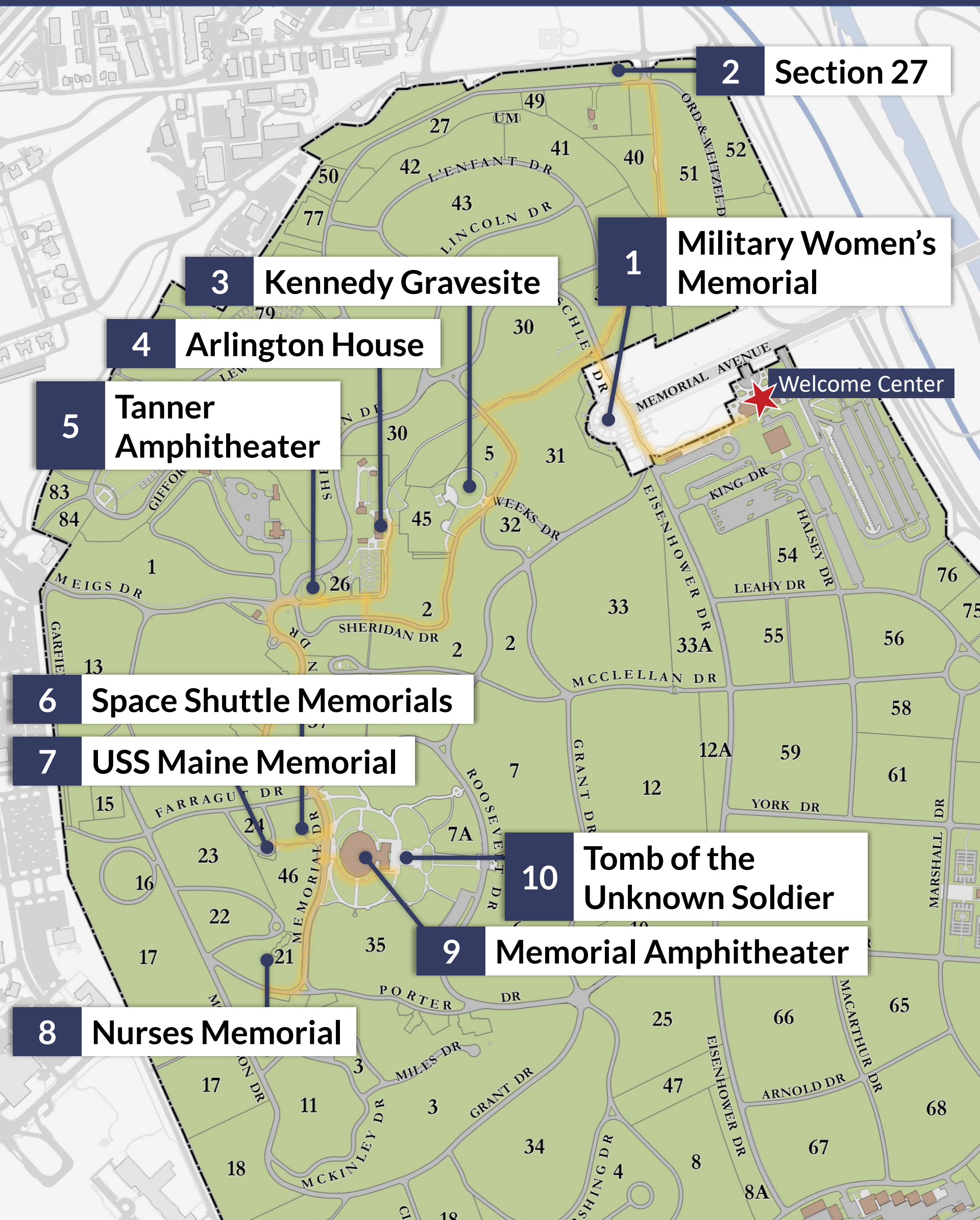


ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY WALKING TOUR

UNDERSTANDING ARLINGTON



We love hearing about your visit! Share your pictures, questions, and favorite parts of the tour on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

@ArlingtonNatl

#ANCEducation

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY WALKING TOUR

UNDERSTANDING
ARLINGTON

Length: ~3 miles

Starting Point: Welcome Center

Exertion Level: Moderate

There are two types of stops on this walking tour:



HONOR stops mark the gravesites of specific individuals.



REMEMBER stops commemorate events, ideas or groups of people.

1	Military Women’s Memorial	<i>Military Women’s Memorial</i>
2	Section 27	<i>Section 27</i>
3	John F. Kennedy Gravesite	<i>John F. Kennedy Gravesite</i>
4	Arlington House	<i>Arlington House</i>
5	Tanner Amphitheater	<i>Section 26</i>
6	Space Shuttle Memorials	<i>Section 46</i>
7	USS Maine Memorial	<i>Section 24</i>
8	Nurses Memorial	<i>Section 21</i>
9	Memorial Amphitheater	<i>Memorial Amphitheater</i>
10	Tomb of the Unknown Soldier	<i>Tomb of the Unknown Soldier</i>

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Arlington National Cemetery was established during the Civil War to accommodate the sudden influx of military dead who could not be transported home. The original cemetery was 200 acres and has since grown to 639 acres (as of early 2020). Arlington was a segregated cemetery, just like all national cemeteries at the time, and it remained segregated by race and rank until 1948, when President Harry S. Truman desegregated the military.

Today, approximately 430,000 [veterans and their eligible dependents](#) are buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Service members from every one of America's major wars, from the [Revolutionary War](#) to today's conflicts, are interred at ANC. As a result, the history of our nation is reflected on the grounds of the cemetery.

Sunrise in Section 60, 2019. (ANC/Elizabeth Fraser)

Explore our [Understanding Arlington guides](#) to learn more about the history, traditions and operations of Arlington National Cemetery.



MILITARY WOMEN'S MEMORIAL



STOP 1

Military Women's Memorial

Administered by the Women in Military Service for America Foundation (WIMSA), the [Military Women's Memorial](#) honors the over three million women who have served in the U.S. military from the Revolutionary War to today. It is the only major national memorial in the United States to honor all women who have served this country.

In 1985, WIMSA chose to create the memorial in the Hemicycle — a neoclassical building dedicated in 1932 and intended to serve as Arlington National Cemetery's original ceremonial entrance. The Memorial is privately run and not part of Arlington National Cemetery.

