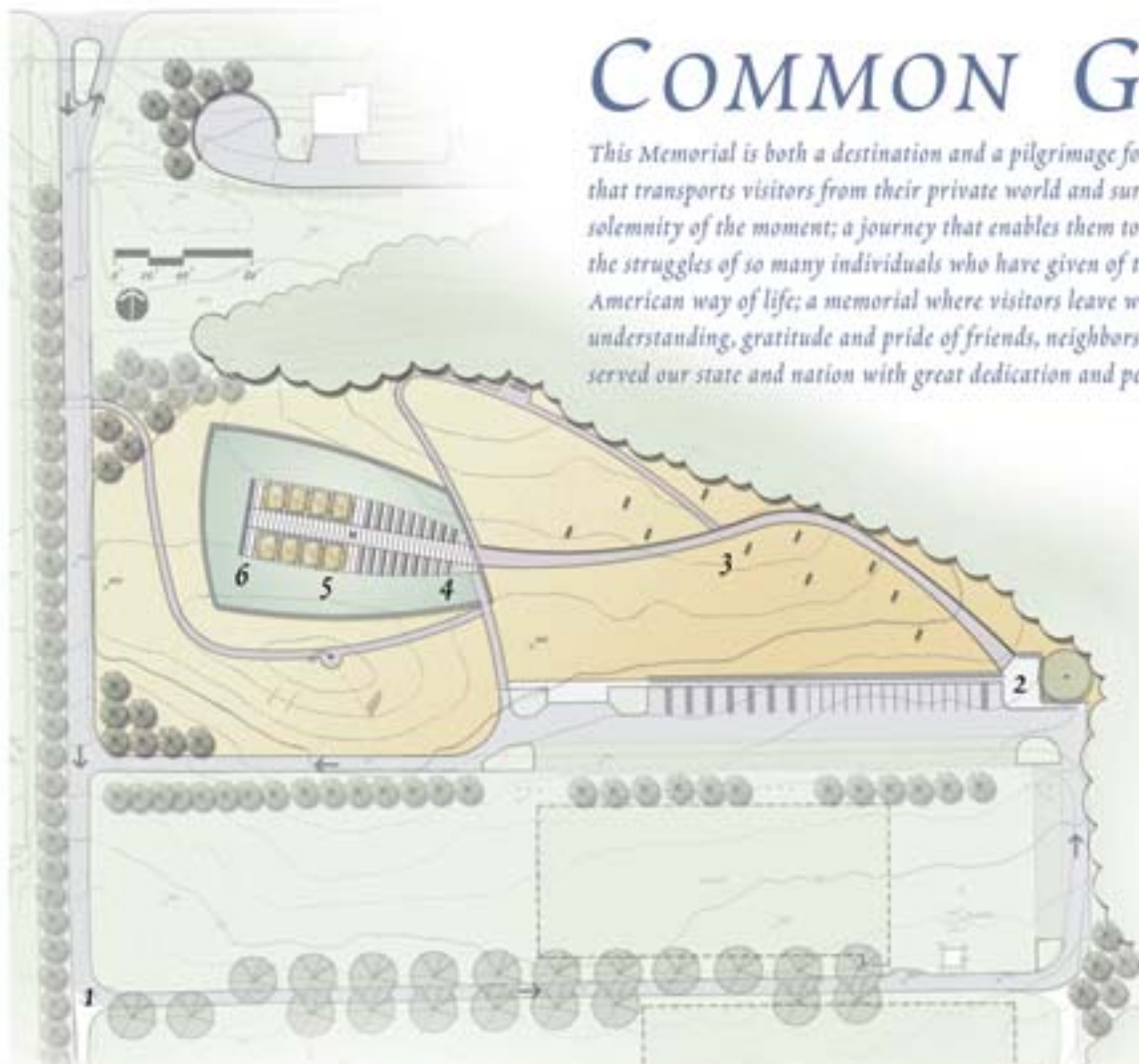


# COMMON GROUND

*This Memorial is both a destination and a pilgrimage for visitors: a journey of the mind that transports visitors from their private world and surrenders their thoughts to the solemnity of the moment; a journey that enables them to embrace the stories and reflect on the struggles of so many individuals who have given of themselves to defend and secure the American way of life; a memorial where visitors leave with a deep appreciation, understanding, gratitude and pride of friends, neighbors and family members who have served our state and nation with great dedication and personal sacrifice.*



## Arrival

**1.** Upon entering the site from West Street, the visitor's first view is of the American flag perched on the highest point of a knoll. Passing by the flag visitors turn and continue slowly down the tree-lined, central drive of Colonel Raymond Gates Cemetery, arriving at the Memorial's main entry.

**2.** The entry space is defined by a traditional Connecticut stone wall set beneath an existing beautiful native oak tree. A gateway through the wall frames the view of a long, open sweep of meadow filled with native Connecticut grasses and in the distance the landmark American flag flying above.

## Soldiers' Walk

**3.** The gateway opens into a softly curving gravel path with a ribbon-like stone border to one side, randomly engraved with the names of past servicemen and women. Moving along the path, visitors become aware of walking through the meadow in the company of ghostly shadows of soldiers on war patrol, pale images on glass panels trekking across the meadow.

The walk elicits a visceral sense of fear and uncertainty, an experience our service men and women constantly face whether passing through a desert land, confined in dark waters aboard a submarine or transporting troops by helicopter.

