

"To Marvin, With Love":

How Do We Process Grief?

DEVELOPED BY GENA OPPENHEIM

"To Marvin, with Love, Mom and Dad"

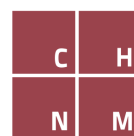


Guiding Question:

How do families deal with battles that occur after a loved one dies in times of war?



NHD
NATIONAL
HISTORY DAY



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Overview

Students will form an initial impression of Sergeant First Class Fogulhut based on the information found on his grave marker. After reading letters from his mother and his widow, they will begin to understand that contrasting perspectives can influence even grief.

Objectives

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to:

- Learn the history of the Cypress Hills National Cemetery; and
- Contextualize the different ways that families deal with grief.



One key attribute of the Cypress Hills National Cemetery is how in the heart of New York City are buried nearly 500 members of the Confederate Army. Through the story of Sergeant First Class Marvin Fogelhut, I wanted to examine how we cemeteries address conflict resolution through simple acts of where someone is buried (i.e. Confederate soldiers in the North) to what religious symbol is put on their grave.

— Gena Oppenheim

**Oppenheim teaches at Saint Ann’s School
in Brooklyn, New York.**

Spotlight: Cypress Hills National Cemetery

Despite the early optimism of both the Union and Confederacy, by summer 1862, it was increasingly evident that the Civil War would be both long and costly. Almost three acres were set aside for the burial of Civil War dead in what became known as Union Grounds. In 1870, the Cypress Hills Cemetery Corporation deeded the property to the United States for a consideration of \$9,600. An inspection report of September 1870 indicates that 3,170 Union soldiers and 461 Confederate POWs were already buried there.

Although Cypress Hills was established to honor Civil War veterans, its grounds include the graves of soldiers who fought in the American Revolution, Spanish-American War, Korean and Vietnam wars. Cypress Hills National Cemetery was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997.

VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

Standards Connections

Connections to Common Core

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8 Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

Documents Used

Primary Sources

Letter from Mrs. Dorothy Fogelhut to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, July 6, 1953
Individual Deceased Personnel File
National Archives and Records Administration - St. Louis

Letter from Mrs. Chanda Fogelhut to Army Effects Agency, January 16, 1954
Individual Deceased Personnel File
National Archives and Records Administration - St. Louis

Secondary Sources

Historical Information, Cypress Hills National Cemetery
National Cemetery Administration
<https://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/cypresshills.asp>

Map, Cypress Hills National Cemetery
National Cemetery Administration
<https://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/cems/maps/cypresshills808.pdf>

Veteran Profile, Sergeant First Class Jerome Fogelhut
National Cemetery Administration
<http://cem.va.gov/legacy/>

Materials

- “To Marvin, With Love” Packet
- Two blank index cards and one pencil for each student.

Activity Preparation

- Make one copy of the “To Marvin, With Love” Packet for each student.
 - Historical Information, Cypress Hills National Cemetery
 - Letter from Mrs. Dorothy Fogelhut to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, July 6, 1953
 - Letter from Mrs. Chanda Fogelhut to Army Effects Agency, January 16, 1954
- Make one copy of the map of Cypress Hills National Cemetery for the teacher.
- Gather index cards and pencils.

Procedure

Activity One: Introduction to Cypress Hills National Cemetery (15 minutes)

- Gather students together when you first arrive at the cemetery. Read the Cypress Hills Cemetery Historical Information aloud.
- Explain the expectations of research in a cemetery.
 - Put all phones on airplane mode.
 - Give other visitors their space. This is a space for grieving and/or quiet reflection.
- Lead students to the grave of Sergeant First Class Marvin Fogelhut, Section 2-S, Site 602. Allow time for them to view his grave marker.
- Pass out two index cards and a pencil to each student.

- Discuss the surroundings:
 - *What do we see, hear, smell, etc.?*
 - *What is the tone of this site?*
 - *What are the significance of the religious symbols on top of each grave marker?*
 - *What are your initial reactions upon seeing Fogelhut's marker?*
 - *What is the significance of the Star of David on his marker?*
- Direct students to write a sentence of their initial reactions on their first index card.
- Allow students to share what they have written with the group.