Notable women buried at Arlington include:

- Rear Admiral Grace Hopper (Section 59, Grave 973)
- Dr. Anita Newcomb McGee (Section 1, Grave 526B)
- General Hazel Johnson-Brown (Section 60, Grave 9836)

Visit [ANC's website](#) to learn more about these women and others buried at the cemetery.



SECTION 27



REMEMBER



STOP 2

Section 27

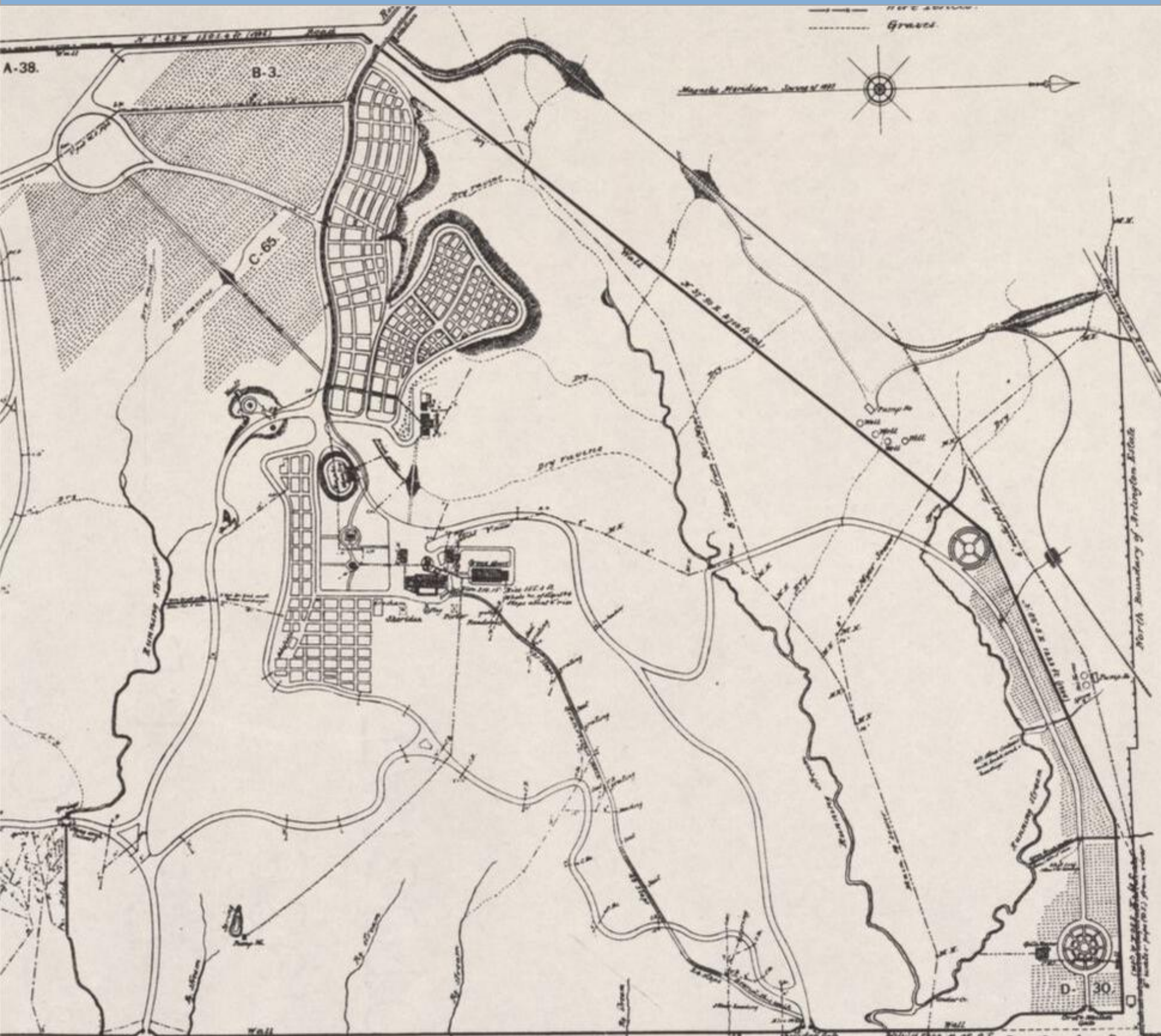


Section 27 is one of the oldest sections of the cemetery and one of the few sections that were once segregated. After Arlington National Cemetery was established in June 1864, during the Civil War, the first burials took place in this area hidden from the view of Arlington House.

Early burials included White U.S. soldiers, government employees and government dependents. Beginning in July 1864, African American civilians and soldiers in the United States Colored Troops (U.S.C.T.), the U.S. Army's designation for Black regiments, were buried there as well.

Some of the first graves in Arlington National Cemetery in what is now Section 27, June 29, 1864. (Chrysler Museum of Art/Andrew Joseph Russell)

★ SECTION 27 ★



In August 1864, U.S. Army Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs ordered that U.S. soldiers and officers should be buried closer to Arlington House. At that point, the military stopped burying White soldiers in Section 27, then known as the “Lower Cemetery.” Burials of Black soldiers and civilians continued, and the section remained segregated until 1899.

