

Arlington Today

- As directed by Congress in the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, Arlington National Cemetery has proposed revised eligibility criteria in order to keep ANC an active cemetery for ground burial “well into the future,” defined as the next 150 years.
See: <https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/eligibility>
- As of January 2023, ANC has fewer than 72,000 burial opportunities, with over 23 million active-duty service members, retirees and veterans living today. Without changes to eligibility, ANC will run out of space for new burials by 2041, or by the mid-2060s with the eventual completion of the Southern Expansion project.
- Interment eligibility at ANC has changed 14 times in the cemetery’s history, with the last significant change in 1980, when above ground inurnment became available.
- One remaining major expansion project will extend ANC’s lifespan as an active cemetery. The Southern Expansion project broke ground in September 2021; construction is expected to last through 2027. The 50-acre site will add over 80,000 burial spaces and integrate the Air Force Memorial.
- In July 2020, ANC launched its Education Program, designed for virtual and in-person learning.
See: <https://education.arlingtoncemetery.mil>
- Also in 2020, ANC developed its first Long-Range Interpretive Plan, with the goal of connecting its millions of visitors to the diverse stories associated with these hallowed grounds.
- In 2021, ANC hosted the Department of Defense’s yearlong Tomb of the Unknown Soldier centennial commemoration.
See: <https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Tomb100>
- Download our ANC Explorer app to find graves.



General Information

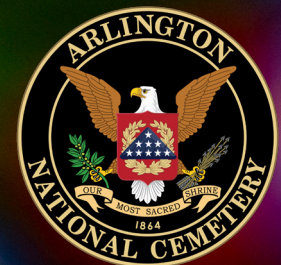
- Currently occupies 639 acres.
- Over 400,000 burials of service members, veterans and their eligible dependents.
- Conducts 27-30 burials per day, Mon.-Fri.; up to 10 on Sat.
- Conducts an average of 6,500 funerals per fiscal year.
- Hosts 3,000+ ceremonies per year, including the National Memorial Day Observance and the National Veterans Day Observance.
- Receives 3-4 million visitors per year.
- Serves as the final resting place for service members from all U.S. wars, from the Revolutionary War to today.
- Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Designated in 2018, and renewed in 2023, as a Level III National Arboretum, with over 9,000 trees of at least 350 species.
- In 2018, ANC completed the most recent expansion of 27 acres and 27,000 burial opportunities.

Follow us on social media
@ArlingtonNatl



ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

HONOR - REMEMBER - EXPLORE





Arlington National Cemetery History

- The Arlington Plantation was established by George Washington's step-grandson, George Washington Parke Custis, to be a living memorial to the first president and a working plantation. At least 100 enslaved African Americans lived and labored there.
- Upon his death, George Washington Parke Custis left the estate to his daughter, Mary Custis Lee. She married U.S. Army 1st Lt. Robert E. Lee (later a Confederate general) in 1831.
- Robert E. Lee served as the executor of his father-in-law's will, but never owned the property.
- During the Civil War, the land that now comprises Arlington National Cemetery came under control of the U.S. Army in May 1861. The Army seized the property for its strategic military value – the high ground overlooking the nation's capital. A common misconception is the Army did so to punish the Lee family.
- In June 1863, the U.S. government established a large Freedman's Village (on the southern end of today's cemetery) to provide formerly enslaved people with housing, social services and skills training.
- Brig. Gen. Montgomery Meigs, Quartermaster General of the U.S. Army, ordered the Arlington property to be used as a cemetery, as space at nearby military cemeteries was running out. The original cemetery was 200 acres.



- On May 13, 1864, the first military burial was conducted for Pvt. William Christman.
- Arlington officially became a national military cemetery on June 15, 1864.
- Burial sections at ANC were racially segregated, as they were at all national cemeteries at the time. ANC remained so until 1948, when President Harry S. Truman desegregated the military.
- African American soldiers and more than 3,800 freedmen were buried in what is now Section 27. According to records, no residents of Freedman's Village are buried in Section 27.
- Initially, being buried at a national cemetery was not considered an honor. It ensured that service members whose families could not afford to bring them home would receive a proper burial.
- The first official Decoration Day, later called Memorial Day, was held at ANC on May 30, 1868.
- Decoration Day became so popular that in 1873, an amphitheater was built to hold the official ceremonies. It was renamed the James Tanner Amphitheater in 2014.
- Veterans of the Spanish-American War and the Civil War pressed for the construction of Memorial Amphitheater, which opened in May 1920. Its grand neoclassical architecture reflected ANC's national prominence.
- In the late 1870s, high-ranking veterans began requesting burial in the Officers' Sections (Sections 1, 2 and 3). Sections are no longer separated by rank.



- In 1900, Congress authorized a section (now Section 16) for Confederate soldiers at a time when the nation was trying to reconcile after the Civil War.
- On November 11, 1921, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was dedicated with the burial of the World War I Unknown.
- Unknowns from World War II and the Korean War were buried at the Tomb in 1958. An Unknown from the Vietnam War was buried in 1984, but he was later disinterred and identified as Air Force 1st Lt. Michael J. Blassie. The empty crypt was rededicated to honor all missing and unknown U.S. service members from the Vietnam War.
- Since 1948, the Tomb has been guarded 24/7 by the 3d. U.S. Infantry Regiment, "The Old Guard."
- President William Howard Taft (1930) and President John F. Kennedy (1963) are the only two U.S. presidents buried at ANC.
- Requests for burial at ANC significantly increased following President Kennedy's televised funeral, combined with an increase in burials of WWII veterans.
- Section 60, established in 1972, is often thought of as the section for veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, it is the final resting place for veterans from the Spanish-American War through recent conflicts. Veterans from current conflicts are also buried in other sections.