

Tahoma High School students share why they consider Tahoma National Cemetery the “greatest landmark in Maple Valley”

Cary Collins recently tasked students in his Washington State History course at Tahoma High School with identifying landmarks in Maple Valley, choosing the one that has had the greatest impact, and formulating an argument to justify their choice. In a lesson titled “Landmarks and Legacies,” Tahoma National Cemetery came in at the top in a runaway. Others receiving mention included Gaffney’s Lake Wilderness Resort and Lodge, Elliott Farm, Tahoma high schools, Olson Mansion, Cedar River, the Cedar River Watershed, Ravensdale Market, Hobart Market, Columbia & Puget Sound Railroad, Ravensdale Coal Mine Disaster, Cedar Mountain Coal Mine, and Wood & Iverson Sawmill.



Included below are some of the student responses (edited for brevity) for why they selected Tahoma National Cemetery as the greatest landmark in Maple Valley:

- Home of war veterans
- Land of Warriors
- Symbol of sacrifice
- Place of valor
- Place of comfort
- Place of remembrance
- Keeping the community together, even in death
- Symbol of Washington's ties to the rest of the United States
- People all over the world come just to visit this national cemetery, bringing peace to loved ones and patriotism to visitors. Whenever I go to the national cemetery, it is always breathtaking, looking through the thousands of rows, all those people served and some died for us to be here today. It gives me hope that there are more people out there like that
- By providing this space as a national shrine, we are commemorating those who have worked their hardest to keep us safe. We honor their service even after they have passed
- I believe Tahoma National Cemetery is the greatest landmark in Maple Valley because it affects our community and our nation. Although it hasn't been in existence as long as some other landmarks, the national cemetery impacts people daily. This landmark gives people a place to come and honor, grieve and respect those who have served our country
- This place holds a very great deal of significance to so many people. It is where many people lay to rest forever. That is why there are so many visitors and so many come here to visit loved ones. It is a very special place for so many people
- I think Tahoma National Cemetery is the most important landmark in Maple Valley because it stands out for recognizing veterans for their bravery and courage

- We as a community come together when we are there. Our school places flags on the graves, making us closer



- I chose the national cemetery since although it is a quite recognized place in Washington, it is also a place that is quite well cared for and maintained, which has many natural flower arrangements, which makes it a quite suitable environment for a cemetery. This is also a place with a lot of military history, in which every year tribute is paid to fallen soldiers through memorials
- Tahoma National Cemetery has a positive impact on the community around it. The great people are remembered here forever
- The number of people impacted range in the hundreds of thousands due to the thousands of people buried here that brings family members and loved ones to visit even from other states and students to keep up the grounds. The impact of Tahoma National Cemetery is nationwide. Its impact is the betterment of the

community, allowing us to teach kids about the sacrifices it took in order for us to be where we are and how we should always honor those who gave everything they had to let us be so successful

- I believe that Tahoma National Cemetery is an important landmark because it reminds us of the sacrifices people have made to preserve our freedom as Americans. It not only impacts the Maple Valley community, but the nation as well. It reminds us of how lucky we are to live in such a prosperous country. Many families have been impacted by the loss of a loved one in times of conflict, but this cemetery serves them as a final resting place, which is surrounded by trees as well as a view of Mt. Rainier. The serenity of the location makes it an ideal landmark
- We live in a small town, but everyone in the Puget Sound area comes to visit the national cemetery
- The families of the people buried there all hold this monument very dearly. Countless have mourned, remembered, and honored the memories of their loved ones in Tahoma National Cemetery
- It is a beautiful place, full of heroes and soldiers
- It is the final resting place of many men and women who gave their lives for this country. Tahoma National Cemetery has been open for about 23 years. It gives the families of the people laid to rest there a sense of comfort knowing that their headstones will be kept clean and nice. Lastly, it helps families because they know that people cannot vandalize the stones there as easily as they would be able to at a normal cemetery
- Tahoma National Cemetery is a physical landmark that stands to honor the fallen heroes of our country. Their valor still remains immeasurable since they were willing to stand strong in the face of danger and tragedy to fight for our rights. To this day, we are only able to stand and live our ordinary lives because they gave up theirs. It also stands to remind us of their bravery and show us that our dreams can only exist because of their sacrifice
- This 158-acre site does an incredible job of honoring the service of countless individuals and it does so in a very respectful and calm environment. One extremely unique aspect of the national cemetery is this is the only national cemetery in the state of Washington

- Many people are impacted by Tahoma National Cemetery as many of them know that some will never come back to their families and some are missing in action and never to be seen again. The community always shows passion for the military every Memorial Day and Veterans Day at this national cemetery
- Tahoma National Cemetery is a place dedicated to those in the military who protect this country and is treated with respect by the members of the community. Schools even visit to place symbols of respect such as flags or flowers for those who have passed
- Tahoma National Cemetery: “Where Heroes Rest.” That is the slogan for Tahoma National Cemetery, and it sums it up perfectly. Thousands of soldiers rest here and thousands more family members come to visit them. Not only has Tahoma National Cemetery made an impact upon Maple Valley, but the country as well by honoring the soldiers who paid the ultimate price
- Visitors come from all over the state to visit this landmark and its peaceful, beautiful setting where Mt. Rainier can be seen overlooking the grounds
- My great-grandfather is buried at Tahoma National Cemetery



- A magnificent setting for the final resting place of our nation's heroes, our veterans
- Tahoma National Cemetery stands out as the only landmark to affect the whole state or country. It imbues a sense of pride and honor to the veteran and their family as a testament for being in the military
- This is the best landmark in Maple Valley because of how many people come to show their respect for the military. It is a beautiful place where you can see so much history in the world. It brings people all over the country to come visit and people find Maple Valley from that. Students make constant visits there to place flags to fallen heroes. Tahoma National Cemetery has a huge impact on America and not just Maple Valley
- Tahoma National Cemetery is a place for people who have served our country to be respected in such a beautiful area
- The reason I chose Tahoma National Cemetery is because it might not be an old place, but every person there has a sad and heroic story
- Tahoma National Cemetery is a big part of the Tahoma schools. Every year we have students go out and place flags on every soldier's headstone
- To me this is the greatest landmark in Maple Valley history because it's a time to honor all those people who fought and gave their lives to help us live and have great lives for who we are today
- Tahoma National Cemetery is where the nations' heroes, the veterans, are resting. It represents not only Maple Valley, but also the nation. Because it is facing Mt. Rainier, the view is magnificent as well with the flags and flowers. It is a landmark of appreciation for their service
- It is a monumental place and holds tremendous value to so many people
- This national cemetery shows how the community of Maple Valley honors its veterans and even further how the country honors them too. When Memorial Day rolls around Tahoma National Cemetery serves to better the lives of the community members and grow the community's unity. Burying the dead is not the only purpose of this national cemetery. Preserving the history of the brave soldiers who fought is as well

- This national cemetery is symbolic of the nation's longstanding history and fight for freedom
- Tahoma National Cemetery is the greatest and most historic landmark in Maple Valley. It has touched thousands, whether it be family members, loved ones, or friends that our soldiers once knew. This national cemetery is not just a regular cemetery, but a place for leaders and heroes. Although it has not been open for long, its presence has already made a profound impact on the lives of those people living in Maple Valley. These men and women fought alongside one another and they are now buried with one another. Another significance of this landmark is that it holds distinction of being an educational tool. This national cemetery will help teach millions of kids forever about the history and sacrifices these people have given to protect our freedoms
- A national memorial to honor the brave soldiers that have passed
- A memorial rich in history about America's veterans and the battles they fought in and an educational facility where you can learn about national cemeteries and how they were established