Activity Two: Letters from Fogelhut's Mother and Widow (30 minutes)

- Ask students to follow along as you read aloud the letter written in 1953 by Sergeant First Class Marvin Fogelhut's mother, Mrs. Dorothy Fogelhut, to President Dwight D. Eisenhower.
- Ask students to write their reactions to the letter on the back of the index card.
 - *Does this letter change how you view this grave? If so, why?*
 - *Do you think Mrs. Fogelhut makes a convincing case?*
- Allow students to share what they have written with the group.
- Ask students to follow along as you read aloud the letter written in 1954 by Sergeant First Class Marvin Fogelhut's widow, Mrs. Chanda Fogelhut, to the Department of Army Effects.
- Ask students to write their initial response to this letter on second index card.
 - *Does this letter change how you view this grave? If so, why?*
 - *What is your reaction to the news that Marvin and his wife had a daughter, especially considering that his mother never mentioned their daughter in her letter?*

Activity Three: Visit to Cypress Hills National Cemetery (30 minutes)

- Engage the students in a discussion about the contrasting perspectives offered by the two letters.
 - *How do these letters display the different ways that family members deal with grief?*
 - *If you were working for the Department of Army Effects, where would you have sent Marvin Fogelhut's belongings?*

Assessment

- Ask students to use the information from their notecards to write a response essay about their reactions to the two letters. Essays should utilize text from the letters and observations written on their index cards.

Methods for Extension

- Students can visit the Union Plot, Sections 1A-1F, where the graves of 461 Confederate prisoners of war are intermingled with the Union dead. Tell the students to look for headstones that include CSA, which identifies members of the Confederate States Army. The Confederate grave that is easiest to find is that of Murdock Jones, located in Section 1D, plot 1216. Ask students to examine the notion of finding common bonds in grief when examining the Confederate marker.

“To Marvin, With Love” Packet

Historical Information, Cypress Hills National Cemetery

National Cemetery Administration

“Despite the early optimism of both the Union and Confederacy, by summer 1862, it was increasingly evident that the Civil War would be both long and costly. It was also apparent that additional burial grounds would be needed to accommodate the growing number of Union soldiers who died from battle injuries and disease.

“While New York City and its outskirts were outside the area of military conflict, numerous hospitals were set up here to care for wounded Union troops. Cypress Hills began as a zone of the Interior Military Cemetery and was located within the boundaries of the large and private Cypress Hills Cemetery in Brooklyn. Almost three acres were set aside for the burial of Civil War dead in what became known as Union Grounds. In 1870, the Cypress Hills Cemetery Corporation deeded the property to the United States for a consideration of \$9,600. An inspection report of September 1870 indicates that 3,170 Union soldiers and 461 Confederate POWs were already buried there. Most of the interments came from military hospitals in the area. There were also a number of reinterments from cemeteries on Long Island Sound and in Rhode Island.

“Prior to 1873, eligibility for burial in a national cemetery was restricted to U.S. soldiers who died as a result of injury or disease during the Civil War. In 1873, however, Congress approved legislation extending burial rights to honorably discharged soldiers, sailors and Marines who served during the war. To accommodate the growing number of burials requested at Cypress Hills, more than 15 acres were purchased in 1884. In addition, in 1941, a small tract within the old Cypress Hills Cemetery, known as the Mount of Victory Plot, was donated by the State of New York. Today the cemetery consists of three parcels totaling a little over 18 acres: the Union grounds, a larger area on Jamaica Avenue, and the Mount of Victory. Although Cypress Hills was established to honor Civil War veterans, its grounds include the graves of soldiers who fought in the American Revolution, Spanish-American War, Korean and Vietnam wars. Cypress Hills National Cemetery was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997.”

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Letter from Mrs. Dorothy Fogelhut to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, July 6, 1953 (Page 1)

1st Ross St
1st Ave 11, NY
July 6, 1953

Honorable President of the U. S.
White House,
Washington, D. C.

AGPS-1 - 201 - Fogelhut, Marvin J
RA-21926971 (18 June 53)

Dear Mr. President:

I would very much appreciate it if you would read this letter through to the end, as it is from a broken hearted mother.

On June 17, we received word from the War Department, that our son, SFC Marvin J. Fogelhut, #21926971, was killed in Tokyo, in an airplane crash. Words are inadequate at this time to tell you how shocked we were to lose our one and only son, who we adored so much.

To make matters worse, my husband is a sclerosis victim, totally disabled for the last 19 months, unable to work or anything. The entire burden is left to me. My husband is 57, and I am 47, and you can see, we are getting on in years.

My daughter-in-law, who lives in Toms River, N.J., is already contemplating marriage, as she has already told us in our time of bereavement. To her, being married to our son (only 4 months), means another soldier - to us, means the loss of our son, whom we will never see again. She will get married again, have her name changed, and forget all about her husband, but we will never, never forget as long as we may live. Now - please hear me out. I think its a shame to have a policy made out to an 18 year old wife for \$10,000.00, and parents are entitled to NOTHING. Is this justice? Is this why we raised our son, loving and caring for him for 22 years, dying for his country, and getting nothing in return but heartaches and more heartaches? My daughter-in-law doesn't want any part of the body, after all, why should she, when she is thinking only of marriage shortly. But we as parents, and as loyal and patriotic citizens of the U. S. think it is only deserving and fitting for us to know where and when our son

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Letter from Mrs. Dorothy Fogelhut to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, July 6, 1953 (Page 2)

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will be buried, as we are of orthodox jewish faith, and feel he should be buried as a Jew, with the star of David. Is that asking too much of broken hearted parents - to let us know some date from time to time, such as his wife receives. My son had on his person a signet ring, which his father gave him on his 18th birthday, bearing initials SF, also a Longine-Wittnauer watch, inscribed on the back "To Marvin, with Love, Mom and Dad", also an identification bracelet, which we gave him - if they found these, need we say we would appreciate it if you would send them to us? Believe me sincerely and deeply, Mr. President, it hurts terribly to have to write such things, but they must be done. Do you think anything could be done about dividing the policy, so that as parents we can get something, as his wife will receive additional widow's pension also. ALSO THE MOST IMPORTANT THING, being parents yourselves, PLEASE KEEP US INFORMED AS TO WHEN AND WHERE THE BODIES WILL BE SENT, SO AT SOME TIME, WE CAN PAY OUR DEEPEST RESPECT TO OUR BELOVED SON.

I would very much appreciate receiving an early reply to this letter, and we will be guided by your kind advice.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Fogelhut

Mr. President:

I remember reading one of your articles some time ago, when your son was a boy scout, and your wife pleaded with you to run after him while he was marching, to give him some "orange juice", and you knew darn well that he wasn't allowed to stop off, but you as a father took it from your wife, drank it yourself, and told his mother that he enjoyed it very much, then your wife was happy - Well, that little ditty brought back memories to me also - as I was always a very devoted and crazy mother - - like all moms.

Letter from Mrs. Chanda Fogelhut to Army Effects Agency, January 16, 1954

Dear Sir:

Jan. 16, 1954

Firstly, please make note of my new address which was, quite some time ago, established ~~with~~ the VA office in Wash., D.C. It is;

250 Mt. Vernon Place - apt. 11L
Iny Hill, Newark 6, N. J.

This will be my permanent residence. As for confirming my status as Sgt. Fogelhut's legal widow, it has been done numerous times and I am sure that ~~one~~ of your offices must have my records on file.

I do desire the effects to be shipped to me at the above address. As his widow I feel entitled to them. My little girl will never know her father except by pictures & belongings so I think his things belong to her.

Please send everything, including the two damaged matches & anything else that may have been damaged in any way.

Sincerely,
Chanda Fogelhut.