

Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery
Fort Leavenworth Military Reservation
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027

Description

The Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery, established in 1862, is located within the Fort Leavenworth military reservation approximately three miles from the city of Fort Leavenworth and one mile west of the Missouri River in Leavenworth County. The 36.1-acre site is situated on gently sloping land. Hancock Avenue provides the major interior circulation, and the burial sections are of unequal sizes. The original gates to the cemetery were located near the utility building. The square brick pillars on stone bases topped by stone caps, still remain. The main entrance to the cemetery is now located along Biddle Boulevard on the east side of the cemetery. A square brick pillar is situated on each side of the entrance, and plaques identifying the cemetery are affixed to these pillars. The flagpole is located just to the south of the main entrance in the northwest corner of Section B of the cemetery. A portion of the cemetery is enclosed by a stone wall, extending from the southeastern corner of the cemetery to the service entrance along the southern boundary. At approximately the center of the cemetery is the lodge and service building complex. A committal service shelter is located along the roadway in Section Q in the northwest area of the cemetery. Graves are marked with upright marble headstones. Some graves in the officers portion of Section A are marked with private markers.



The lodge was constructed in 1905. It is a two-story brick structure over an exposed ashlar stone foundation. In plan, the central (east) portion is an "L" with a center-back (west) wing. The front porch, originally defined by brick pillars, infills the "L". It has been enclosed with wood lap siding. On the porch, there are three one-over-one double-hung windows and a storm door with a transom light above. The mansard roof of asphalt shingles encloses the second story. Shallow dormers occur at each second story window. Windows are one-over-one with exterior storm units. There is a small attic ventilation dormer on the east facade. Windows on the main stories are one-over-one double-hung with flat stone sills and lintels. The basement windows are two section casements of single lights each. None of the windows is original. A small rear porch has been enclosed to create a half bath. The building is used as an office by the National Cemetery Administration's Office of Memorial Programs.

To the west of the lodge is the utility building. The main section is rectangular with two small additions on the north facade. The original portion of this building was a frame stable which was encased by brick additions in 1935 and 1968, resulting in a one-story building with a pitched roof. In 1962, a project to renovate the service building was accomplished. The project included the construction of an addition for rest rooms at the north end of the building and an offset for paint and oil storage on the east side next to the tool room (concrete foundation, floors and walls, with a built-up roof). A concrete porch was added for rest rooms. Other work consisted of removing three doors at the north end of the building, bricking up the openings, removing existing overhead doors, and replacing them with larger overhead doors. An automatic sliding fire door was installed between the garage and the existing building. Records also show that in 1968 an addition to the service building was constructed consisting of a three-bay heated garage.

A committal service shelter is located along the roadway in Section Q. The enclosed structure of concrete and wood framing with translucent paneling was constructed over 25 years ago. There are four sets of bifold wooden doors.

Noted Burials

There are nine Medal of Honor recipients buried in the Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery, and one recipient is memorialized in the Memorial Section. Their graves are marked with special markers inscribed with an enlarged gold-leafed replica of the medal of the awarding service and the words "MEDAL OF HONOR." The nine are as follows:

Thomas W. Custer, Second Lieutenant, Company B, 6th Michigan Cavalry - Section H, Grave 1488.

Edward Pengally, Private, Company B, 8th U. S. Cavalry - Section G, Grave 3032.

Albert Sale, Private, Company F, 8th U. S. Cavalry - Section E, Grave 2076.

Joseph Robinson, First Sergeant, Company D, 3d U. S. Cavalry - Section D, Grave 1269D.

Jacob Widmer, First Sergeant, Company D, 5th U. S. Cavalry - Section G, Grave 3529.

Fitz Lee, Private, Troop M, 10th U. S. Cavalry - Section G, Grave 3183.

Harry Bell, Captain, 36th Infantry, U. S. Volunteers - Section A, Grave 167.

William Edward Hall, Lieutenant (j.g.), Scouting Squadron 2, Air Group 2, U. S. S. Lexington - Section I, Grave 286.

John Kyle, Corporal, Company M, 5th U. S. Cavalry - Section H, Grave 3341.

The Medal of Honor recipient who is memorialized in the Memorial Section (Plot No. 29) is: George Miller, Corporal, Company H, 5th U. S. Infantry

Other notable burials in the cemetery include Hiram Rich and four members of his family (Officers portion of Section A, Grave 293). Rich was the first post Sutler (a person who follows an army and sells provisions, etc., to the soldiers) at Fort Leavenworth in 1841. Private John Urquhart, one of the soldiers who fought in the first Civil War battle at Fort Sumter, is buried here (Section F, Grave 63). Also interred here (Section D, Grave 738) is an Indian guide of the convoys to Laramie during the 1850s, Shango Hango. Virginia Hastings, the first Girl Scout leader on post, is buried in Section F, Grave 403.

