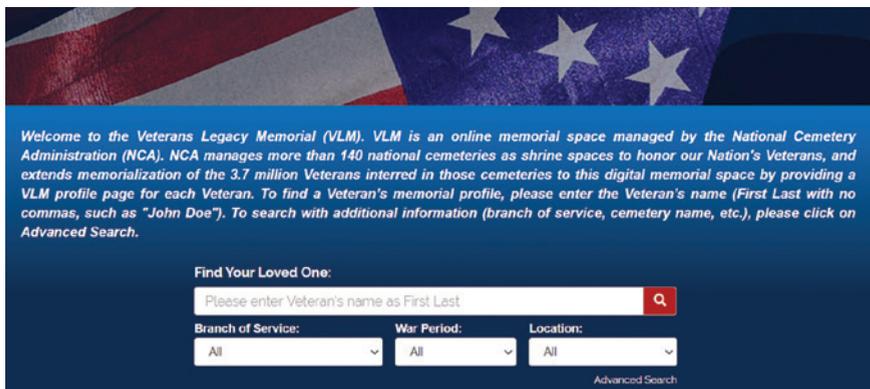




Veterans Legacy Memorial: Your Family Connection?

Tony Bandy looks at the National Cemetery Administration's online portal

FOR ANY FAMILY HISTORY PROJECT, FINDING MILITARY SERVICE information can be challenging at times. While we may be lucky and have personal effects and stories, in some cases, we do not have much, or we just have incorrect names, units, battles and campaigns. However, do not give up! Recently, I found an online site known as the **Veterans Legacy Memorial** that might just be able to help. Let's take a look!



Containing both quick and advanced search options, it's easy to find information leads for long-lost family members.

Origins & Purpose

Found online at www.vlm.cem.va.gov, the **Veterans Legacy Memorial** exists as part of the National Cemetery Administration and offers "... to enhance the on-site national cemetery experience by honoring the legacy of Veterans interred in national cemeteries, highlighting the place of NCA cemeteries in American culture, and engaging the community to share and learn the histories of their hometown Veterans." They do this by giving users the ability to create an online account at the site and the ability to upload and share comments, digital "mementos", photos or documents about their loved ones and veterans.

Searching the Site

To start using the site, first navigate to www.vlm.cem.va.gov. Here you will find background information, extended links about the database and both basic and advanced search options. The basic/quick search is by last name and then optional limiters such as:

- Branch of Service (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, etc.)
- War Period (Civil War, World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, Modern-day)

- Location (List of federal veteran's cemeteries)

It is important to note that while you can designate subcategories to start searching, the last name must be present for the search to work properly.

While I found that the basic search works well for a quick dive into what information is in the database, the advanced search box does hold several advantages, including:

- Multiple or "stacked" search
- Advanced metadata field choices
- Column filtering options

Stacked search is the ability to search last name and multiple metadata entry points. This is useful if you have the last name and partial additional information such as war period or decorations. This is also handy in the event of some of the more common last names and helps to speed up your research when a potentially large number of names are returned.

Advanced metadata field choices include date of birth, death, cemetery, war, service designator and decorations. Within these sub-options, you can also pick individual locations, as in the cemetery, war period and service choice. Column filters can also help by allowing you a specific number of elements to be shown in the return results list.