


Security posted at Confederate cemetery on Johnson's Island

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 A guard at Johnson's Island's Confederate cemetery chats with visitors. The Whitestone Group, a Columbus-based company, now provides security at the cemetery in the wake of attacks on Confederate statues in Ohio and across the U.S. -- Register photo/TOM JACKSON

Tom Jackson

Staff Reporter

JOHNSON'S ISLAND — Federal authorities are now providing security to guard a [Confederate cemetery and statue of a Rebel soldier on Johnson's Island](#).

On Wednesday, visitors to the cemetery, maintained by the Department of Veterans Affairs, chatted with a guard from a private security firm who explained that his company had been hired by the VA. The guard said there hasn't been any trouble and said visits to the cemetery seem to have picked up because of recent publicity.

The guard wore a uniform identifying him as an employee of The Whitestone Group, a Columbus-based company providing security for federal government agencies.

A VA spokeswoman said the agency has stepped up its security efforts in the [wake of attacks on Confederate statues in Ohio and across the U.S.](#)

"In response to recent events, VA's National Cemetery Administration determined the need for additional security measures at certain facilities to ensure the safety of staff, property and visitors paying respect to those interred," spokeswoman Jessica Schiefer said. "VA has a responsibility to protect the federal property for which it's responsible, and we will continue to monitor and assess the situation going forward."

Last week, vandals toppled a statue of a Confederate soldier at Camp Chase, a Confederate cemetery in Columbus, then carried off the head of the statue.

Columbus news media have not reported an arrest in the case. A spokesman for Columbus' police department didn't immediately return a call Wednesday afternoon.

VA officials said in a statement last week that they intend to repair the Camp Chase statue. There are no plans to disturb any of the monuments at Confederate cemeteries maintained by the VA, the statement said.

Reach reporter Tom Jackson at jackson@sanduskyregister.com and follow him on Twitter [@jacksontom](https://twitter.com/jacksontom).