Significant Monuments/Memorials

General Henry Leavenworth Monument - This monument, approximately 12 feet, 4 inches high, is located in Section 2, directly east of the lodge near the flagpole, and is dedicated to Henry Leavenworth, for whom the fort is named. The date of construction is unknown. Leavenworth was originally buried in Delhi, New York, his boyhood home. He had initially been buried beside his wife and child. Later, when a newer cemetery was established (Woodland), their remains were reinterred there. A monument in the form of a broken column marked the grave. In 1902, in response to public interest, his remains were brought to the Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery for reinterment. The reinterment, along with the unveiling of the Leavenworth monument, was held on Memorial Day. The monument had been purchased from funds raised by public subscription. Mr. Henry Shindler, Secretary of the Committee of the Commercial Club, Leavenworth, Kansas, was granted permission to reinter the remains at a suitable location in the national cemetery to be selected by the Depot Quartermaster of St. Louis, or his agent. A guard of honor was sent to Delhi, New York, to transfer the remains, and there was an impressive reinterment.



Fred Heis, Granite Monuments, Leavenworth, Kansas, erected the monument for \$571. The monument was rededicated on July 4, 1956. Impressive ceremonies were sponsored by the Byron H. Mehl Post of The American Legion of Leavenworth. Dr. Lynn Leavenworth of New York City, a descendant of General Leavenworth, was an honored guest at the ceremony, which was also attended by the Commanding General at Fort Leavenworth and many other distinguished guests. The ceremonies marked the completion of two years of activity to effect changes in the existing monument at General Leavenworth's grave which would make it more aesthetic in appearance and more in keeping with the dignity of a national cemetery. Consent to modify the monument was obtained from all known living relatives of the deceased and with the concurrence of the Cemetery Branch of the Office of the Quartermaster General, a new design for the upper portion of the memorial was devised. The work of refurbishing the monument consisted of the removal of the original hemispherical capstone and the placement on the existing shaft of the monument of a sculptured piece of Barre granite matching in color and texture the granite of the shaft. The sculpture consists of an eagle in repose, perched on a granite cairn and with the head facing to its own right in accordance with the rules of heraldic symbolism. The entire cost of the renovation was assumed by The American Legion post. Prior to placement of the sculptured

eagle on the monument, Mr. Lee C. Pike, representing The American Legion, and Colonel Charles Peters, post quartermaster at Fort Leavenworth, placed a time capsule in a recess at the top of the shaft of the monument. The capsule contained correspondence, news clippings, and photographs concerning the project of refurbishing the Leavenworth gravesite and monument.

General Henry Leavenworth was born in New Haven, Connecticut, on December 19, 1783, and lived in Delhi, New York, during his early life. His military career began in 1812. From 1818 until his death in 1834, he played a leading part in the establishment of several important frontier military outposts. He was commissioned to a Brigadier General without increase in pay on July 25, 1824. Following service at Jefferson Barracks in 1826, he established in 1827 the frontier post in Kansas Territory named by the War Department as "Cantonment Leavenworth" (later Fort Leavenworth). In 1834, he was placed in command of the entire southwestern frontier with instructions to negotiate peace with the warring Indian tribes. Pursuant to that authority, he set out from Fort Gibson with 500 troops on June 15, 1834, but was stricken with fever and died on July 21, 1834.



Hatch Monument - A large private monument, approximately eight feet, two inches in height, constructed of granite and located in the Officers portion of Section A, commemorating the life and deeds of Colonel Edward Hatch, United States Cavalry. The date of construction is unknown.

Colonel Hatch was a cavalry officer in the Union Army during the Civil War. He participated in over 50 battles and skirmishes in southern Missouri, Tennessee, Mississippi, and northern Alabama. His contribution to the northern effort during the Civil War was substantial but, ironically enough, the most important single contribution he made was at a battle in which he did not even take part, the famous battle of Vicksburg. It was in the spring of 1863 when Ulysses S. Grant began his advance on Vicksburg. As a means of diverting attention and to cut southern communications from the east, he sent a cavalry raiding force into central Mississippi. The force came to be known as "Grierson's Raiders" and it was composed of three regiments, one of which was under the command of Colonel Hatch. His regiment was given the most important task of destroying a vital railroad line between Columbus and Macon. After a sharp battle at Columbus, Colonel Hatch and his regiment successfully completed the mission and returned to their base of operations in Tennessee. Meanwhile, Grant made his assault on Vicksburg, emerging victorious in one of the Civil War's most famous battles.

After Atlanta fell in September of 1864, Colonel Hatch was given command of part of William T. Sherman's cavalry. He organized it into a division and prepared to march to Tennessee to help defend the state against an impending invasion by Confederate General John B. Hood and his Army of Tennessee. Hatch's division was deployed along the Tennessee River to observe the approach of General Hood and delay him as long as possible. After successfully carrying out this assignment, Colonel Hatch and his unit became known as "the eye of the Army." General Hood was decisively set back in his attempt to retake Tennessee.

Besides these instances, Colonel Hatch was involved in battles all over the area. Through all of the battles, he was wounded only once in an encounter at Moscow, Tennessee, when he

was shot in the chest. He remained on the battlefield in an ambulance until the rebel force was finally routed. The wound hospitalized him for three months.

