



Elaine F. Marshall
Secretary of State



Walter Gaskin
Secretary
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

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For Immediate Release
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Ceremonial Urn Cover Donated for Veteran Committal Services
Western Carolina State Veterans Cemetery will use the urn for veteran memorials and burial ceremonies

BLACK MOUNTAIN – Secretary of State Elaine F. Marshall previously accepted the donation of a ceremonial veteran urn cover on behalf of the State of North Carolina and presented it today to Walter Gaskin, Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Military and Veteran Affairs (NCDMVA), during a ceremony at [Western Carolina State Veteran Cemetery in Black Mountain](#).

“Our veterans and their families have served our country and sacrificed so much that the least we can do is ensure that each one is committed with the dignity and respect they so richly deserve,” **said Secretary Marshall**. “This exquisite wooden design reflects the honorable service each of these veterans has made to our nation.”

“The value that these urns will provide to North Carolina’s veterans and their families cannot be overstated,” **said Secretary Gaskin**. “We often see those who gave everything in service to their country not able to afford proper burial services. These ceremonial urns will offer meaningful dignity and proper interment our brothers and sisters in arms deserve.”

The ceremonial urn cover was designed and donated by Idaho artist and woodworker John Sword. Similar urn covers have been donated to veteran cemeteries in more than 20 locations. Each veteran ceremonial urn cover is a handmade elegant creation that creates a solemn feeling of strength and purity. Numerous holes have been drilled in the base of the urn and plugged with a brass cap. Soil or sand from a battlefield like Omaha Beach or Pearl Harbor is placed there to represent the battlegrounds where veterans fought and so many lost their lives.

The leaf on the lid was replicated in bronze from an actual leaf collected for Arlington National Cemetery. This the first of four ceremonial veteran urns expected to be donated and placed in North Carolina.

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Additional photos available upon request.
High-res photos of the urn donation ceremony may be downloaded [here](#).

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