

Philadelphia City National Cemetery
Haines Street and Limekiln Pike
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19138

Description

The Philadelphia National Cemetery, established in 1862, is located approximately 22 miles north of the center of the city and about two miles north of Germantown. The 13.3-acre site is rectangular in shape, and the grounds are enclosed by a stone wall topped by four-foot iron picket fencing. The main entrance is situated at the southeast corner and is protected by a wrought iron gate supported by stone masonry posts, with a pedestrian gate on each side. The entrance driveway leads to the flagpole. The utility building is located about midway along the north boundary of the cemetery. A rostrum is situated near the northeast corner of the cemetery. The layout and design of this cemetery are unique among the earlier national cemeteries. Instead of a formal, military-scaled site plan, it was influenced by the designs of Olmstead, a landscape architect of the late 19th century. Here the roads curve and create a natural park environment, focusing on tree plantings and other natural resources. The trees are mature, tall shade trees, and the plantings are sited in natural groupings, not in formal, symmetrical patterns.



The entrance is located at the southeast corner of the cemetery at the intersection of Haines Street and Limekiln Road. It has a wrought iron vehicular gate, 19 feet, 4 inches wide, with a four-foot pedestrian gate on each side. There are two Ashlar cut granite piers on each side of the three openings. The base and caps are limestone with the most elaborate caps on the piers at each side of the vehicular gate. The entry was constructed in 1940, replacing the original 12-foot-wide gate which could no longer accommodate vehicles.

The cemetery contains 26 sections of varying sizes. Two loop roads further divide the sections. A Confederate burial area, located in the northwestern area of the cemetery, contains the remains of 184 known and 224 unknown soldiers. Both the known and the unknown soldiers are buried as groups, as their remains could not be individually identified. The names of the known soldiers are inscribed on a monument in the Confederate section, and a marker commemorates the memory of the 224 unknown soldiers. There are 11 interments in the Distinguished Service Section and 303 burials in the Officers Section, both located near the center of the cemetery. Graves in these sections are marked by upright marble headstones, except for one in the Officers Section, which is marked with a private monument (Galisha Pennypacker, a Medal of Honor recipient). There are three sections containing the interments of cremated remains, and these graves are marked with flat marble markers.

A brick and concrete utility building, 22 feet, 4 inches by 20 feet, 4 inches, was constructed in 1936 and is located on the north boundary at the mid-point of the cemetery. The building contains three garage bays and two public restrooms. This was the standard Corps of Engineers design for utility buildings for national cemeteries in the mid-1930's. In 1963, a flat roof addition was constructed. The flat/pitched roof is asphalt shingles.

A new ashlar cut granite rostrum, 21 feet by 30 feet, located near the north boundary just east of the flagpole, was constructed in 1939. It is a semi-circular structure with Tuscan columns and an ashlar stone base with wrought iron railing. It is the American interpretation of the Beaux Arts classicism of the early to mid-twentieth century. This was a standard rostrum design used in the national cemeteries. The addition ensured continued use of the cemetery on special occasions and added to the solemnity of the site.

Noted Burials

Two Medal of Honor recipients are buried in the national cemetery:

Galisha Pennypacker, Colonel, 97th Pennsylvania Infantry - He is buried in the Officers Section, Grave 175, and his grave is marked with a private monument.

Alphonse Girandy, Seaman, U. S. Navy - He is buried in Section N, Grave 66, and his grave is marked with a special marker inscribed with an enlarged gold-leafed replica of the medal of the United States Navy and the words "MEDAL OF HONOR."

Significant Monuments/Memorials

Mexican War Monument - This granite monument is located near Section P and measures four feet by six feet, is approximately 20 feet high, and commemorates soldiers of the Mexican War whose remains were transferred to the Philadelphia National Cemetery from the Glenwood Cemetery on May 15, 1927. Its design was influenced by the Gothic revival. Three sides of the monument are inscribed with names of 136 of the soldiers along with their ranks, dates of death, and ages. Although the remains of 169 soldiers and one widow were transferred to the national cemetery, not all their names are inscribed on the monument.



Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Monument - This rusticated granite monument is located in the Confederate Section and is approximately nine feet high. The base measures approximately six feet square. The remains of 187 Confederate soldiers are buried under this monument. Their names, along with their companies and regiments, are inscribed on three sides of the monument.

There are also two commemorative markers within the Philadelphia National Cemetery:

Revolutionary War Memorial Marker - This is a large granite boulder with a bronze plaque, approximately three feet square, located near Section P.

Confederate Marker - This marker, located in the Confederate section, is a flat stone slab, two feet by six feet by five inches.

Civil War Activity in Area

On April 15, 1861, three days after the start of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln called upon Pennsylvania for 16 regiments of volunteers. Philadelphia responded with characteristic energy to provide the Government with soldiers properly armed and equipped as far and as fast as they were needed. Under this first call by the President, eight regiments, one cavalry troop, one artillery company, and one independent company, were furnished by Philadelphia to serve three months. In the latter days of May, a rush of enlistments beyond all requirements possessed the youth of the city. In the course of the war, this city was represented in nearly 150 regiments, battalions, independent batteries, cavalry troops, and other detached bodies.

Although there were no battles fought in Philadelphia during the Civil War, the city served as a major general support area providing arsenals, supply depots, hospitals, and other related facilities. United States arsenals in the Philadelphia area included the Frankford Arsenal at Bridesburg and the Philadelphia Depot of the Quartermaster's Department, U. S. Army, on Gray's Ferry Road, commonly called "The Schuylkill Arsenal." The Frankford Arsenal covered 59 acres on the shore of the Delaware River. At the opening of the war, the materials on hand were supposed to include muskets, saltpeter, sulphur, powder, percussion caps, primers, and cartridges. Ammunition supplies were sent from the Frankford Arsenal to "the front," and space was being cleared for an augmented force of workers to be employed in the preparation of ammunition. Throughout the Civil War, the Philadelphia Depot was an important depot for uniforms, blankets, and equipment for the outfitting of the armies of the Republic. In addition to the large regular force employed in the several workshops and warehouses, many persons were kept employed in thousands of homes in that section of the city. The operations here were so constantly urgent that warehouses outside the depot were leased by the Government.

Fort Mifflin, within sight of the present Navy Yard at League Island, was the only point of protection afforded Philadelphia. During the Civil War, a garrison was maintained at Fort Mifflin, where large supplies of ammunition were stored. Here also was the execution ground for deserters and "bounty jumpers." Fort Delaware, the chief defensive work for the Port of Philadelphia, was located in mid-stream, on an island of 125 acres. In 1861, its armament consisted of 19 columbiads, 14 eight-inch guns, and a large number of smaller cannon. The range of gunfire was three miles. It was admirably adapted for a military prison camp. The space outside of the fort was gradually covered with barracks for the prisoners of war who were guarded here at a later



time. It was reported that on July 1, 1863, the prisoners at the fort numbered 3,576. Following the battle of Gettysburg, in excess of 9,000 additional prisoners arrived at the fort, which necessitated more extensive hospital facilities. In September 1863, a new hospital containing 600 beds, was opened for the use of both the prisoners and their guards.

The first United States Navy Yard at Philadelphia was located in the First Ward, just south of Washington Avenue and fronting upon the Delaware River. The Civil War gave employment at this Navy Yard to a force of mechanics numbering, at times, 2,500 to 3,000 men. A remarkable achievement was the building of the sloop of war *Tuscarora*, which was constructed in 58 days and launched on August 24, 1861. This ship was taken to New York for her armament and, in a few months, was busy hunting down Confederate privateers in European waters. In the course of the war, many notable sea fighters were built at this historic yard. On June 18, 1862, the city councils had undertaken a movement to induce the Government to establish a new navy yard at League Island, and the old Navy Yard was sold at auction on December 2, 1875. By far, the most important vessel built at this port for war purposes and the most formidable ship of the navy was the *New Ironsides*. In the course of the war, she participated in 20 battles, where she engaged the heavy Confederate batteries at short range. While laid up at League Island in 1866, she was destroyed by fire. In other private shipyards, hundreds of skilled mechanics were also busy with Government ship construction and repair throughout the war.

The Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon was organized in May 1861. Troops from New England, New York State, and New Jersey began moving southward in the spring of 1861. Steamboats conveyed them to the foot of Washington Avenue, where trains awaited them. Patriotic families living in the vicinity of the navy yard offered refreshments to the extent of their limited abilities, after which a small boat shop was leased as a free refreshment saloon. Buildings were gradually added, as funds permitted, until full regiments were promptly provided with washing facilities and bountiful meals at the hands of the hospitable men, women, and maids of old Southwark. In September 1861, the needs of sick and wounded soldiers led to the establishment of the first military hospital opened in the city. This hospital ministered to thousands of sick and wounded soldiers and was recognized as a regular Government establishment. The Cooper Shop Volunteer Refreshment Saloon was established on May 26, 1861. Emulating its neighbor, the "Union," its Committee was actively engaged in patriotic work. The Cooper Shop Hospital ministered to thousands of sick and wounded brought there. There was rivalry between the two refreshment saloons, but it was the kindly competition of devoted men and women actuated by the highest of motives. Neither sought nor had government, state or city aid, each had its own hospital annex, and each endured to the end of the war.

Throughout the war, Philadelphia was constantly thronged with soldiers who had been discharged from the army, many of them destitute and homeless. The Cooper Shop Volunteer Refreshment Committee established a retreat called the "Cooper Shop Soldiers Home," which opened on December 22, 1863. Beneficiaries of this home were soldiers and sailors who had been honorably discharged. The Soldiers Home in the City of Philadelphia was incorporated on April 9, 1864. In the spring of 1866, the managers secured from the Legislature the large new State Arsenal building for their purposes. A school for the instruction of maimed inmates in vocational education and a hospital were the leading features. The Soldiers Home continued until June 11, 1872.

The Government decided to create several great army hospital establishments in Philadelphia for the reception of sick and wounded soldiers and sailors without relation to statehood. The first modest hospital opened in the city, conducted by the Union Volunteer Soldiers Refreshment Saloon Committee. It was intended to care for the sick and wounded men of regiments from other states passing through the city. These hospitals, the majority being located in old buildings adapted to the purpose, numbered 24. After the West Philadelphia Hospital was opened in June 1862, several of the smaller hospitals were closed and upon the completion of larger hospitals, the number was further reduced. In addition, there were several hospitals maintained by citizens, and both the Pennsylvania and St. Joseph's Hospitals cared for a large number of soldiers at different periods of the war. By Act of the Legislature dated February 28, 1862, Surgeon General H. H. Smith was directed to send a hospital ship to bring sick and wounded men from the scene of the war. The steamer W. Whilldin was chartered and proceeded to Yorktown, Virginia, and returned with a large number of men suffering from the results of the Peninsular Campaign. It was the first of many vessels thus laden which came up the Delaware River in the course of the war. A military hospital car was also maintained between Washington and Philadelphia attached to regular trains and making three trips weekly. The "high tide" of military hospital service in Philadelphia came with the battle of Gettysburg. There were more than 10,000 soldiers to be cared for by the host of surgeons and nurses awaiting them. The annual report of the Philadelphia Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission in 1866, stated that 157,000 soldiers and sailors were cared for in the general hospitals at Philadelphia during the war.

A Naval home and hospital were also maintained at Philadelphia by the United States Government. It was established in 1826 and located at Gray's Ferry Road and Bainbridge Street. This facility was crowded throughout the Civil War with wounded, sick and retired officers and sailors from the war fleets of the Navy.

The original Philadelphia National Cemetery consisted of several lots within ten different cemeteries in the Philadelphia area where Union soldiers who died in the general hospitals in Philadelphia were buried. In 1885, all interments in the Government-owned lots in these ten cemeteries were disinterred and reinterred in the current site of the Philadelphia National Cemetery.