## The Common

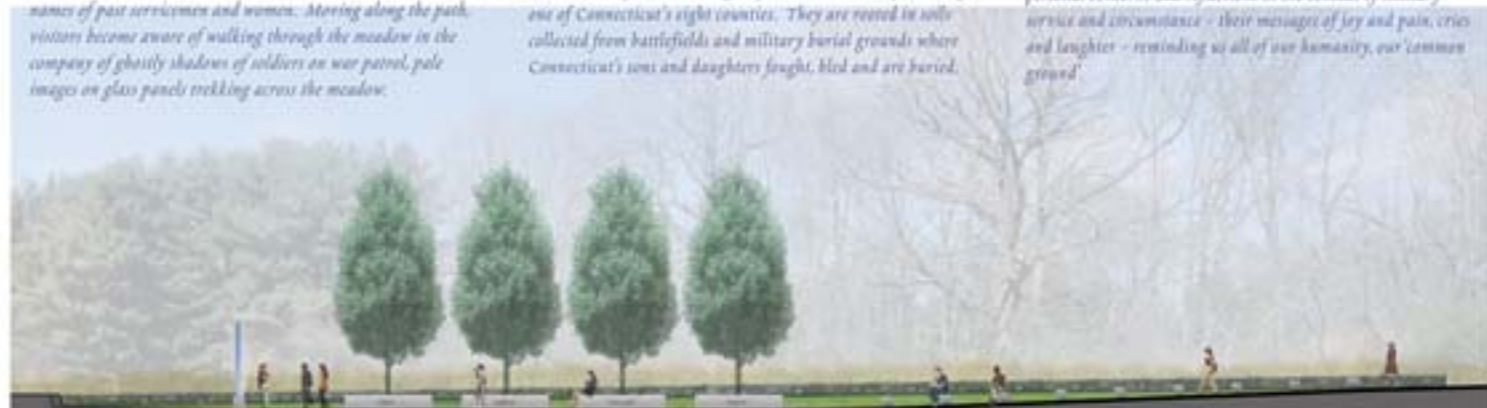
**4.** Deep inside the meadow visitors find a gathering space delineated with a stone wall and lawn encircling a stone-paved plaza, "The Common", set with stone benches along a central aisle where friends, families and veterans can congregate, exchange experiences and join in services of thanks and remembrance. On the back of each bench, arranged in a timeline as one moves down the aisle, is an inscription with the name of a war or conflict, dates and the number of Connecticut lives lost.

**5.** Moving forward, visitors pass through an alley of eight trees, selected for their strength of character, each representing one of Connecticut's eight counties. They are rooted in soils collected from battlefields and military burial grounds where Connecticut's sons and daughters fought, bled and are buried.

For rest and personal reflection, lining the central aisle in front of each tree is a bench engraved with the county's name. The fate of MIA's are marked with yellow ribbons tied around the trunks each one's county tree.

## Remembrance Wall

**6.** At the end of the central aisle visitors find the heart of the Memorial, a translucent blue wall, luminous like stained glass. The central glass panel carries an elegant message of thanks from the people of Connecticut to our military service personnel for their sacrifice and dedication. Inscribed below are the seals of the five branches of the armed forces. Flanking the message of thanks, emerging in cascades from the soft, glowing light behind the vertical glass are personal messages to and from Connecticut veterans from every era and branch of service - letters, diaries, news reports and memoirs - expressing private, personal concerns and reflections in the context of military service and circumstance - their messages of joy and pain, cries and laughter - reminding us all of our humanity, our "common ground".



# Connecticut State Veterans Memorial

*A gathering place to honor those who serve and the families who support them from the home front*



The Common North-South Section



Soldiers' Walk

Remembrance Wall



The Common - Stone Wall



The Common - Plaza Paving



Soldiers' Walk - Meadow Grasses



Soldiers' Walk - Dedication Pavers



# *Connecticut State Veterans' Memorial*

## *Common Ground*

The Memorial is both a destination and a pilgrimage for visitors: a journey of the mind that transports visitors from their private world and surrenders their thoughts to the solemnity of the moment; a journey that enables them to embrace the stories and reflect on the struggles of the many individuals who have given of themselves to defend and secure the American way of life; a memorial where visitors leave with a deep appreciation, understanding, gratitude and pride of friends, neighbors and family members who have served our state and nation with great dedication and personal sacrifice.

Upon entering the site from West Street, the visitor's first view is of the American flag perched on the highest point of a knoll. Passing by the flag visitors turn and continue slowly down the tree-lined, central drive of Colonel Raymond Gates Cemetery, arriving at the Memorial's main entry. The entry space is defined by a traditional Connecticut stone wall set beneath an existing beautiful native oak tree. A gateway through the wall frames the view of a long, open sweep of meadow filled with native Connecticut grasses and in the distance the landmark American flag flying above.

The gateway opens onto a softly curving gravel path with a ribbon-like stone border to one side, randomly engraved with the names of past servicemen and women. Moving along the path, visitors become aware that they are walking in the company of ghostly shadows of soldiers on war patrol, pale images on glass panels trekking across the meadow. The walk elicits a visceral sense of fear and uncertainty, an experience our service men and women constantly face whether passing through a desert land, confined in dark waters aboard a submarine or transporting troops by helicopter.

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