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HVL LESSON TITLE:

# WHERE THEY ARE BURIED

DEVELOPED BY: ERIN COGGINS

## WHERE THEY ARE BURIED

GUIDING QUESTION:

Where were the fallen buried  
during WWII?

## OVERVIEW:

This lesson will introduce students to the burial procedures for soldiers killed in battle overseas during WWII. A focus will be on the American cemeteries overseas and the Punchbowl Cemetery in Hawaii.



**SUBJECT(S):**  
Social Studies



**VETERAN(S):**  
John Kuhn



**DURATION:**  
90 minutes

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# WHERE THEY ARE BURIED

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“And rather than attacking on the beach, they tried to come in from the lagoon side because they thought they would get the element of surprise. But they misjudged the tides and a lot of them got hung up on coral reef and the Japanese were just kind of pounding them.”

HVL Co-founder Chris

Batte

## OVERVIEW:

This lesson will introduce students to the burial procedures for soldiers killed in battle overseas. A focus will be on the American cemeteries overseas and the Punchbowl Cemetery in Hawaii.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

Of the 16.4 million troops who fought in World War II, 416,800 did not survive. The Graves Registration Service recovered the remains of more than 280,000 service members from all theaters of action following the war. Of these, 171,752 returned to the continental United States via the “Return of the Dead Program” and over 92,000 were interred at America’s overseas cemeteries with another 78,985 commemorated on our Tablets of the Missing as missing in action, lost or buried at sea. Some are still being found.

Today, the American Battle Monuments Commission maintains 26 American military cemeteries overseas. ABMC headquarters is located in Arlington, Va. A Paris-based office has operational responsibility for ABMC’s overseas cemeteries and memorials.

## OBJECTIVES:

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

- Conduct research as it relates to historical issues.
- Identify the American cemeteries overseas.

## STANDARDS:

R.L. 30

Synthesize research using responsible and ethical practices to create and orally present clear, coherent products demonstrating command of language that is suitable for the target audience and purpose.

D.L. 18 18

Create and deliver an oral presentation, created collaboratively from individual contributions, that is suitable in purpose and tone for its intended audience and occasion

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## MATERIALS & DOCUMENTS

[Photo of Normandy/American Cemetery](#)

[John Kuhn HVL Video](#)

[CBS “Honoring America’s Dead Overseas](#)

Honoring America’s Dead Questions (Doc A)

Facts About Cemeteries (Doc B)

Excerpts of Return of the Dead (Doc C)

Project Directions (Doc D)

Project Rubric (Doc E)

## PROCEDURES

### ACTIVITY 01

- Project the photo of the Normandy/American Cemetery. Tell students that 9,388 American service members are buried at the cemetery in Normandy, France. The families of these service members elected to keep their loved ones buried overseas.
- Show the John Kuhn video. Ask students to think about the following question as they watch: Where are American service members from WWII buried and who maintains those grave sites today?
- Discuss student responses following the video.

### ACTIVITY 02

- Inform students that they are going to take on the role of a historian representing the American Battle and Monument Commission.
- Show the [CBS Video: “Honoring America’s Dead Overseas.”](#) Students will answer the questions on the Honoring America’s Dead Questions (Doc A)
- Distribute the Cemetery Facts (Doc B). Go over these facts with students so they can become familiar with the geographic locations.

- Distribute or project the Excerpts of the Return of the Dead.(Doc C). Read and discuss as a class.

### ACTIVITY 03

- Divide students into groups of 2-3 Distribute the Project Directions (Doc D). Inform students they will develop a Detailed Presentation (using Powerpoint, Canva, Google, etc.) that a historian would use in a talk with visitors at their assigned cemetery. Teacher should assign a cemetery to each group. Go over the Directions (Doc D) and the Rubric (Doc E) before students begin working on their project. NOTE: If you cannot assign all cemeteries, be sure to assign Normandy and Punchbowl.
- If time allows, require groups to present their presentations to the class.

## HELPFUL WEBSITES

- [World War II Burial Program, National Cemetery Administration](#)
- [American Battle Monuments Commission Cemeteries and Memorial Webpage](#)

## WHERE THEY ARE BURIED QUESTIONS

DOC A



# HONORING AMERICA'S DEAD QUESTIONS

Why was it important to establish American Military Cemeteries overseas?

