen and Chickens", the overburdened and weakened boilers exploded. Fire broke out on the ship, and the hundreds of hapless passengers were forced to jump into the swift and hostile current of the dark Mississippi. Some were drowned outright; others were rescued and taken to various Memphis hospitals, where many died as a result of burns, exposure to the elements, and as a result of weakened physical stamina brought about by long incarceration as prisoners of war in Confederate prison camps. The death toll of this Mississippi River tragedy has been estimated at more than 1,537 persons.

The victims of the Battle of Fort Pillow and those who died in the occupancy of that Fort are interred in Section A, also known as the "Fort Pillow Section." Burials also include many victims of illness rather than battle wounds, as there was a large marine (meaning naval or river) hospital at the old Fort Pickering site on the Memphis Bluffs. Fort Pickering was occupied by Federal troops from July 26, 1862, until it was dismantled on March 9, 1866. In the late 19th century, the mound area was known as "Andrew Jackson Park; then in 1884, the marine hospital was established by the Federal Government. Interments in the Memphis National Cemetery also include 20 Union prisoners of war.

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**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)**

Several areas of the cemetery, especially Sections A, B, C, D, E, H, J, and K, contain the graves of Civil War unknowns.

A grave of interest is the grave of Caleb Adams, an ex-slave who died on July 14, 1933, at the age of 112. He served with the 122nd U.S.C. Infantry in 1864 and 1865 and was the house servant of President John Quincy Adams for a number of years. He is buried in Section K, Grave 5372A.

The cemetery consists of 44.1 acres. Land was acquired by deed from William Sides dated February 20, 1867, conveying 8 acres. By deed dated April 8, 1867, Augustus Alston conveyed 16 acres. By deed dated May 23, 1868, Coleman Boyd, et al, conveyed 19.9 acres. By warranty deed dated October 7, 1941, Lots 20, 21, and 22 of the Kenilworth Land Company's Subdivision, containing .2± acre, were conveyed by Shelby County.

**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

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Report of the Inspector of the National Cemeteries of the United States for 1869

Commager, Henry Steele. The Blue and the Gray. Wings Books, New York, 1991.

Holt, Dean W. American Military Cemeteries. McFarland & Company, Inc., 1992.

Suhr, Robert Collins. "River Battle for Fort Pillow." America's Civil War (March 1996): 50-56

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA - UTM REFERENCES**

POINT	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	16	232780	3895960
B	16	232720	3895640
C	16	232180	3896100
D	16	232290	3896240
E	16	232400	3896270

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA - VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundaries are indicated on the accompanying base map.

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA - BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The National Cemetery System has used the existing boundaries of the cemetery.



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MEMPHIS NATIONAL CEMETERY  
Shelby County, Tennessee  
Mark E. Maynard, photographer  
Dates of Photographs: April 22 and 23, 1996

All negatives are stored with Technical Support Service (401B), National Cemetery System, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20420

VIEW OF: Main entrance gate, view looking  
northeast

NEG. NO. 65053-19  
PHOTO 1 of 24

VIEW OF: Lodge, northwest elevation

NEG. NO. 65053-14  
PHOTO 6 of 24

VIEW OF: Former main entrance gate  
NEG. NO. 65053-15  
PHOTO 2 of 24

VIEW OF: Lodge, southwest elevation  
NEG. NO. 65053-11  
PHOTO 7 of 24

VIEW OF: Pedestrian gate near eastern corner  
NEG. NO. 65056-7  
PHOTO 3 of 24

VIEW OF: Lodge, southeast elevation  
NEG. NO. 65053-10  
PHOTO 8 of 24

VIEW OF: Flagpole, view looking northeast  
NEG. NO. 65053-18  
PHOTO 4 of 24

VIEW OF: Administration/service building,  
northwest elevation  
NEG. NO. 65053-1  
PHOTO 9 of 24

VIEW OF: Lodge, northeast elevation  
NEG. NO. 65053-13  
PHOTO 5 of 24

VIEW OF: Administration/service building,  
southwest elevation  
NEG. NO. 65053-2  
PHOTO 10 of 24

VIEW OF: Lodge, southwest elevation  
NEG. NO. 65139-9  
PHOTO 6 of 22

VIEW OF: Administration/service building,  
southwest elevation, showing public restrooms  
NEG. NO. 65053-4  
PHOTO 11 of 24

