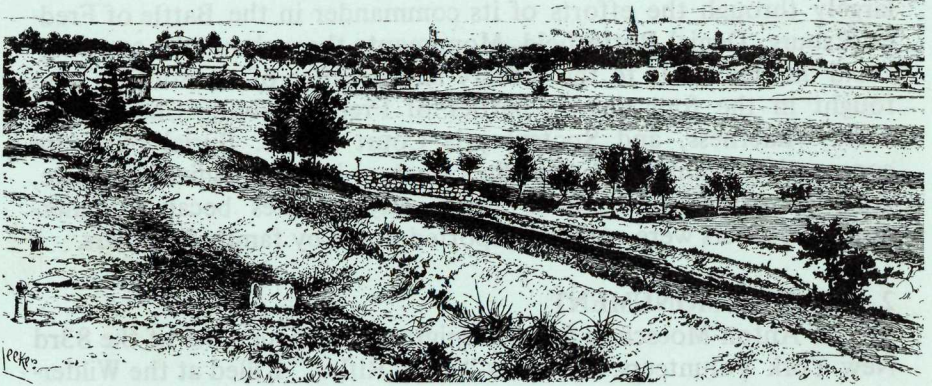


# FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY

## A Walking Tour



View from today's National Cemetery hill during the Civil War

When the Civil War ended, the people of Fredericksburg set about the task of restoring shell-damaged buildings and war-torn lives. But the evidence of the war lingered on, in the trench-scarred hillsides and crude cemetery plots scattered haphazardly across the nearby battlefields. Thousands of battle casualties lay under stark mounds of earth, with very little to identify the soldiers, beyond perhaps, a name scratched on the lid of an ammunition box.

In July 1865, three months after the restoration of peace between the states, Congress authorized the establishment of a National Cemetery in Fredericksburg to honor the Federal soldiers who died on the battlefields or from disease in camp. The site chosen was on Marye's Heights, the formidable Confederate position which had proven so impregnable to repeated Federal attacks on December 13, 1862.

A soldier who fought with the 14th Indiana in the recent war returned to Fredericksburg as a member of a veteran corps assigned the task of locating and identifying the dead. He made these observations in a letter: *"Your correspondent roamed all over the battle field of December 13, 1862. No headboards or monuments mark the spot where the gallant defenders of the old flag fell on that ever-memorable day. The great 'slaughter pen' of Gen. A. E. Burnside is most all under cultivation, enriched with the blood of as brave men as ever answered their country's call."*



As you follow this 30-minute walking tour, you will encounter a steep incline to the top of the hill and uneven ground. A map on the back of this brochure will provide you with the direction of the tour.

### 1. FIFTH CORPS MONUMENT

Dedicated to the service of the Fifth Corps in the war, it was erected largely through the efforts of its commander in the Battle of Fredericksburg, Daniel Butterfield. Monuments throughout the cemetery stand as memorials to the bravery and sacrifice of the soldiers who fought in the four nearby battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House. Burial plots are consecutively numbered; thus the cemetery is not organized by state, unit, or campaign. Soldiers are mostly privates because higher-ranking officers were often transported home by family members.

### 2. MOESCH MONUMENT

Joseph Anton Moesch, a Swiss immigrant, was a member of the 83rd New York Volunteers, known as "Swiss Rifles." Killed at the Wilderness while leading his regiment, Colonel Moesch's body was placed in an unmarked grave on the battlefield. Years after the war, his comrades returned to have his remains reinterred in the National Cemetery and marked with a suitable monument. Few are so honored. Of the 15,243 Civil War soldiers resting here, only 2,473 are in identified graves. You will see small stones which mark the graves of the unknown. Below the consecutive grave number is a numeral which indicates the number of interments in that plot.

### 3. BATTLE PAINTING

From atop these heights you have a panoramic view of the countryside below. The painting and two-minute push-button program will help you recreate the battle scene. Much has changed since that cold afternoon of December 13, 1862, when the roar of battle focused on this ridge. Green-carpeted terraces now replace the rugged slopes. It took several years for military details from Washington to complete the task of building the cemetery and interring the thousands of Federal soldiers.

### 4. PARKER'S BATTERY MEMORIAL

Two guns of Parker's Virginia Battery were in position here when Federal troops broke the Confederate line on May 3, 1863. This action is sometimes called the Second Battle of Fredericksburg, but it was only part of the larger Chancellorsville campaign fought primarily ten miles west of town. Though this ridge had been a Confederate defensive line, no Southern soldiers are buried here. The

Southern dead are interred in the Fredericksburg Confederate Cemetery and the Spotsylvania Confederate Cemetery. Local organizations were largely responsible for giving these soldiers a final resting place.

### 5. HUMPHREYS' DIVISION MONUMENT

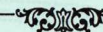
Commanding the center of the cemetery, this monument commemorates the charge of General Andrew A. Humphreys' Division of Pennsylvania Infantry, Fifth Corps, on December 13, 1862. This was the last and most nearly successful of several attacks directed toward Marye's Heights and the Confederate defenses. Ironically, many who lost their lives in these attacks now rest peacefully on this same ridge.

### 6. WILLIS CEMETERY

The Willis Cemetery, enclosed by the brick wall, has stood since before the Civil War on what was then known as Willis Hill. The stone gate posts still bear the marks of war. The Willis House, which stood at about the site of the present post-war residence, burned before the war began. Beyond the Willis home and out of view stood Brompton, the home of the neighboring Marye family. The two homes were separated by a gap in the ridge. Due to the national attention focused here in 1862 and 1863, the name Marye's Heights came to identify the entire ridge.

### 7. 127TH PENNSYLVANIA VOLUNTEER MONUMENT

The 127th Pennsylvania was a nine-month unit. Its only battle experience came in the assaults against Marye's Heights on December 13, 1862 and May 3, 1863. Near this monument and throughout the cemetery are several plaques containing verses of the poem "The Bivouac of the Dead." Written by Theodore O'Hara to commemorate Kentuckians killed in the Mexican War, the poem has since become associated with many national cemeteries.



Registers for the National Cemetery and both Confederate cemeteries may be consulted in the Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center. Since the Civil War, a few local veterans of more recent wars, and some of their wives, have been buried in the cemetery, increasing the total number of interments to about 15,300. The cemetery was officially closed to further burials in the 1940's.

Countless thousands died in the Civil War in defense of their home, state, or nation. General Robert E. Lee described the cost aptly from a vantage point just south of this ridge during the Battle of Fredericksburg: *"It is well war is so terrible—we should grow too fond of it."*