What does the quote "Time will not dim the glory of their deeds" mean?

Why do you think it is important for families to know where their fallen loved ones are buried and for them to visit those grave sites?

## WHERE THEY ARE BURIED

### CEMETERY FACTS

DOC B



## CEMETERY FACTS

#### Ardennes American Cemetery, Belgium

The Ardennes American Cemetery is the final resting place for 5,162 Americans, with 65 percent of those being fallen airmen of the U.S. Army Air Forces.

#### Brittany American Cemetery, France

The Brittany American Cemetery and Memorial in France covers 28 acres of rolling farm country near the eastern edge of Brittany and contains the remains of 4,404 of our war dead, most of whom lost their lives in the Normandy and Brittany Campaigns of 1944.

#### Cambridge American Cemetery, England

The Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial site in England, 30.5 acres in total, was donated by the University of Cambridge. It lies on a slope with the west and south sides framed by woodland. The cemetery contains the remains of 3,811 of our war dead; 5,127 names are recorded on the Walls of the Missing.

#### Epinal American Cemetery, France

The Epinal American Cemetery and Memorial in France, 48 acres in extent, is sited on a plateau 100 feet above the Moselle River in the foothills of the Vosges Mountains. It contains the graves of 5,252 of our military dead, most of whom lost their lives in the campaigns across northeastern France to the Rhine River and beyond into Germany.

#### Florence American Cemetery, Italy

The Florence American Cemetery and Memorial site in Italy covers 70 acres. The wooded hills that frame its western perimeter rise several hundred feet. Between the two entrance buildings, a bridge leads to the burial area where the headstones of 4,392 of our military dead are arrayed in symmetrical curved rows upon the hillside. They represent 39 percent of the U.S. Fifth Army burials originally made between Rome and the Alps. Most died in the fighting that occurred after the capture of Rome in June 1944. Included among them are casualties of the heavy fighting in the Apennines Mountains shortly before the war's end. On May 2, 1945 the enemy troops in northern Italy surrendered.

#### Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, Belgium

At the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery and Memorial in Belgium, covering 57 acres, rest 7,987 of our military dead, most of whom lost their lives during the advance of the U.S. armed forces into Germany. Their headstones are arranged in gentle arcs sweeping across a broad green lawn that slopes gently downhill.

#### Lorraine American Cemetery, France

The Lorraine American Cemetery and Memorial in France covers 113.5 acres and contains the largest number of graves of our military dead of World War II in Europe, a total of 10,481.

## WHERE THEY ARE BURIED

### CEMETERY FACTS

#### Luxembourg American Cemetery, Luxembourg

The Luxembourg American Cemetery in Luxembourg is where 5,070 service members lie, many of whom lost their lives in the Battle of the Bulge and in the advance to the Rhine River. Gen. George Patton is buried here.

#### Manilla American Cemetery, Philippines

The Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in the Philippines occupies 152 acres on a prominent plateau, visible at a distance from the east, south and west. It contains the largest number of graves of our military dead of World War II, a total of 16,859, most of whom lost their lives in operations in New Guinea and the Philippines.

#### \*\*National Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl), Hawaii

Over 13,000 WWII servicemen and sailors are buried at the National Cemetery of the Pacific. Veterans from the Korean War and Vietnam War are also interred here.

#### Netherlands American Cemetery, Netherlands

The only American cemetery in the Netherlands, this one is the final resting place to 8,288 of our military dead.

#### Normandy American Cemetery, France

The cemetery site, at the north end of its half mile access road, covers 172.5 acres and contains the graves of 9,389 of our military dead, most of whom lost their lives in the D-Day landings and ensuing operations. On the Walls of the Missing, in a semicircular garden on the east side of the memorial, are inscribed 1,557 names.

#### North Africa American Cemetery, Tunisia

At the 27-acre North Africa American Cemetery and Memorial in Tunisia rest 2,841 of our military dead, their headstones set in straight lines subdivided into nine rectangular plots by wide paths, with decorative pools at their intersections.

#### Rhone American Cemetery, France

On 12.5 acres at the foot of a hill clad with the characteristic cypresses, olive trees, and oleanders of southern France, rest 851 of our military dead, most of whom lost their lives in the liberation of southern France in August 1944.