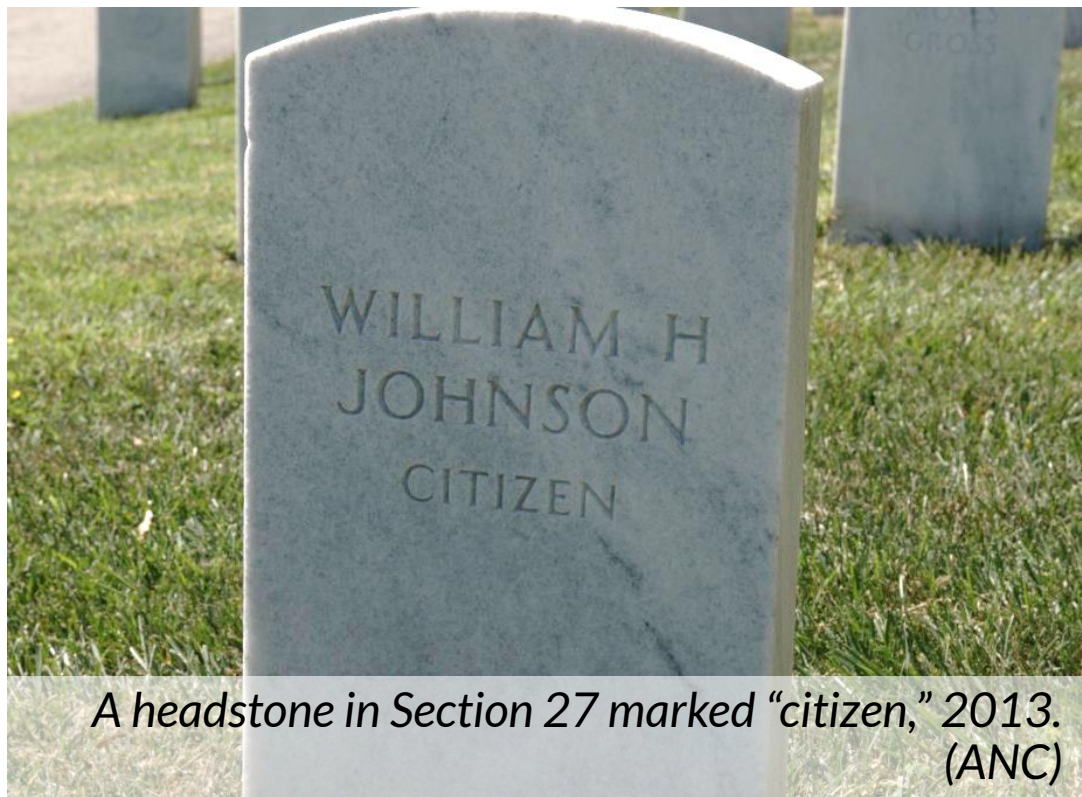


SECTION 27



During and after the Civil War, the U.S. government assisted freedpeople — those who had escaped from slavery or were freed by the Emancipation Proclamation — in many ways, including providing burial assistance.

Freedpeople who lived in and around Washington, D.C. and were too poor to afford a proper burial could be buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



A headstone in Section 27 marked "citizen," 2013. (ANC)

From 1864 to 1867, more than 3,800 African American civilians were buried in Section 27, significantly outnumbering the number of soldiers (both White and Black) buried in the section.

While many assume that the African American civilians buried in Section 27 were residents of the nearby Freedman's Village (present-day Sections 4, 8, 20 and 34), burial records indicate no residents of Freedman's Village are buried here.



NEAR SECTION 27



Private William Henry Christman Section 27, Grave 19

Christman, a 20-year-old farmer, enlisted in the U.S. Army in March 1864. Like many other Civil War soldiers, he soon succumbed to illness, dying from rubella in a Washington, D.C. hospital on May 11, 1864. Two days later, he became the first soldier interred at Arlington.



Civil Rights Activist Medgar Evers Section 36, Grave 1431

As Mississippi field secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Evers recruited hundreds of members, organized voter registration drives and economic boycotts, and investigated racially based crimes, including the 1955 lynching and murder of Emmett Till. In response, a Ku Klux Klan member shot and killed Evers in front of his home on June 12, 1963. The following year, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 — one victory in the struggle for which Evers sacrificed his life.



NEAR SECTION 27



President William Howard Taft Section 30, Grave S-14

President William Howard Taft, the 27th president of the United States, was the first president to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery, and one of only two presidents buried here. Taft is the only person to have served both as president of the United States (1909-1913) and as chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court (1921-1930).



*William Howard Taft, undated.
(White House)*



Christman's headstone, undated. (ANC)



Medgar Evers, 1963. (LOC)

JOHN F. KENNEDY GRAVESITE



STOP 3

John F. Kennedy Gravesite

President John F. Kennedy visited Arlington National Cemetery in March 1963. After his visit, the *New York Times* and many other papers reported that Kennedy said, "I could stay here forever," while looking at the view of Washington, D.C. from Arlington House. Eight months later, he was assassinated.

After his death, Kennedy's family interred him at this spot. An eternal flame, lit by Jacqueline Kennedy, was added to the site in July 1967.



*View of the Kennedy Memorial and Washington from Arlington House, 2018.
(ANC/Elizabeth Fraser)*