During the battles of Nashville and Franklin, Hatch was commissioned to a brigadier general and major general without increase in pay. After the Civil War ended, he was discharged from the U. S. Cavalry. With the 9th Cavalry he was, for a time, in command of the Department of Arizona and New Mexico. Among many encounters with Indians, Colonel Hatch was in command of the force that pursued the Apache chief, Victorio, after he escaped from the Mescalero Indian Reservation. Victorio was captured shortly after he fled the territory under Hatch's jurisdiction.

Still in the active Army at the age of 57, Colonel Hatch, who had lived through over 50 battles in the Civil War and numerous Indian campaigns, was thrown from his carriage and severely injured. He died shortly afterward on April 11, 1889, at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, and his remains were then reinterred with full military honors in the Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery. During his 23-year career, he was considered one of the best cavalry officers in the Army.

Civil War Activity in Area

Though associated in many respects with events of the Civil War period, the Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery was not, strictly speaking, a battlefield cemetery as were many of the first national cemeteries established in Virginia, Maryland, and Kentucky. The history of the national cemetery at Fort Leavenworth is one which encompasses not only the Civil War period, but also the more distant past in connection with the growth and development of Fort Leavenworth, one of the most important western military posts established by the United States.

Initial need for the establishment of a southwestern frontier post was dictated in part by the emergence of Mexico as an independent nation in 1821. That country's need for merchandise opened up the great overland trade routes of the Southwest. These routes crossed the ancestral homes of the Plains Indians, which is the collective name for the many tribes who had freely roamed the endless prairies of the West for centuries. As more and more white pioneers poured into their lands, the Indians' resentment and hatred grew, resulting in the inevitable bloody conflicts. Soon these skirmishes between the Indians and the white men became so frequent that it was apparent the traders and settlers needed the help and protection of the United States Government. Officials in Washington, D.C. soon responded to their plight by authorizing a series of forts to be built west of the Missouri River.

In 1827, Colonel Henry Leavenworth was directed by the War Department to select a position on the banks of the Missouri River which, in his judgment, would be best suited for a site of a permanent cantonment (quarters for the troops). Colonel Leavenworth explored the banks of the river and determined that the western shore on the Kansas side offered the most advantageous site. The area chosen on May 8, 1827, was located on the right bank of the Missouri River, some 23 miles above the mouth of the Kansas River. It was designated Cantonment Leavenworth and, on February 8, 1832, the name was changed to Fort Leavenworth. The post was evacuated in May 1829 and was occupied by Kickapoo Indians until it was regarrisoned in the fall of 1829. Beginning as early as 1834, the First Dragoons, organized in 1833 as the first cavalry regiment in the Army, were ordered to the Fort and acquitted themselves well in quelling Indian uprisings. When the troubles with Mexico came to a head in war during 1846 and 1847,

the Fort served as an outfitting post for the troops as it did later for the California gold seekers. In 1854, when the Territory of Kansas was organized, Fort Leavenworth was named the temporary Territorial Capital and Andrew H. Reeder, the first Territorial Governor, maintained his executive headquarters there for a short period of time. Until well in the 1870's, the post served as a chief unit in the system of frontier defense, and in the 1850's and 1860's, it was the general depot from which supplies were sent to all military posts of the Rocky Mountain area. With the outbreak of the Civil War, Fort Leavenworth achieved additional importance because of its strategic location on the border of two states with opposing sympathies. In 1861, Camp Lincoln was established on the post, and thousands of volunteers were equipped and trained for the Union Army, establishing a precedent for the role the fort was to play in America's later wars.

Kansas joined the Union as a "free state" in 1861, and thousands of volunteers from the state trained at Fort Leavenworth and proudly served under their country's flag in the Union Army.

Because of its strategic value, General Sterling Price, at the head of a Confederate army, set out to capture Kansas City and the Arsenal at Fort Leavenworth in 1864. Price, however, was decisively defeated by Union troops from Fort Leavenworth, under the command of General Samuel Curtis, at the Battle of Westport, the "Gettysburg of the West."

From 1854 until the outbreak of the Civil War, Fort Leavenworth was visited by scores of men who later became famous during that conflict. Included among these were Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, W. T. Sherman, Albert Sidney Johnston, J. E. B. Stuart, Horace Greeley, and Abraham Lincoln.

Life in an active frontier military post, such as Fort Leavenworth, was not easy, as it was beset by the dangers of armed conflict with hostile Indians, and by the always present peril of disease. The ravages of malaria among the original garrison necessitated the establishment of a burying ground at Fort Leavenworth as early as 1827, the year of its founding. There were, in fact, two burial sites in which interments were made until 1858. A soldiers' burying ground was located near the present site of the Commanding General's quarters, and an officers' burying ground was located near the present location of the library of the Command and General Staff College Library. In 1858, a new two-acre site was set aside for cemetery purposes, and the remains from the two older post cemeteries were reinterred therein. The outbreak of the Civil War caused the cemetery to be utilized for the interment of Union dead and, in 1862, this area became the Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery.