**B.3 STATEMENT OF WORK/SPECIFICATION**

1. **Background**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), National Cemetery Administration (NCA) furnishes headstones, markers and niche covers (monuments) for deceased veterans worldwide. Memorial monuments are also furnished to memorialize veterans whose remains are non-recoverable.

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this contract is to supply:

* **Inscribed flat marble markers (type F1) to cemeteries worldwide**
1. **General**

This contract shall include all labor and materials necessary to furnish flat marble marker(s) to each consignee’s address. The Contractor shall be responsible for providing all labor and material needed to manufacture, inscribe, package, palletize, and deliver FOB destination.

**3.1 Performance period:** The contractor shall have **fifteen (15) calendars** **days** following the day an order is sent to the contractor until the monuments are manufactured, inscribed, packaged, and delivered to destinations within the contiguous 48 states (CONUS). For destinations outside CONUS, the contract shall have 15 calendar days for delivery to the point of embarkation and another 45 days for delivery from the point of embarkation to the overseas destination.

**3.2 Unit Price:** The unit price is all-inclusive and covers the completed monuments delivered FOB destination. The same unit price shall apply regardless of the total number of characters inscribed. This all-inclusive price includes product and services to provide monuments meeting technical requirements as shown in drawings listed in Sections 4.0 and 5.1.

**4.0 Material Specification**

**4.1 Description:** Flat marble marker, Inscribed(12” x 24” x 4”)

**4.1.1 Product Code:** F1

**4.1.2 Drawing No.:** A-F1, dated June 5, 2003

**4.3 Material:** Marble must conform to the definition of marble as defined by ASTM- C119. Marble provided under this contract shall be standard grade, fine to medium grained material as classified by the National Building Marble Quarries Association. It shall be free of cracks, seams, or starts which may impair its integrity or readability of the inscription. Marker containing two or more feldspar phenocrysts which exceed 10mm in any direction shall be rejected.

**4.4 Color:** Marble shall be a uniform shade of fine to medium grain, gray color (N8.75 to N9) as judged against the Munsell Neutral Value Scale, Matte 31 - step scale.

**4.5 Finishing:** The front, top and sides of each monument must be uniformly machine honed with an 80 grit pad, or stone, to a smooth satin finish, free of scratches, saw marks, rust spots and skips. The bottom shall be a smooth sawn finish.

**4.6 Source of supply:** All stone shall be obtained from quarries within the United States having adequate capacity and facilities to meet the specified requirements. Cutting and finishing shall be done by a manufacturer equipped to process the material promptly and in accordance with these specifications.

If the contractor changes from the original approved quarry to another quarry during the contract term, an additional sample shall be submitted to the MPS Program Support Unit for approval prior to using the new stone to produce blanks

**4.7 Workmanship:** Each monument shall be free from defects in workmanship.

* Chips, cracks, open seams, or abraded edges, shall not be permitted and the repair or patching of any such defects is prohibited and shall be cause for rejection.
* Monuments shall be free of ink, oil, crayon marks, dirt, coatings, sealers and stone dust.
* Inscriptions shall be free from defects due to broken or blown out lettering...
* Workmanship and production shall be in accordance with industry standards, practices, and regulatory safety requirements

**4.8 Testing:** Stone supplied under this contract shall conform to the following specifications and physical requirements. Stone shall be tested, as listed below, by an approved testing laboratory and test results shall be submitted to the Memorial Products Service (MPS), Program Support Unit for approval prior to the production of the sample. Testing is required only once and shall be from a representative sample of the quarry. Testing results are required for new sources of stone.

**NOTE:** Testing results are not required for sources in the following areas:

* Marble Valley, Coosa County, Alabama
* Marble, Gunnison County, Colorado
* Danby, Rutland County, Vermont
* Tate, Pickens County, Georgia

**4.9 Marble Testing Specifications**

**4.9.1 Abrasive hardness:** Marble shall have an abrasive hardness value (Ha) of not less than 10 when tested as specified in ASTM C241.

**4.9.2 Absorption:** Marble shall absorb not more than 0.15 percent of moisture by weight when tested for a 48 hour period as specified in ASTM C97.

**4.9.3 Compressive strength:** Marble shall have a minimum compressive strength of 7500 psi or (5.27 kg/mm2) when tested as specified in ASTM C170.

