

Annapolis National Cemetery
800 West Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Description

The Annapolis National Cemetery, established in 1862, is located at the intersection of West Street and Taylor Avenue. The site may be described as a parallelogram, enclosed by a rubble stone wall, 3-5 feet high, 1,763 linear feet, laid in mortar with granite coping. Approximately 450 feet of the stone wall, beginning in the southwest corner of the cemetery, was removed in 1951 and replaced with chain link fencing and a concrete curb wall. The main entrance is in the center of the south end, fronting on the West Street road. The main entry gate, 14 feet wide, was constructed



in 1940, typical of that period when new entries at many of the national cemeteries replaced original gates that were too narrow to accommodate modern automobiles. This wrought iron gate is marked by two limestone columns approximately eight feet high. They are designed in a modern classical form with eagles carved on the front face. From the main entrance, an avenue extends north through the grounds, passing around a small circular mound, on which stands the flagpole. The cemetery contains 15 burial sections. A lodge is situated in the southeastern corner of the grounds, and a utility building and gasoline storage building are located to the east of the lodge. There is also a four-foot-wide wrought iron pedestrian gate, supported by stone piers, on the south side of the lodge. Graves are marked with upright marble headstones.



The lodge was constructed in 1940. This colonial style house is a two-story Flemish bond brick residence with a steep gabled slate roof. The gabled roof, with a chimney at each end, extends down in the rear over a railing enclosed brick portico with one arched opening on the north side enclosed by an aluminum door providing access to the rear yard, with iron railing on the east and south sides. The dwelling looks like a duplex due to the symmetrical placement of two separate white wood paneled doors. The first story contains a living room, dining room, kitchen and office, and the second story contains three bedrooms and a bath. The windows are six-over-six double hung. There is a screened back porch. The lodge contains a basement, and a total of 1,638 square feet of living space.

The brick and concrete utility building with comfort station, 48 feet by 13 feet, 6 inches, was constructed in 1936. The roof is asbestos shingles.

A brick and concrete gasoline storage building, 6 feet, 4 inches by 5 feet, 4 inches, with a tin roof, was constructed in 1936.

There are two small iron field guns mounted on concrete bases in front of the lodge.

Noted Burials

N. Demidoff, Seaman, R.N.S., a Russian sailor who died at Annapolis on February 4, 1864, while serving on a Russian man-of-war docked at Annapolis, is interred in Section G, Grave 2420. The seaman was killed as a result of a bar room brawl in Annapolis. According to a newspaper article estimated to be written in the early 1960's, the victim, a crew member of one of two Russian ships in the port of Annapolis on a goodwill tour, became enraged when a bartender refused to serve him a drink. With two companions, he joined in a free-for-all and was shot dead in the course of the disturbance. The Maryland Legislature, acting on a note from the Russian Embassy, launched an investigation of the incident, an investigation joined by no less than President Lincoln. An apology and a satisfactory explanation evidently followed for top Russian officials, and state and military figures were present at the gravesite for the Russian Orthodox ceremony.

Significant Monuments/Memorials

A cast bronze plaque is affixed to the front of the lodge between the two white paneled doors and reads as follows:

UNITED STATES
NATIONAL MILITARY CEMETERY
ANNAPOLIS
ESTABLISHED 1862
INTERMENTS 2482
KNOWN 2271
UNKNOWN 211

Civil War Activity in Area

There were no Civil War battles in the Annapolis area, but several regiments passed through the city on their way to Washington, after President Abraham Lincoln's call to arms in April 1861. Massachusetts was the first state to respond. Two Massachusetts militia regiments (6th and 8th) had formed a brigade, and their leader was Brigadier General Benjamin Franklin Butler. The 6th Regiment was the first to travel to Washington, D.C.; Butler was back in Philadelphia with the 8th Regiment. While there, the 7th New York Regiment arrived, bound for Washington, but they declined to join Butler. On April 20, the 7th sailed for Washington aboard Boston down the Delaware Bay, out in the Atlantic, up the Chesapeake Bay, hoping to reach Washington via the Potomac River. Information from a fishing boat indicated that Confederate cannon blocked the Potomac, so they continued up the Chesapeake Bay to Annapolis. Butler also left Philadelphia on the 20th by train in the direction of Baltimore. When he arrived at the Susquehanna River at Perryville, he found the bridge burned. He then commandeered the railroad ferry Maryland, loaded the 8th Regiment on board and at about 6 p.m., sailed for Annapolis. He arrived a little past midnight on the 21st. At dawn, he towed U.S.S. Constitution to safety and anchored it in the mouth of the Severn River. Butler did not discharge his troops first, due to the urgency to save this great national symbol. While returning to the Naval Academy to land his troops, Maryland ran hard aground. It was still aground when, on April 22, the 7th New York Regiment arrived, passed Maryland and landed its troops. Then Boston went out to bring in the Massachusetts soldiers stranded on Maryland. The 7th New York and 8th Massachusetts regiments camped on

the grounds of the naval school at Annapolis. On the morning of the 24th, they started on what afterwards proved to be one of the hardest marches on record. The railroad tracks had been torn up between Annapolis and Annapolis Junction and locomotives had been ruined by the inhabitants, in order to prevent travel. A Massachusetts volunteer put the engine together again, after which members of the regiment laid the track again. The Colonel of the 7th decided to march with Butler along the railroad instead of the common road, as he had obtained secret information that led him to suppose that armed insurrectionists awaited them along the latter route. The march lasted until the following morning. Soon after, numerous other regiments arrived and the Union army maintained a strong presence in Annapolis throughout the war.