JOHN F. KENNEDY GRAVESITE

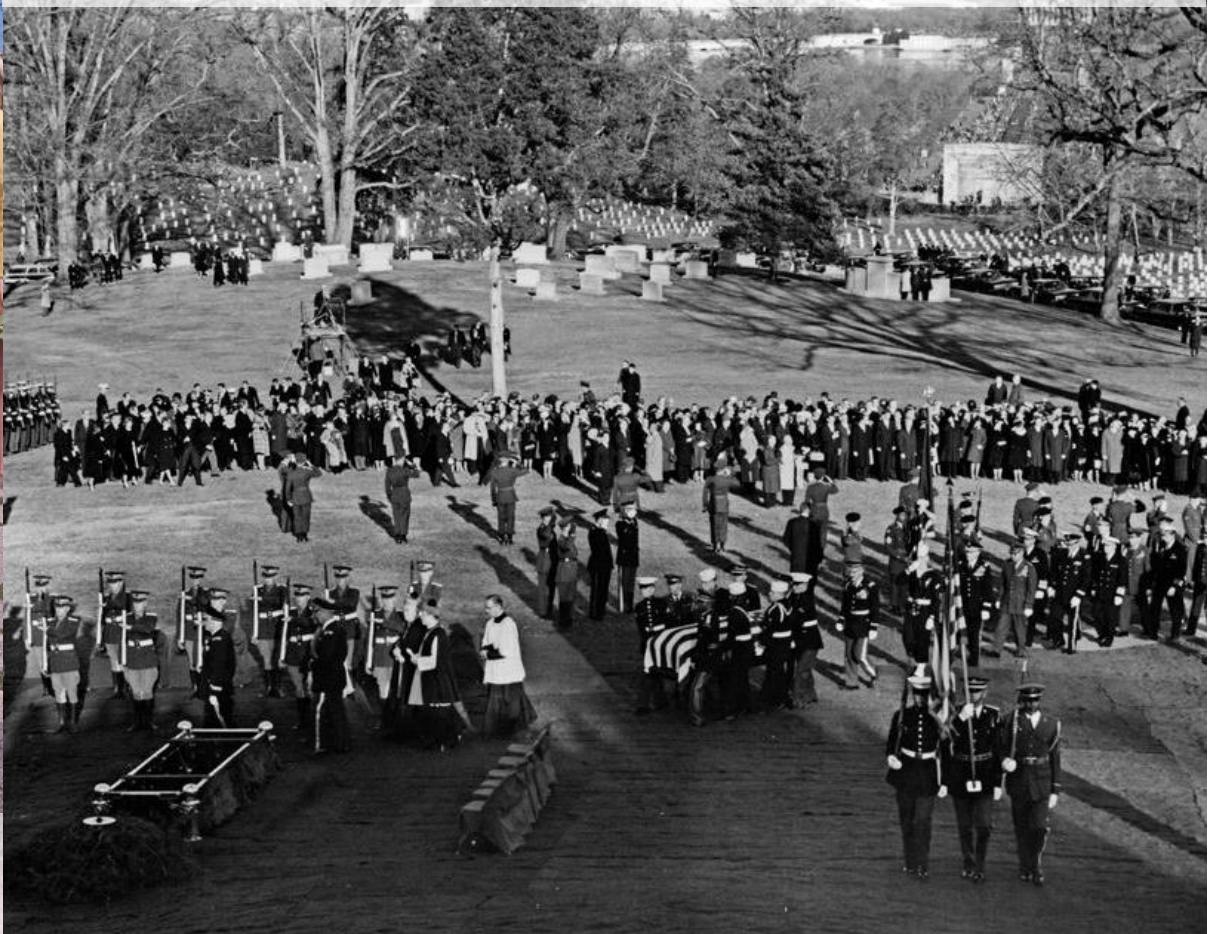


President Kennedy's burial at Arlington elevated the prominence of the cemetery. During the first year after Kennedy's death, up to 3,000 people per hour visited his gravesite, and on weekends an estimated 50,000 people visited. Three years after Kennedy's death, more than 16 million people had visited the gravesite. For years after President Kennedy's televised state funeral, the number of requests for burial at Arlington grew exponentially.



Visitors at the eternal flame, circa 1967. (LOC)

Kennedy's burial at Arlington, November 25, 1963. (JFK Presidential Library and Museum/Abbie Rowe)



Kennedy is one of only two presidents buried at Arlington. The other is William Howard Taft (Section 30), who died in 1930. Besides Taft, Woodrow Wilson was the only other president buried in the National Capital region. (President Wilson is buried at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.)

NEAR JFK GRAVESITE

Other members of the Kennedy family are buried in graves nearby, including First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis; two of the couple's children who died in infancy; and JFK's brothers Joseph P. Kennedy (a U.S. Navy pilot killed during World War II), Robert F. Kennedy (senator and U.S. Navy veteran) and Edward M. Kennedy (senator and U.S. Army veteran).

Several Supreme Court justices are buried in nearby Section 5. Visit [ANC's website](#) to learn more.



Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg Section 5, Grave 7016-1

The first Jewish woman appointed to the Supreme Court, and the second female justice, Ruth Bader Ginsburg served on the nation's highest court from 1993 until her death in 2020. Ginsburg had previously co-founded and directed the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Women's Rights Project, winning five of six cases that she argued before the Supreme Court.



Associate Justice Thurgood Marshall Section 6, Grave 40-3

Appointed in 1967, Thurgood Marshall was the first African American Supreme Court justice, and the only Black justice during his 24-year tenure. Marshall argued numerous cases before the Supreme Court — including *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), which held that the racial segregation of public schools violated the Constitution.



STOP 4

Arlington House

George Washington Parke Custis, step-grandson of President George Washington, built Arlington House in the early 19th century. After Custis' death, his daughter, Mary Anna Randolph Custis, inherited the property — a working plantation that included the house, 1,100 acres of land and 196 enslaved men and women. She and her husband, Robert E. Lee, lived at Arlington House until the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861.

On April 20, 1861, Lee resigned from the U.S. Army and pledged his loyalty to the Confederacy. The Lee family fled Arlington House a few weeks later, never to return.





On May 23, 1861, the U.S. Army occupied the Arlington property due to its strategic value on high ground just outside of Washington, D.C. The Army used the house as a headquarters and officers' housing, while soldiers built forts and camps around the property. With the war's mounting death toll, the Army formally designated 200 acres of the property as a military cemetery in 1864.

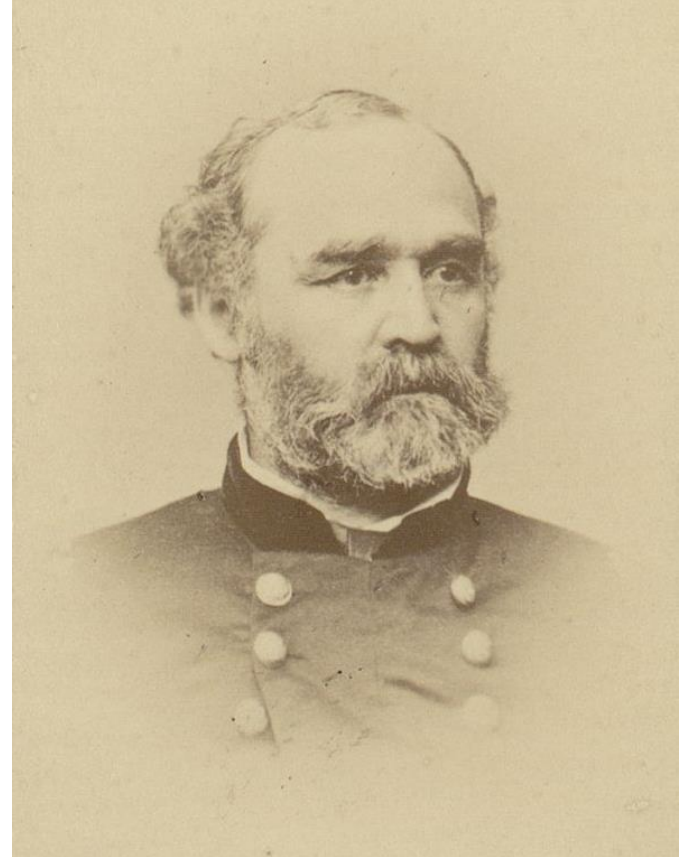
Today, Arlington House is managed by the National Park Service and features exhibits on the estate's history and the people who lived there, both free and enslaved.

NEAR ARLINGTON HOUSE



General Montgomery Meigs Section 1, Grave 1-EH

As quartermaster general of the Army during the Civil War, Meigs directed the establishment of Arlington National Cemetery. In May 1864, he designated part of Robert E. Lee and Mary Custis Lee's former estate, now occupied by U.S. troops, as an Army cemetery.



James Parks Section 15E, Grave 2

Born into slavery on the Custis plantation, James Parks lived on the Arlington estate for nearly 90 years. He gained his freedom in 1862, under the terms of the will left by George Washington Parke Custis. At Arlington, Parks worked for the U.S. Army from 1861 to 1929, digging graves, maintaining cemetery grounds and helping to build forts.