**4.9.4 Modulus of rupture:** Marble shall have a minimum modulus of rupture of 1000 psi (or 0.70kg/mm2) when tested as specified in ASTM C99.

**4.10 Applicable Publications**

**4.10.1** Munsell Neutral Value Scale, Matte (31 - step scale)

617 Little Britain Road, New Windsor, NY 12553 – 6148

Phone: (800) 622-2384

**4.10.2** ASTM, Sections C97, C99, C170, C241

American Society for Testing and Materials

1220 L. Street, N.W., Suites 100-167

Washington, DC 20005

**4.10.3** Dimension Stones of the World

Marble Institute of America, Inc.

28901 Clemens Road, Suite 100, Cleveland, OH 44145

**5.0 Inscription Specification**

**5.1 Reference Drawings**

* A-LFN&OC-1 through, dated June 13, 2016, Letters, Fonts, Numbers, & Other Characters
* A-EM 1 through 5, dated 06/27/14, Emblems

**5.2 Product:** The contractor shall inscribe all information as contained on the headstone order. The end or limit of each line shall be indicated on a line-by-line basis as shown on the order. If any deviation from this is encountered, contact the MPS Program Support Unit at MPSProgSupport@va.gov.

Inscriptions shall be made using an air blast abrasion method. The inscription shall be a depth consistent with the technical drawing and shall conform to the character and dimensions of letter, numbers and emblems shown in the technical drawings. Inscription layouts shall conform to scenarios in the contract drawings.

**5.3 Lithichrome Application**

Lithichrome **shall be** applied to all inscriptions in F1 type monuments unless otherwise requested. Whenever lithichrome **is** **not** required, **“NO LITHICHROME”** shall be notated on the order. When lithochrome is applied, it shall be N4 or lower as judged against the Munsell Neutral Value Scale, Matte (31-step scale).

**6.0 Submittal by Potential Offerors**

Potential offerors shall submit at contractor expense one marble sample (24” x 12” x 3/4”) representative of the marble to be used in the production of markers under the contract. The marble sample shall conform to government specifications and shall be submitted for approval. Mark each sample on the back with a permanent marker to show: contractor’s name, solicitation number, and email address. Any sample which arrives damaged shall not be accepted.

The sample must be manufactured, inscribed, and packaged to prevent any damage during shipment.

Samples must be accompanied by a statement identifying the brand name and grit rating for the pad or stone used to produce the final finish.

The following inscription, with lithichrome, shall be used for the sample submission - refer to drawings for emblem’s character, font style, special marks, inscription depths, spacing, and dimensions:

Emblem # 52 (Land Eagle)

JOSÉ QUIÑÓNEZ

2ND LT US ARMY WWII

APR 18 1914 AUG 31 2004

WE WILL ALWAYS YOU

TENDERLY KIND

UNSELFISHLY GENEROUS

Failure to meet any of the requirements shall result in the rejection of the sample.

The sample shall establish the acceptable product for all inscriptions under this contract and shall be the basis for comparison of inscription services.

Samples must be received by Memorial Products Service (MPS) prior to closing date. If one or more of the samples are disapproved by MPS, you shall receive notification by MPS (Program Support Unit) and have until the closing date of the solicitation to resubmit another sample**.**

**NO samples shall be accepted after closing date.**

Once submitted, samples become the property of the Department of Veterans Affairs and shall not be returned. Submit sample and test results to the following address:

Department of Veteran Affairs

Memorial Products Service

Program Support Unit, Rm. 600J

1575 Eye Street, NW

Washington, DC 20005

**6.1** Full size copies of drawings are available upon request at no additional charge to potential vendors. The request should be e-mailed to the NCA Memorial Products Service (MPS) Program Support Unit at MPSProgSupport@va.gov and shall include the contractor’s name, mailing address, phone number, e-mail address, and the name / drawing number of the drawing(s). If hard copies of the drawings are desired, e-mail the request to MPS with sufficient time for the drawings to be mailed. MPS recommends vendors use full size drawings for determining work requirements. An extension to the solicitation’s closing date shall not be granted for failure to request the technical drawings with sufficient lead time.

**7.0 Packaging and Palletizing**

**7.1 Materials:** All monuments shall be packed in accordance with normal industry standards and commercial best practices to assure acceptance by the common carrier.

