

The Monument Manufacturing Process

Ever wondered how a Memorial is made from its raw materials into the custom everlasting commemoration of your loved one? Well the first step in this lengthy, dangerous and expensive process is to excavate the granite from the ground, or quarry as the digging site is called. These quarries are often hundreds of feet deep with jagged razor sharp edges of solid rock. Water drains into these massive holes creating a large pool at the bottom.

Different types of granite are quarried differently and in various parts of the world, but the main process is essentially the same. High magnitude explosives are placed in drilled holes in order to break apart the granite strategically so that it can be preserved for good use. These immense slabs of granite are then hauled out of the quarry and sent to the manufacturing plants where they are then cut using precision machines and diamond tipped blades.

The next stage is smoothing or polishing the stone. This process consists of buffing and grinding the stone with large machinery and water. It requires many stages before it shows the glossy shine that we see on many memorials. An unpolished (steeled) stone also needs to be taken through this process in order to smooth it down, but it would not go through as many levels of the grinding and buffing stages. The stones are then cut into the proper shape.

Next, they add the designs and engraving to the stones. A drawing needs to be made beforehand of where everything will go on the stone. This is often done on computers now, but some are still done using architectural tools. This is then approved by the customer to guarantee accuracy. The design can then be put on the stone using sandblasters, lasers or hand carving tools depending on the design. Some designs are too intricate to use sandblasters and therefore must be hand-carved by quality craftsmen. These sculptures can take many man hours depending on the intricacy of the design. For the designs that are able to be sandblasted, a rubber stencil is made of the design. This stencil is attached to the stone using a light adhesive. The letters and design parts are peeled off and a sandblaster is used to penetrate the stone and create the depth and shadowing of the letters and design.

The immense and heavy product still needs to be washed, crated, transported and delivered to the cemetery plot. Since the granite weighs hundreds and even thousands of pounds sometimes, it must be handled using cranes and dollies. Even though it is heavy, it is also delicate and needs to be handled with care. The monument is now ready to be installed, but before it can be installed, a foundation must be dug and built days in advance so that the cement is solid to eliminate sinking and tipping. This is generally done by the cemetery. It is at this point of setting the stone when porcelain portraits and any other additional features like display cases, vases and vigil lights may be installed.

This lengthy process starts with a raw material and ends in a beautiful work of art. It is also a dangerous process that includes jagged rocks, deep quarries, hazardous dust and heavy lifting. But in the end, your family and friends are left with a beautiful memorial to commemorate your loved one that will last forever.