



## **VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS APPALLED BY DESECRATION OF HERO'S GRAVE**

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**SACRAMENTO, CA** – The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Department of California, is appalled to learn that the grave of a soldier awarded the Medal of Honor is now the site of a dog park. The park was the site of a cemetery before being converted by the city to its present form.

Veterans throughout the country were enraged by the news; arguing that the ground should be treated with the reverence it deserves so long as bodies are buried there. Instead, the ground is used for defecation, and the graves of several of America's finest are now soiled upon daily.

The most honored amongst the soldiers entombed in the park is Private James Sumner. He received the Medal of Honor, the country's highest military honor, for valiantly pursuing Apache Indians who had kidnapped a settler's child. President Ulysses S. Grant awarded him the medal in 1870, and it is believed the medal is buried along with him under the park.

Despite repeated promises from the park commissioners, the attempts to move Sumner's body have been delayed and pushed aside by a group that seems more intent on taunting the request than acting upon it.

"We are absolutely shocked by the insensitivity of the Ventura Parks Commission," said Denis Wells, State Commander of the VFW, Department of California. "Placing the bodies of America's Finest directly below what amounts to a bathroom offends all those who served and died for our country, but the attitude with which we were met when trying to get the body moved was far more insulting. The Parks Commission seems intent on flaunting their ignorance of the dignity of the soldier."

Cemetery Memorial Park is home to around 3,000 bodies, several of which still have gravemarkers.

*The Veterans of Foreign Wars is America's largest organization of combat veterans. Since its inception more than 100 years ago, the VFW has donated millions of dollars and volunteer hours, been a strong supporter of the country's youth, and of patriotic and educational efforts. The VFW has also been an unwavering advocate to the military, its veterans, and their families. Please visit [www.vfwca.org](http://www.vfwca.org) for more information on ways you can help the VFW support veterans in your community.*

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