Non metal bands shall be secured around the pallet or crate for its entire height (from top to bottom) and two additional bands shall secure the pallet or crating around the width. Banding pressure shall be such that it causes no damage to the edges of the stone when packaged. Colored materials or materials capable of staining the stone (ex. uncoated cardboard, certain kinds of wood) during outdoor storage are not permitted.

The packaging and crating shall protect the monuments throughout the handling process and during shipment and comply with the National Motor Freight Classification:

* Ensure the pallet is in good condition. The quantity of monuments that can be placed on the pallet shall depend on the pallet’s quality of build and product-to-pallet dimensions.
* Ensure there is no product overhang. The pallet shall be taking the initial side impacts. Ensure that the pallet extends 1-2” away from the edges of the product.
* Corrugated board that is being used to wrap around the product shall be 350 PSI double wall corrugated board.
* Reinforce and protect edges of the monuments with corner fiber boards.
* Ensure shipments of multiple monuments are properly unitized and secured firmly to the pallet.

**7.2 Single Packaging:** Packaging shall consist of a two-part carton constructed of a double wall corrugated board. The front of the carton shall fit completely over the front of the monument with the top, bottom and two side flaps folding over each respective surface to protect at least half of that surface. The back of the carton shall fit completely over the back of the monument with the top, bottom and two side flaps folding over each respective surface of the monument to protect at least half of that surface. The flaps of the carton halves shall be secured with ½” plastic banding or 2” filament tape. Two bands shall be secured around the carton its entire height (from top to bottom) and two additional bands shall secure the carton around the width. Banding pressure shall be such that it causes no damage to the edges of the stone when packaged.

The packaging shall protect the headstones from shipping abuse during multiple shipments and handling and comply with the National Motor Freight Classification.

Monuments that are to be individually shipped must have two stringers or (runners) running the width of the headstone (12” dimension) beginning at 8” from either end. Material used for the stringers, runners or blocks is left up to the contractor and the contractor’s packaging specialists but should be permanently adhered to the cardboard packaging so as to remain in place until the monument is received. This requirement is for convenient pickup so as to avoid damage when using either a hand truck/dolly or for the forks of a forklift to move the headstone when in transit.

**7.3 Palletizing:** Each pallet shall not exceed 2,500 lbs. When multiple orders are being shipped to the same consignee or cemetery, headstones are to be shipped together on the same pallet, with sufficient non-steel banding in conjunction with stretch wrap along with individual packaging materials shall be used to prevent damage to the monuments during shipment. Banding shall be in cross-directional pairs, four per pallet ensuring that the banding is routed through the pallet to minimize any movement of the headstones while in transit. Non-staining corner cards are to be provided between the band and the monument at each corner of the banding (uncoated cardboard against the stone is unsatisfactory due to the tendency for discoloration). The following specifications shall be used in conjunction with standard 42” x 48”, 4-way wood pallets.

**The weight of markers placed on the pallet must not exceed what the pallet can hold but in all cases shall not more be more than 20 markers per pallet.**

Protruding metal fasteners must be replaced to avoid tearing the packaging or scratching the monument’s (s’) surface.

The contractor shall ensure non-coloring materials are used for packing and that packing materials are not prone to compression which may cause load shifts or damage from the ensuing loose banding.

The monuments shall be packed in such a manner that any adhesive, glue, or coloring from the packaging does not transfer and adhere to the stone during shipment or during interim storage prior to use. All monuments and packing material shall be contained within the dimensions of the pallet with no overhang. The contractor shall palletize multiple monuments on pallets in good repair with three stringers having lift access capability from all four directions.

The contractor shall replace monuments at no additional cost to the Government if damage is incurred during transport. The MPS Program Support Unit reserves the right to notify the contractor by email within 5 days of any blanks damaged during transportation. Upon notification, the contractor shall replace the damaged monuments within FIVE (5) calendar days from the date the e-mail was sent by MPS to the contractor.

The front and back of each individual package or on each side of a pallet shall be labeled with the words, **HANDLE WITH CARE**, in one-inch high red letters. Use of commercially available labels can be used for this requirement.