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VIEW OF: Service building, southeast elevation  
NEG. NO. 65053-5  
PHOTO 12 of 24

VIEW OF: Illinois Monument  
NEG. NO. 65055-21  
PHOTO 19 of 24

VIEW OF: Service building, southeast elevation  
NEG. NO. 65053-9  
PHOTO 13 of 24

VIEW OF: Minnesota monument  
NEG. NO. 65053-21  
PHOTO 20 of 24

VIEW OF: Service building, northeast elevation  
NEG. NO. 65053-6  
PHOTO 14 of 24

VIEW OF: Cemetery, view looking north  
NEG. NO. 65055-24A  
PHOTO 21 of 24

VIEW OF: Service building, garage bay area  
NEG. NO. 65053-7  
PHOTO 15 of 24

VIEW OF: Cemetery, view looking southeast  
NEG. NO. 65056-17  
PHOTO 22 of 24

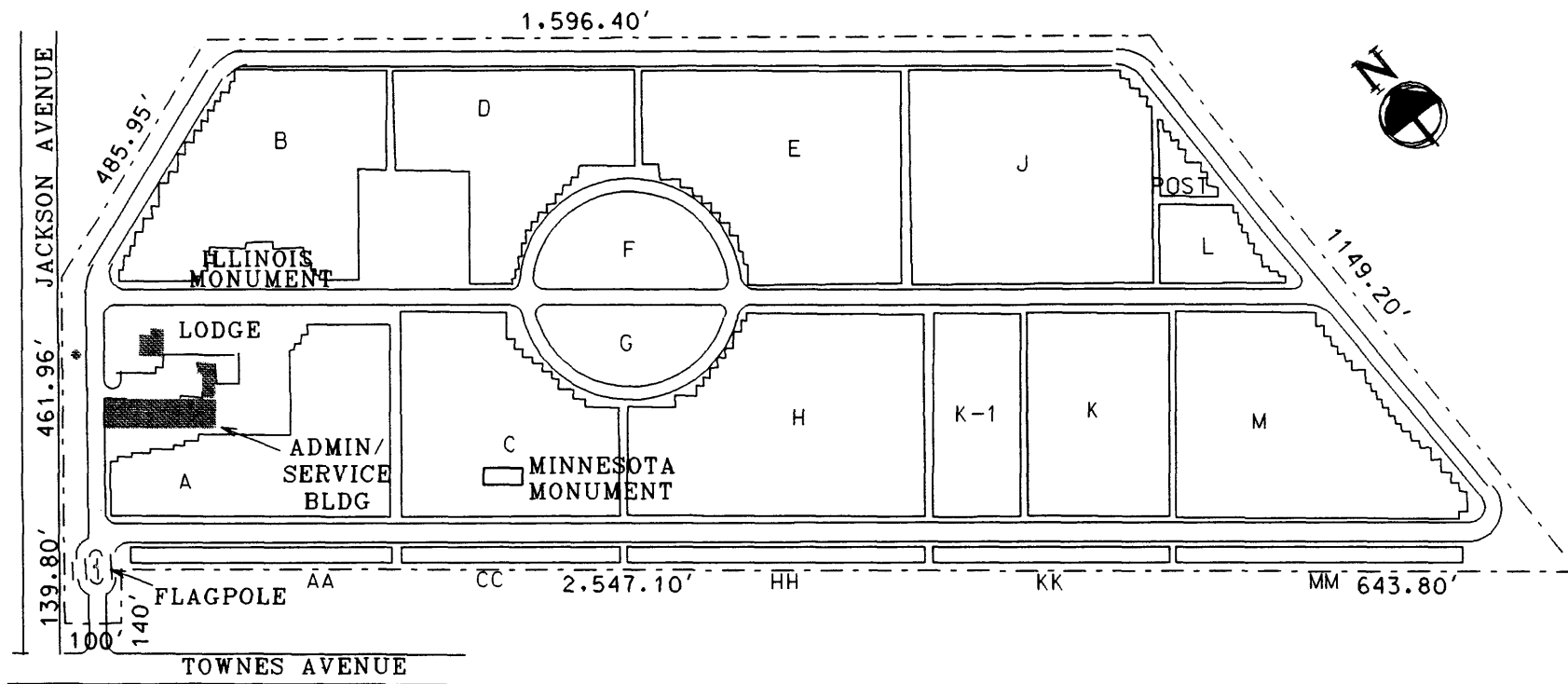
VIEW OF: Service building, garage bay area  
NEG. NO. 65053-8  
PHOTO 16 of 24