Top: Montgomery Meigs, circa 1865. (LOC/Frederick Gutekunst);
Bottom: James Parks, undated. (NPS)

NEAR ARLINGTON HOUSE



Pierre Charles L'Enfant Section 2, Grave S-3

Pierre L'Enfant was an architect, engineer and city planner. Born in Paris, France in 1754, L'Enfant left in order to join the American Revolution. In 1791, President George Washington appointed him to design the "federal city" that would be the new nation's capital. The "L'Enfant Plan" envisioned Washington, D.C. as a four-quadrant grid, with north-south and east-west streets crossed by grand diagonal avenues.



Tomb of the Civil War Unknowns Section 26

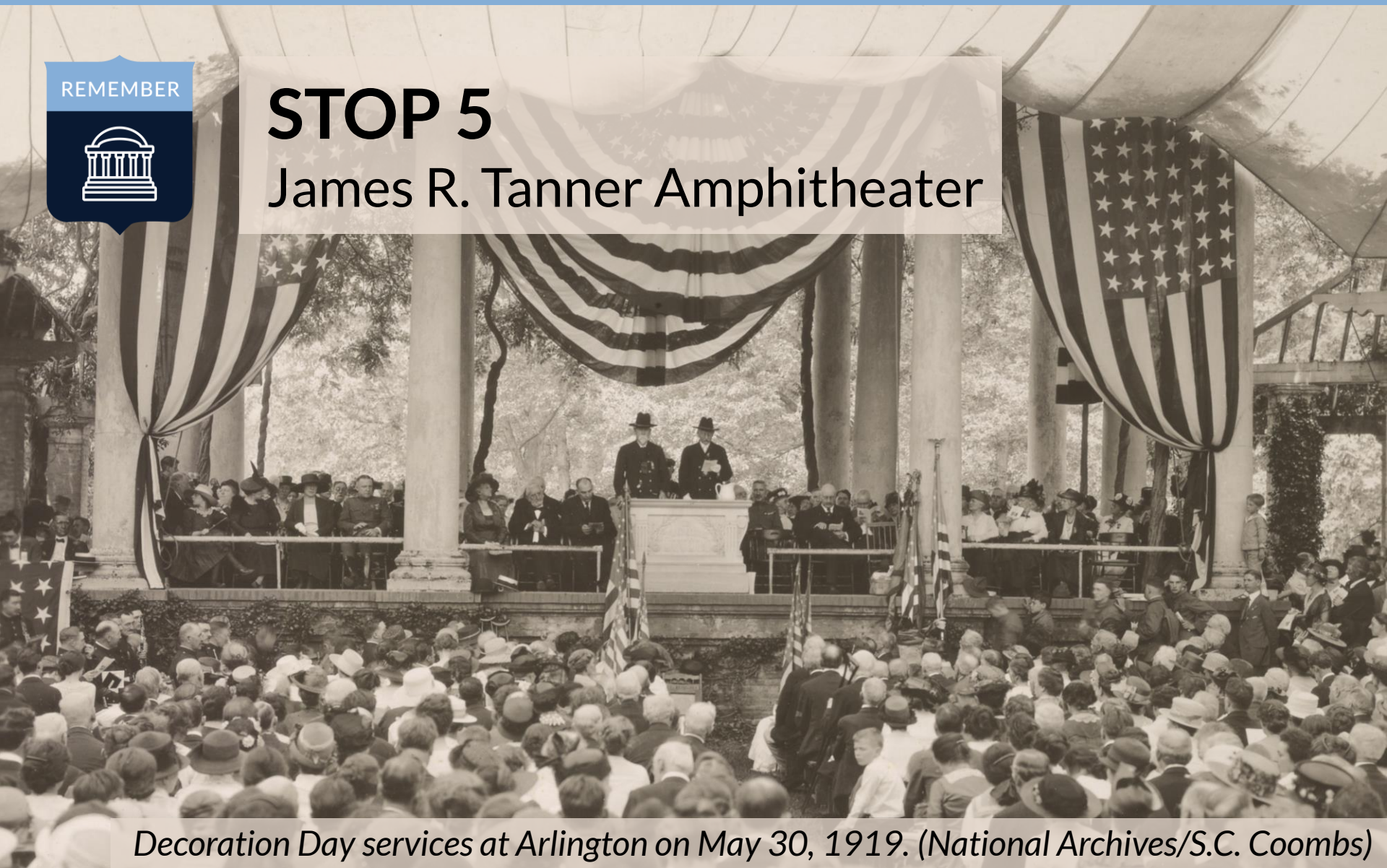
Dedicated in September 1866, this monument contains the remains of 2,111 Civil War soldiers, likely including both Confederate and U.S. Army soldiers. The remains were found scattered across battlefields or in trenches within an approximately 25-mile radius of Washington, D.C. This was the first memorial at Arlington to be dedicated to soldiers who had died in battle and whose remains could not be identified.

JAMES R. TANNER AMPHITHEATER



STOP 5

James R. Tanner Amphitheater



Decoration Day services at Arlington on May 30, 1919. (National Archives/S.C. Coombs)

The James R. Tanner Amphitheater, or the “Old Amphitheater,” marks the site of the first national Memorial Day commemoration held at Arlington National Cemetery on May 30, 1868. Originally called Decoration Day, Memorial Day began as a day of remembrance for U.S. soldiers who had died in the Civil War. The ceremony became so popular that ANC decided to build an amphitheater to accommodate the crowds. It was dedicated in 1873, at the fifth Decoration Day ceremony.

As part of Arlington’s 150th anniversary commemoration in 2014, it was renamed as the James R. Tanner Amphitheater, in honor of a wounded Civil War veteran who became a prominent advocate for veterans’ rights.

SPACE SHUTTLE MEMORIALS



STOP 6 Section 46

NASA is not a military organization, but it has many

ties to the military. During NASA's first two decades, those selected to become astronauts tended to be current or former military pilots.