Lawless, violent and stressful conditions prevailed in the Annapolis area during the war. In an article by Jack Kelbaugh titled "A Peek at the Past, Annapolis National Cemetery," he quotes Samuel Brooks, wartime aide to the Governor, who wrote in his reminiscences that Annapolis saw more of the grim realities of war than many places farther south. Paroled Union prisoners of war arrived in Annapolis after long stays in harsh Confederate military prisons in deplorable condition.

When the Civil War began, the tradition of exchanging and paroling prisoners of war was well established. After some early indecision, the Union and Confederate armies continued the custom of physically exchanging their prisoners of war. During the early months, a few informal exchanges and/or paroles of individual soldiers took place, often due to the political influence of the soldier's family. After the Battle of Bull Run in July 1861, substantial paroling of prisoners occurred. Sometimes, they were granted on the battlefield but more often they were granted at military prisons. Early parole allowed soldiers to return to their homes. The Army often had difficulty locating them when they were exchanged. In addition, some personal (versus military) paroles were granted during the first year of the war. Occasionally, Union officers held prisoner would be allowed to leave prison for short periods upon giving their word that they would return to prison at a specified time. Preliminary discussions about parole began in February 1862 between representatives of both armies. On July 22, 1862, both sides signed an agreement that designated City Point, Virginia, as the official prisoner exchange point and specified Annapolis as one of the locations where the Union paroled soldiers would be held. Here they were easily found and conveniently returned to their regiment at the time of an agreed upon exchange. About mid-June 1862, Colonel John Stanton, Military Governor of the Annapolis District and commander of the provost regiment, placed a notice in northern papers directing all Union officers at home on parole or furlough to report to him in Annapolis. In early July, a similar notice called for all paroled soldiers at home to report here. Great numbers began arriving by train, and some were delivered from military prisons in the south. The first camp of paroled soldiers was established in 1861 on the grounds of St. John's College ("College Green"). They encamped here and by September 1, the number reached 3,000. The army promptly established a second camp of paroles about two miles southwest of the city. This camp was hastily established on a farm two miles southwest of town, probably on the south side of the present Forest Drive between Greenbriar Lane and Bywater Road. Within six weeks, 20,000 men were encamped there. During the winter of 1862-1863, the paroled soldiers were terribly cold in their tents, and many became ill. It was clear that barracks would be



needed for the following winter. In September 1863, the Army completed "Parole Barracks"—soon to revert to "Camp Parole." Located adjacent to the old Annapolis and Elkridge Railroad, this third Camp Parole easily received supplies by train at all times. The initial 60 barracks grew to a substantially larger number later. This final Camp Parole lasted until the end of the war. The Parole Shopping Center now stands on the site.

At Camp Parole, Miss Clara Barton established her headquarters and completed her wartime work. Miss Barton, known as the "Angel of the Battlefield" for her efforts in caring for the wounded of the Union Army and later as the founder of the American Red Cross, accepted as her last wartime task the establishment of a register of missing or unaccounted-for Union soldiers.

Many interments in the Annapolis National Cemetery would come from the Camps of Parole. Disease took its toll among their ranks. Epidemics of smallpox and ague periodically swept through the Annapolis area encampments, causing scores of deaths, but typhoid fever, chronic diarrhea (dysentery), consumption and tuberculosis were the most consistent causes of death among the soldiers here.

General Ulysses S. Grant early opposed the parole and exchange of prisoners of war. In late April 1864, he suspended all parole and exchange of prisoners. By late summer, the collapsing Southern Confederacy was incapable of providing reasonable care for its legions of Union prisoners, and Grant would not budge from his position. He would neither send supplies for the Union prisoners nor exchange Confederate prisoners for them. The Confederacy had no alternative but to return its Union prisoners with no hope of receiving their own in exchange. On August 31, the first of an eight-month succession of flag-of-truce steamers arrived in Annapolis carrying 236 paroled prisoners from Virginia. During September and most of October, a steady flow of prisoners from the upper South arrived in Annapolis. In late October, the now-enormous number held in the deep South, especially at Andersonville, were released. Thousands upon thousands of prisoners continued to stream into Annapolis. The Army expanded Camp Parole again in February 1865. Prisoners continued to arrive until about six weeks after the war ended. Many were in such poor condition that they died on the steamers while enroute to Annapolis.

Annapolis also became an Army hospital town during the Civil War. After the first Battle of Bull Run (July 18, 1861), the Union Army had to face the reality of the need to handle large numbers of wounded. General Butler recommended that the vacated buildings of the naval school be used as an Army hospital. This facility focused initially on care for the wounded, but due to the high incidence of camp diseases, the army sick soon made up a significant portion of the hospital population. About ten days after the battle, Union wounded began to arrive from the overflowing makeshift hospitals in Washington. The existing naval school buildings were inadequate to accommodate the great influx. The Army had to use a great number of tents to increase the capacity of the Annapolis hospital. After the Seven Days battles in the vicinity of Richmond, Virginia, in June 1862, General Robert E. Lee paroled all the Union wounded on the battlefield. The hospital was then deluged with casualties delivered from Virginia by steamer. Another massive influx occurred when scores of trains bearing wounded from Gettysburg arrived via Frederick in 1863. About January 1, 1863, the Army also pressed the St. John's College buildings into service as an Army hospital. By the fall of 1863, Annapolis had become a major Army hospital center. The hospitals had shifted their emphasis from care for the wounded to primary care for the sick and emaciated paroled prisoners arriving from the South. Because of the reputation of

Annapolis being a superb hospital town, Admiral David Porter built a beautiful Navy hospital there in 1871. This state-of-the-art structure, shaped like a giant anchor, made of pressed brick and containing steam-operated elevators, was used for less than a year. A dearth of patients caused "Porter's Folly" to be used as a storage building until 1912 when it was demolished and a new naval hospital was constructed nearby.