VIEW OF: Cemetery, view looking southeast  
NEG. NO. 65056-19  
PHOTO 23 of 24

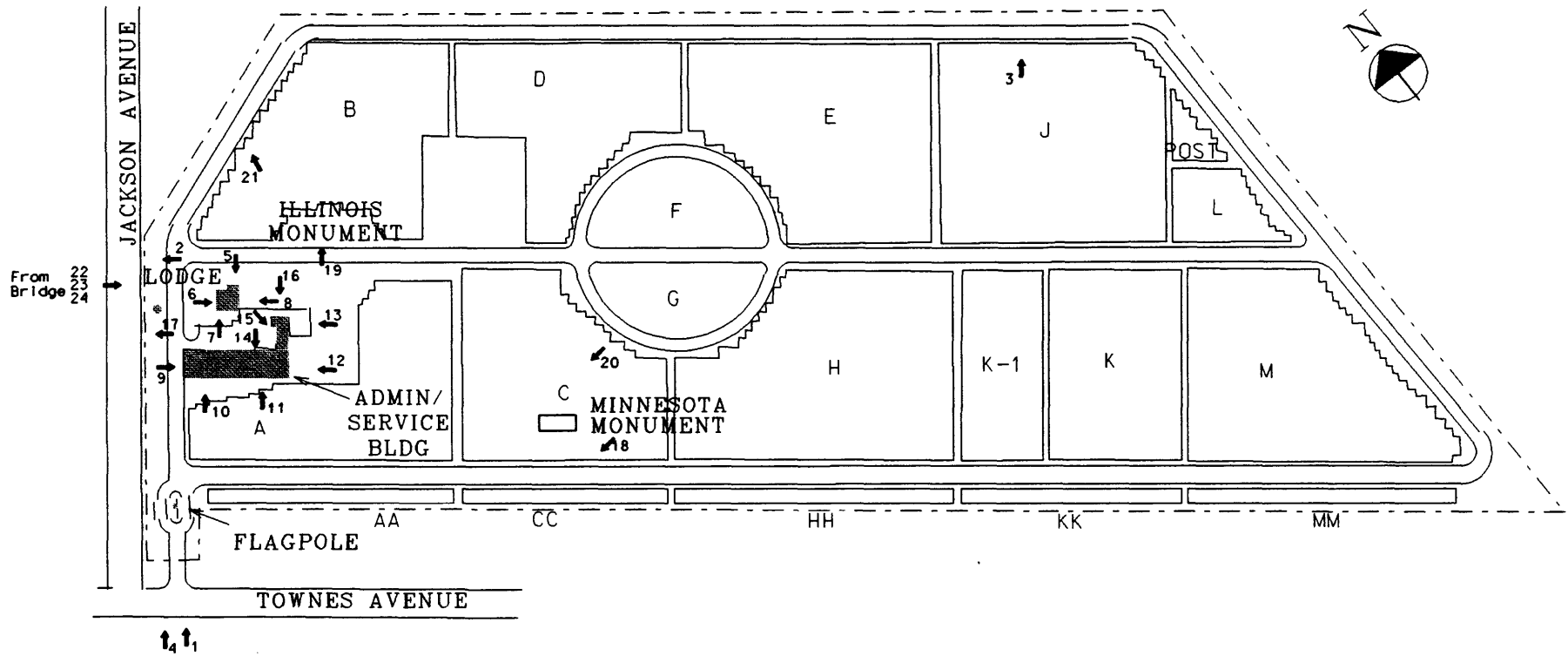
VIEW OF: Pump house  
NEG. NO. 65053-16  
PHOTO 17 of 24

VIEW OF: Cemetery, view looking southeast  
NEG. NO. 65056-18  
PHOTO 24 of 24

VIEW OF: Portion of southwest perimeter wall  
NEG. NO. 65056-15  
PHOTO 18 of 24



Base Map  
 Memphis National Cemetery  
 Shelby County, Tennessee



Sketch Map  
 Memphis National Cemetery  
 Shelby County, Tennessee

NOTE: Numbered arrows correspond to  
 the views in the accompanying  
 photographs.