

Resetting a Military Grave Stone

Many of our pioneer cemeteries have marble military markers that are leaning and need attention. Bringing one to a vertical is relative an easy procedure --- providing that you know its dimensions and how to correctly reset the stone. Remember these two important points: (1) **Do no harm** and (2) **Take no action that cannot be reversed**.

Do not set any grave stone in wet concrete...ever!

Let's Get Started!

Basic information: Choose a dry weather period because wet stones break easily. Be very careful when using metal tools; they scratch stone and these scratches cannot be removed.

Tools and Material: Shovel or spade, plastic trowel, level, tape measure, small piece of plastic tarp for dirt, aggregate of crushed limestone rock or pea gravel & sand mix. Note: crushed limestone should have both fines and coarse rock (graded limestone ranges from crushed fines up to 1/2" maximum). Mix equal parts of pea gravel and sand. Either choice of aggregate will pack well.

Most government provided stone military markers were made in several sizes;
Length: 30" to 42". Width: 14" or less. Thickness: 4" or less.

Resetting to the proper depth varies according to the stone's length. See government directions and standards listed below.

Do not cover any military information.

Simplest Procedure

- Remove the dirt opposite the direction of lean and from each narrow side.
- Save dirt on a plastic tarp.
- Wiggle (carefully) the stone to vertical. Use level to plumb in all directions.
- Replace and tamp dirt in the created void.

Government Directions & Standards (Condensed version)

- Remove sod and dirt from all sides. Save dirt on plastic tarp.
- Remove grave stone.
- Dig out hole to a minimum of 3" below final elevation of stone.
- Add aggregate in bottom and tamp solid.
- Measure from top of arc or point so depth so will be appropriate for length of stone.
 - 25" above grade for final elevation for a 42" stone.
 - 22" above grade for final elevation for a 35" or 39" stone.
 - 12" above grade for final elevation for a 30" stone.
- Insert grave stone in hole.
- With a level, plumb grave stone vertical in all directions.
- Place aggregate in 3 inch layers around all sides of headstone. Tamp solid each layer.
- Leave 4" at the top for dirt; tamp solid and replace sod (reseed if necessary).