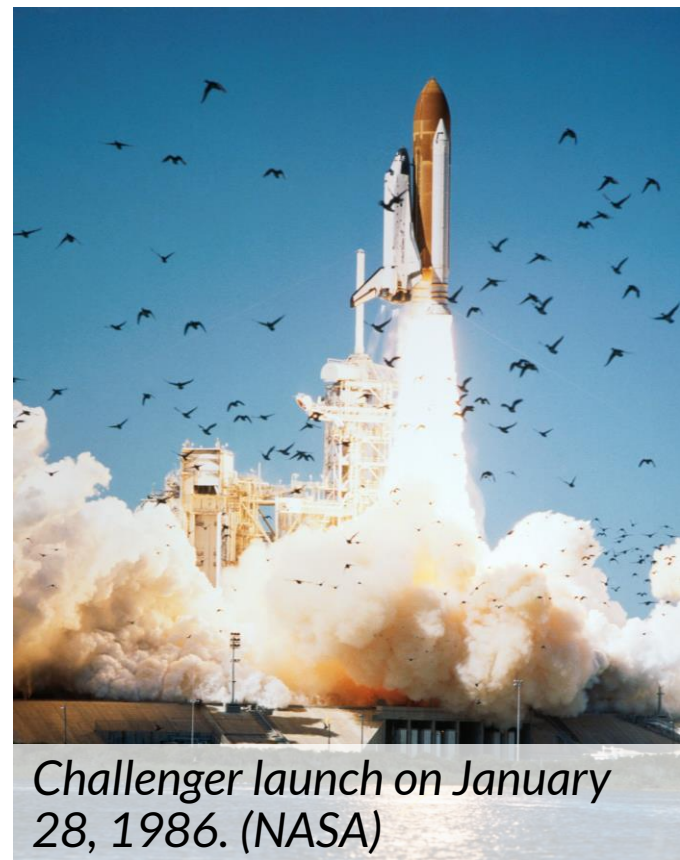
The two memorials here commemorate the Space Shuttle Challenger and Columbia disasters, which each claimed the lives of their entire crews.

SPACE SHUTTLE CHALLENGER

Challenger was NASA's second space shuttle, and during its three years in service it flew nine successful missions. On January 28, 1986, the Challenger exploded just 73 seconds after takeoff, killing all seven crew. The commingled cremated remains of the Challenger astronauts are buried here beneath a memorial that features their faces and names.



The crew of Challenger's final mission, November 1985. (NASA)



Challenger launch on January 28, 1986. (NASA)



SPACE SHUTTLE MEMORIALS



SPACE SHUTTLE COLUMBIA

Columbia was NASA's first space shuttle, taking its first flight on April 12, 1981. On February 1, 2003, while returning from its 28th



Crew of Columbia's final mission, October 1, 2001.
(NASA)

mission to space, Columbia broke apart as it reentered the atmosphere. All seven crew were killed. The memorial honors all seven, and three astronauts whose remains could be identified individually (David Brown, Laurel Blair Salton Clark and Michael P. Anderson) also have gravesites nearby.

Notable astronauts buried at Arlington include:

- John Hershel Glenn, Jr. (Section 35, Grave 1543)
- Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom (Section 3, Grave 2503-E)
- Alan L. Bean (Section 11, Grave 249-2-B)
- Roger B. Chaffee (Section 3, Grave 2502-F)

Learn more about the astronauts buried at Arlington on [ANC's website](#) and in the [Explorers education module](#). Only some choose to include the designation of astronaut on their headstone.

USS MAINE MEMORIAL



STOP 7 Section 46



USS Maine, circa 1897. (LOC)

On February 15, 1898, an explosion in the harbor of Havana, Cuba, ripped open the hull of the USS Maine, sinking the Navy battleship and killing more than 260 of the American sailors on board.

The Maine had been sent to Cuba to protect American interests during the Cuban fight for independence from Spain. Fueled by concern for the condition of the Cuban rebels, general opposition to European colonization of the Americas, and public outrage over the destruction of the Maine, the U.S. declared war on Spain on April 25, 1898.

USS MAINE MEMORIAL

Although the Spanish-American War lasted for only a few months in 1898, it had tremendous historical impact. The U.S. acquired international holdings, established itself as the dominant nation in the Western Hemisphere, and began a new era as one of the major world powers.

Arlington has more Spanish-American War memorials than any other single site in the continental United States. The USS Maine Mast Memorial overlooks the remains of those who died when the ship exploded.



Burial of sailors from USS Maine explosion, December 28, 1899. (LOC)

Dedication of the USS Maine Mast Memorial on May 30, 1915. (LOC)



Learn more about this war in the [Spanish-American War education module](#).



NURSES MEMORIAL



REMEMBER



STOP 8

Section 21



Nurses Memorial, April 2020. (ANC/Elizabeth Fraser)

Section 21, sometimes known as the “Nurses Section,” is the resting place of 653 nurses who heroically served in the U.S. armed forces. Against a background of evergreens, an 11-foot-tall white Tennessee marble statue designed by Frances Rich appears to gaze reverently upon the deceased nurses that lie before her.

Representing "The Spirit of Nursing," the figure wears simple attire with her hair pinned up, a practical style many early twentieth-century nurses adopted while working. Unveiled in 1938, the statue initially honored nurses who died during their service in the Army or Navy. Its meaning has since expanded to include all nurses who served in the U.S. armed forces.

NEAR NURSES MEMORIAL



Namahoyke "Namah" Curtis

Section 21, Grave 15999-A-1

Namahoyke Curtis, known as Namah, was a prominent African American nurse in late-19th-century Washington, D.C. During the Spanish-American War (1898), the Surgeon General assigned her to recruit other Black women to serve as U.S. Army contract nurses. She recruited as many as 32 Black nurses for the war effort. Curtis was of African American, European and American Indian descent, and she married Dr. Austin Curtis, a leading Black physician and the superintendent of Freedmen's Hospital in D.C.

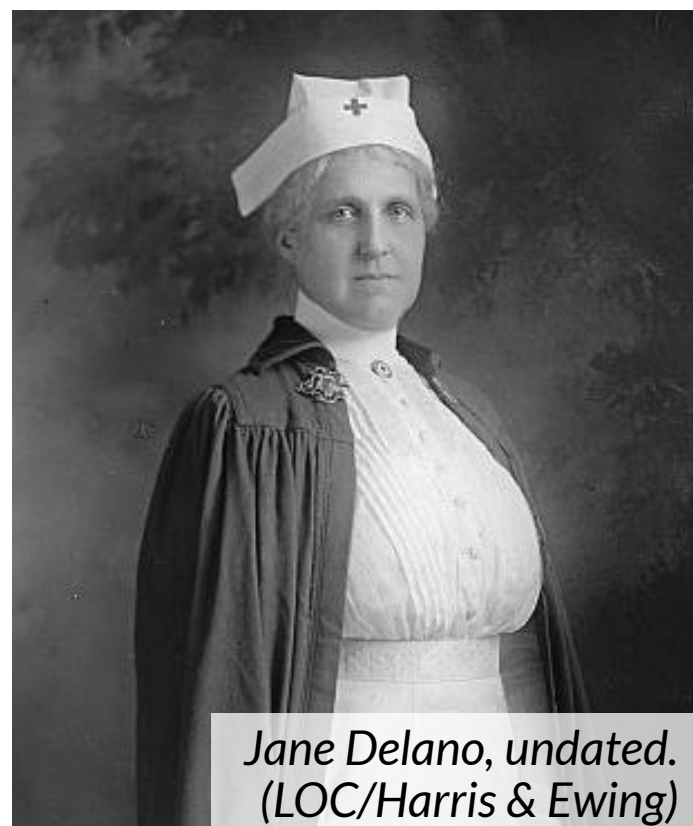


Jane Delano

Section 21, Grave 6

A distant relative of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Jane Delano served as superintendent of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps from 1909 to 1912. In 1909 founded the American Red Cross Nursing Service. By the