#### Sicily-Rome American Cemetery, Italy

The World War II Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial site in Italy covers 77 acres, rising in a gentle slope from a broad pool with an island and cenotaph flanked by groups of Italian cypress trees. Beyond the pool is the immense field of headstones of 7,845 of American military war dead, arranged in gentle arcs on broad green lawns beneath rows of Roman pines. The majority of these individuals died in the liberation of Sicily (July 10 to August 17, 1943); in the landings in the Salerno Area (September 9, 1943) and the heavy fighting northward; in the landings at Anzio Beach and expansion of the beachhead (January 22, 1944 to May 1944); and in air and naval support in the regions.

## WHERE THEY ARE BURIED

### RETURN OF THE DEAD PROGRAM



“The primary and final disposition of remains buried in temporary cemeteries began six months after the war ended.”

“Wishes of immediate family were of the utmost importance to the military and it worked to assure that their every “desire should be fulfilled with regards to final disposition of their loved one.” A war-time policy forbidding the transport of remains until hostilities ceased precluded, and greatly extended, the mourning process for families. They received an initial notice of death along with word that decisions on final interment would come later. After the war, families received a questionnaire along with the detailed 1946 Quartermaster pamphlet, “Tell Me About My Boy,” explaining burial options. The War Department also produced films, such as Decision (1946), that explained the process. Families could leave remains abroad in a permanent overseas cemetery maintained in perpetuity by ABMC, have them returned home at the government’s expense for burial in a national or private cemetery, or have them sent to a foreign country for burial in a private cemetery if it was the homeland of the deceased or family. Families of those killed at the very end of the war had a two-year wait, at minimum, for repatriation. Families of those killed early in the conflict had to wait up to five years or more for final burial and closure.

Some chose to leave remains overseas out of patriotic convictions, others because the pain of having them returned so long after death reopened wounds. National cemeteries provided a desirable option for some families, but distance made them an undesirable option for some who lived too far for easy visitation.”

[Excerpts from National Cemetery Administration America’s WWII Burial Program](#)

\*Perpetuity-forever and ever

\*Repatriation-the return of someone to their own country

# WHERE THEY ARE BURIED

## PROJECT DIRECTIONS

DOC D



### PURPOSE:

Develop a presentation that a historian may use in a talk to visitors at one of the American Cemeteries overseas.

### SPECIFICS:

- 6-8 Slides. Slide one should be a title slide.
- Include photos of the cemetery. These photos should be cited.
- Besides the number buried in the cemetery (provided on your Cemetery Fact Handout), you will include who is buried at the cemetery (well-known if noted), architecture and art of the cemetery, history on the “battles” the servicemen fought in (battles and operations noted on the Cemetery Fact Handout), and the maintenance and upkeep of the cemeteries (ex. are there any special volunteers who help, ceremonies held, etc.)

### PRESENTATION:

Be sure to pay particular attention to the quality of photos embedded in the presentation, as well as type size and font choices. All presentations should adhere to grammatical, punctuation, and capitalization rules.

### Reflection Questions:

The answer to these questions should be the last page of your presentation.

1. What did you learn about American Military Cemeteries overseas?
2. Why is it important for America to maintain American Military Cemeteries overseas?
3. If you had a fallen loved one, would you want them to be buried in an overseas military cemetery?

# WHERE THEY ARE BURIED

## PROJECT RUBRIC

DOC E



Achievement Levels	1	2	3	4
Content	Most of the questions are left unanswered or are missing. Grammatical errors are a serious issue.	More than half of the questions are answered. The verbiage is riddled with grammatical errors.	Most questions are answered. The verbiage is well-written and exhibits few grammatical errors.	Research details the answers to all mandatory questions listed. The verbiage is well written and free from grammatical errors.
Skills	Skills for design and creativity is lacking.	Work exhibits a potential knowledge of presentation design. Lack of additional resources and creativity.	Work exhibits knowledge of skill in presentation design. Additional resources were utilized for creativity.	Work exhibits master level skill in presentation design. Additional resources were utilized above and beyond for creativity.
Quality	Work is incomplete, missing key items.	Work has potential but is lacking key information or is unorganized. The message is not clear.	Solid work that provides adequate information for potential travelers. Minor corrections may be needed.	Impressive work that provides detailed and information. The work is print ready or view ready.