In addition, t**he contractor shall ensure the commercial bill of lading is notated with the following statements:**

* ***“the palletized headstones must be moved to the rear of the delivery vehicle to ensure the ability of the receiving business to offload the pallet using a forklift”.***
* ***“In case of delivery problems: call (202)-461-4132 or 202 501 2696 for guidance and follow-up notification with email to*** ***MPSProgSupport@va.gov******.***
* *Items damaged during transport must be reported by email to MPSProgSupport and the damaged items must be positively destroyed by the transporter or transporter’s agent. The contractor shall document such monuments were, “… demolished or pulverized into small pieces and no portion of the inscription remained legible”.*

**7.4 Labeling:** the contractor shall provide a packing list or a shipping label for all packaged monuments. The label shall be at least five (5) inches wide by four (4) inches long with the Order Number, Last Name of the Veteran, and Consignee. Labels shall be completely adhered to the front of the package and shall be over-coated with transparent adhesive tape that completely covers the label to prevent removal, smearing or blurring of the information. Shipping labels shall not be covered or obscured in any way by individual packaging or banding materials that would make the labels unreadable.

For multiple orders that have been palletized, a packing list shall be included and attached to the outside of the shrink wrapped pallet. The packing list shall include all headstones packed on the pallet: Order Number, Last name of the Veteran and Consignee. Use of a plastic, sealable pouch for the packing list is required to help ensure the packing list is not removed or torn during transit.

**7.5 Overseas Shipments:** All individual monuments destined for overseas shipments, to include Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, etc., shall be routinely shipped in wood crates that comply with the National Motor Classification and the Uniform Freight Classification.

**7.6** Special **Crating within CONUS:** Shipment in well packed wooden crates will occasionally be required for delivery of markers to destinations within continental United States. This is different than the routine crating that is required for shipments to overseas destinations. Special crating for CONSU shipments may be required under one or more of the following circumstances:

* Previous orders of the same monument were repeatedly damaged during transport,
* Extra assurance of undamaged delivery is desirable due to unusual media coverage,
* Extra assurance of undamaged delivery is instigated through congressional inquiry or late discovery of a prior monument having been lost or grievously mis inscribed.

Special crating shall be required for not more than 500 (less than 2%) of all orders to destinations within the CONUS. Special crating is in addition to the routine crating specified for overseas shipments.

**8.0 Government Quality Assurance (QA)**

**8.1 Inspections:** Quality assurance (QA) inspections of the contractor’s manufacturing facility and products may be performed by the designated COR of the Memorial Programs Service to assure satisfactory contract performance. The Government reserves the right to inspect the quality of blanks and the inscription process without prior scheduling or notifications to the contractor.

During each QA visit at production sites, a complete assessment of the contractor’s operation shall be made, to include the following areas:

* Packaging and palletizing of product that promotes damage-free shipments and compliant with all contractual requirements.
* Execution of quality control procedures.
* Maintaining QA records as required, with the records indicating the quality of the headstones as shipped.

When at the contractor’s production facility, the contractor shall assist the designated COR by providing an adequate, well lighted inspection area. Contractor personnel must provide assistance lifting, handling and moving of product.

**8.2 Quality System:** The contractor must develop and maintain a written inspection system that documents the quality and timeliness of finished products**.** The Contractor shall provide, to the designated COR of the MPS Program Support Unit, reports on the Contractor’s processing and delivery of orders to the carrier. Weekly reports must be emailed to MPS at MPSProgSupport@va.gov, attention to the designated COR by the close of business, Tuesday of the next week. Should this day fall on a holiday, the report must be submitted no later than the next business day. Each report must include the following information:

* Date order was received
* Obligation number
* Shipment numbers
* Date shipped
* Carrier’s name
* Carrier’s tracking number
* Delivery Date
* Quantity of orders shipped
* Invoice number
* Invoice date
* Quantity invoiced
* Invoice amount
* Items damaged during transport and subsequently destroyed
* Quantity of orders pending
* Estimated ship dates for pending orders
* Number of orders cancelled
* If any order is completed late or projected to be completed beyond the contractually required due date, the contractor must identify the reason(s) for the delinquency, what actions are underway to resolve the tardiness, and the projected future date for completion (projected completion dates which are before the reporting date are unacceptable).
* Identify the number of blanks that were scrapped each week (due to blowouts, breakage, change in inscription, inscription error, etc…)

If an order is delinquent at the time that the status report is emailed to the MPS Program Support Unit, the contractor must provide, in the same email with the report, the reason(s) for the delinquency, what measures the contractor is undertaking to remedy the causes of the current delinquency, and the date the contractor expects to become current with orders.