outbreak of World War I, the American Red Cross Nursing Service had more than 8,000 registered and trained nurses ready for emergency response. Delano was on a Red Cross mission in France when she died in 1919; her last words reportedly were, "I must get back to my work." She was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and reinterred a year later in the "Nurses' Section" of the cemetery.



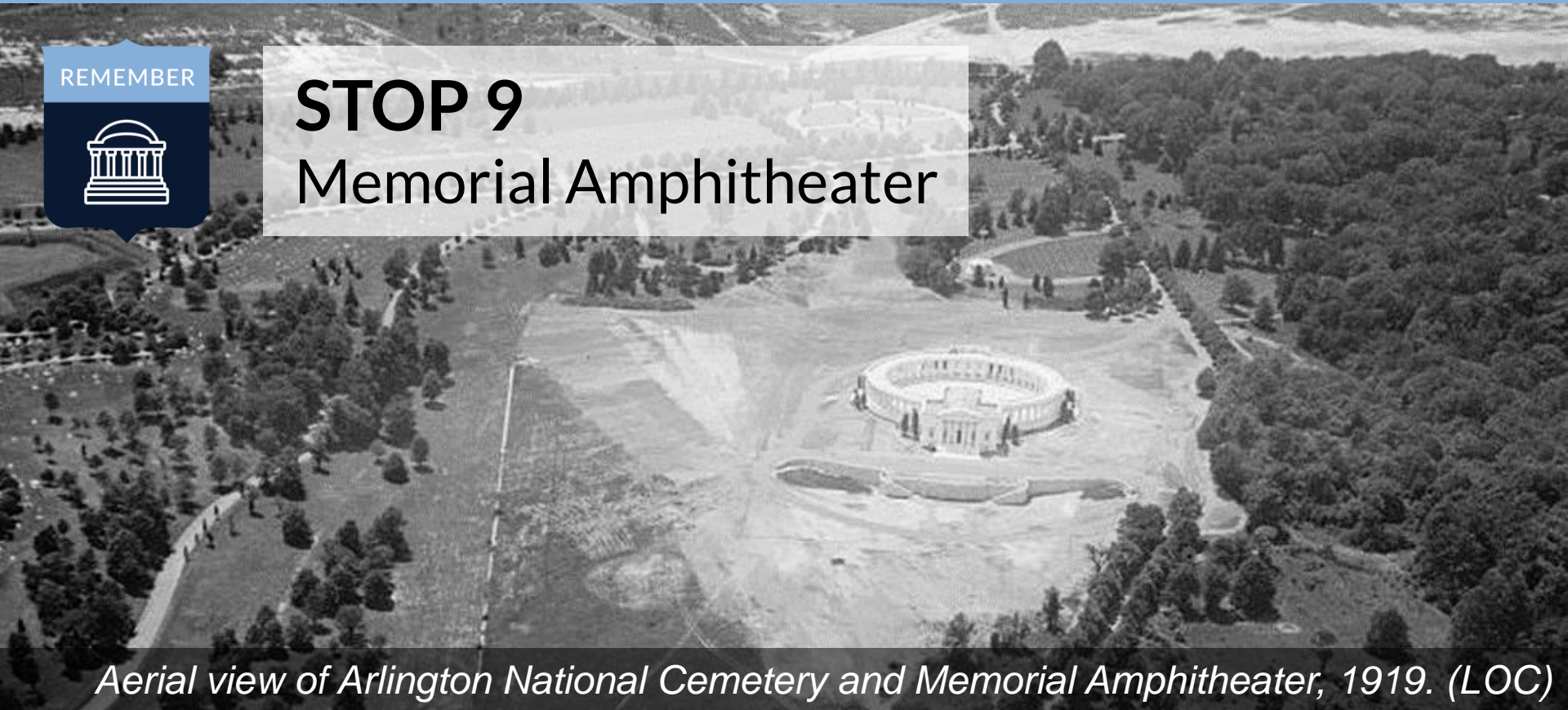
*Jane Delano, undated.
(LOC/Harris & Ewing)*

MEMORIAL AMPHITHEATER



STOP 9

Memorial Amphitheater



Aerial view of Arlington National Cemetery and Memorial Amphitheater, 1919. (LOC)

By the early 1900s, Arlington National Cemetery's original amphitheater — now called the James R. Tanner Amphitheater — could no longer accommodate the large crowds that flocked to ceremonies held there. Since its dedication in 1920, Memorial Amphitheater has served as the site for the National Memorial Day Observance; after 1954, it has also hosted the National Veterans Day Observance.

Additionally, Memorial Amphitheater has hosted memorial and funeral services for several notable Americans, including every Unknown Soldier, [Colonel Charles Young](#) (Section 3, Grave 1730-B) and [General John J. Pershing](#) (Section 34, Grave S-19).

The construction of Memorial Amphitheater marked a new stage in Arlington National Cemetery's significance as a national shrine and a monument to America's service members.

★ NEAR ★ MEMORIAL AMPHITHEATER



First Lieutenant Audie Murphy

Section 46, Grave 366-11

After altering his birth certificate to enlist in the Army before his 18th birthday, Audie Murphy became one of the nation's most-decorated soldiers in World War II, earning 28 medals (including three from France and one from Belgium). After the war, Murphy became a professional actor, starring in multiple popular movies.



Lieutenant Colonel Matt Urban

Section 7A, Grave 40

On June 14, 1944, Urban received a serious leg wound during combat in France. In mid-July, he was recuperating in a hospital in England when he learned that his unit had suffered significant casualties. He left the hospital and hitchhiked back to the 2nd Battalion command post near St. Lo, France. Under heavy enemy fire, he was wounded three more times in August and early September 1944, each time refusing evacuation until his battalion was secure. Urban's Medal of Honor recommendation was lost for 35 years; however, in 1980, he was finally awarded this highest honor.



Sergeant Joe Louis (Barrow)

Section 2, Grave S-3

Between 1937 and 1949, Joe Louis was boxing's "Heavyweight Champion of the World." He held that title longer, and defended it more often, than any other boxer in history. He was one of the first great African American idols for a whole generation of Americans.

★ NEAR ★ MEMORIAL AMPHITHEATER

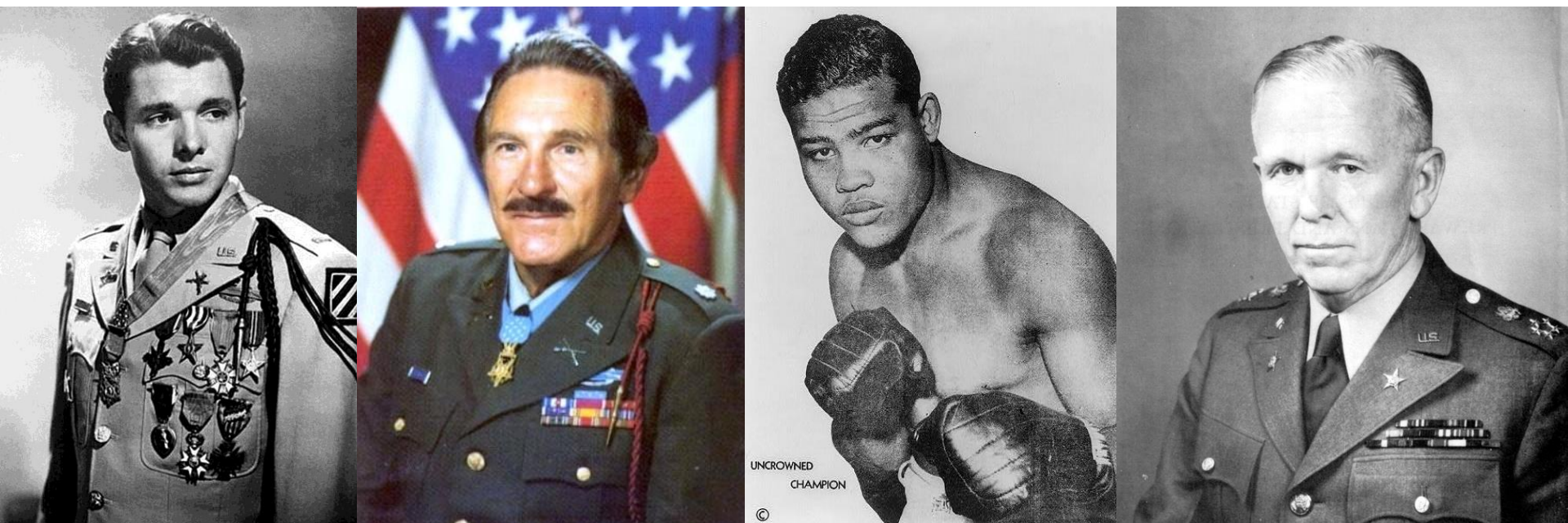


General George C. Marshall

Section 7, Grave 8198

One of the most distinguished military and diplomatic leaders of the 20th century, Marshall served as chief of staff of the U.S. Army during World War II (1939-1945). He directed the largest expansion of the Army in U.S. history, from fewer than 200,000 men before the war to more than eight million. On December 16, 1944, Marshall was promoted to General of the Army (five stars), the nation's highest rank.

After the war, President Harry Truman appointed him secretary of state (1947-1949) and secretary of defense (1950-1951); he is the only person to have held both positions. Marshall's diplomatic career was as historically significant as his military one. Most notably, he conceived an ambitious, highly successful program for the postwar economic recovery of Western Europe — known as the "Marshall Plan" — for which he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953.



From L-R: Audie Murphy, 1948. (U.S. Army); Matt Urban after receiving the Medal of Honor on July 19, 1980. (U.S. Army); Joe Louis, 1936. (LOC); George Marshall, undated. (U.S. Army)

TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER



STOP 10

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was built in 1921 to honor unknown soldiers from World War I. Initially the burial place of a single Unknown Soldier from World War I, it eventually became a national memorial to honor the military service and sacrifice of all unknown service members. Today, it holds the remains of unknown soldiers from both world wars and the Korean War, as well as an empty crypt to honor missing service members from the Vietnam War.



*Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, 2020.
Crypts (L-R): Korean War, Vietnam War, World War II. (ANC)*



*Peace, Victory and Valor on the front of the Tomb sarcophagus, 2020.
(ANC/Elizabeth Fraser)*



TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER



GUARDING THE TOMB

Each element of the Tomb Guard's routine has meaning. The Guard marches 21 steps down the black mat behind the Tomb, turns and faces east for 21 seconds, turns and faces north for 21 seconds, and then takes 21 steps down the mat. Next, the Guard places his/her weapon on the shoulder closest to the visitors, signifying that he or she stands between the Tomb and any possible threat. The number 21 symbolizes the highest symbolic military honor that can be bestowed: the 21-gun salute.



First permanent guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, March 25, 1926. (LOC)

Tomb Guard, 2018. (ANC/Elizabeth Fraser)



After visiting the Tomb, take a few moments to visit Memorial Amphitheater's Display Room, at the top of the steps to the west of the Tomb. View historical artifacts related to the Tomb and explore how people have honored and remembered unknown soldiers since 1921.

Learn more about the Tomb and unknown soldiers in the [Tomb of the Unknown Soldier education module](#).



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PHOTOGRAPHS

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Page 15: Frederick Gutekunst, [Montgomery C. Meigs, bust portrait, facing slightly right, wearing military uniform], 1865, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2005677227/>.

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Page 27: Elizabeth Fraser, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, October 20, 2015, Arlington National Cemetery, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtonnatl/50494696432/>.

Page 27: Elizabeth Fraser, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Front Façade, October 28, 2020, Arlington National Cemetery, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtonnatl/50540500886/>.

Page 28: 1st Permanent guard at tomb of unknown soldier, [Arlington, Va.], March 25, 1926, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2016850884/>.

Page 28: Elizabeth Fraser, Fall Foliage 2018, November 2, 2018, Arlington National Cemetery, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtonnatl/30793532357/>.