**8.3 Quality Complaints**

The receipt of complaints concerning unsatisfactory quality or non-compliance with the contract specifications shall be considered reason for an immediate visit and review of the contractor’s quality assurance program. The Government reserves the right to inspect 100% of the production for an indefinite period due to quality problems. Indicative, but not all-inclusive, examples of issues meriting inspection are:

* Nonconforming product shipped to fill Government orders.
* The COR rejecting product that passed the contractor’s inspection system but product is still awaiting shipment.
* Deficiencies that adversely affect performance of the contract in areas such as:

o Inspection system

o Inspection personnel

o Manufacturing process

o Production control

o Planning and scheduling

o Employee training

o Craftsmanship

o Safety

o Knowledge/training of processes and measuring tools

o Multiple reorders of same order due to loss or damage from inadequate labeling or palletizing.

The designated COR of the MPS Program Support Unit or a designated inspector for this contract shall inform the Contractor of the deficiencies. A site inspection report shall be generated by the inspecting COR and the COR shall discuss with the contractor what corrective action(s) shall be taken and when the corrective action shall be taken. When an issue(s) arise regarding a monument not meeting the specified standards and the issue(s) cannot be resolved between the contractor and the Government, the Contracting Officer shall make a final determination as to whether the monument shall be replaced at the contractor’s expense or at the Government’s expense.

**9.0 Processing of Orders and Time of Delivery:**

Contractors shall provide a single email address for electronically receiving orders.

Orders shall be electronically distributed by MPS to the contractor’s provided email address, Monday thru Friday. Contractors shall manufacture and ship individual orders on a first in/first out basis. Each order for Normal Delivery shall be produced in numerical sequence, by shipment number.

**9.1 Normal Delivery:** All markers shall be manufactured and placed on a transportation carrier for delivery within **(15) calendar** days following the date the order was sent by Memorial Product Services (MPS).

**9.2 Accelerated Deliveries:** All markers identified for accelerated delivery (sometimes referred to as 10-day specials) shall be moved to the front of the production queue but behind any previous orders flagged as 10-day specials. The contractor shall provide this service for accelerated production at no additional costbeyond the standard unit cost offered by the vendor.

**9.3 Replacement In-Kind:** The intent is to replicate all or part of a pre existing inscription. In-kind replacements must be provided at no additional cost beyond the standard unit cost offered by the vendor.

**9.4 Inscription Corrections/Cancellations of Orders:** Occasionally, it shall be necessary to request a correction, change, or cancellation be made after an order is sent to the contractor. These corrections/changes/cancellations shall be forwarded by email to the contractor only by the MPS Program Support Unit and within **one (1) calendar day** from the date the contractor received the order. The contractor shall be required to respond to each emailed request from the MPS Program Support Unit within **one (1) business day** from the date the request was sent.

**10.0 Procedures (Administrative and Other)**

**10.1 Government Responsibilities:** Notwithstanding the Contractor’s responsibility for total management during the performance of this contract, the administration of the contract shall require coordination between the Government and the Contractor. The Centralized Contracting Division shall provide, at the time of the contract’s award, the name of one or more individuals authorized to act as Contracting Officer’s Representatives (CORs) during the coordination.

**10.2 Contractor Records and Files:** The contractor shall maintain records and files of all documents relating to each order filled under each Government Headstone and Marker contract. These records shall include, at minimum, copies of all orders, quality assurance records, inspection results, shipping documents (bearing carrier’s name and PRO tracking numbers) and invoices. These records shall be made available, upon request, to the designated MPS Program Support Unit COR during on-site Quality Assurance inspections.

**10.3 Government Headstone and Marker Drawings:** The contractor shall ensure copies of all relevant Government drawings for production of monuments are maintained on file and are available to the designed COR, upon request, during on-site Quality Assurance inspections.

**10.5 Completion point for invoicing products delivered FOB destination:** The contractor’s responsibilities are deemed complete when satisfactorily prepared orders are delivered to the ordered destination (consignee’s address). The contractor shall bear all charges to the point of destination.

**10.6 Point of Contact at MPS:** E-mail to**:** MPSProgSupport@va.gov

**END STATEMENT OF WORK**