

San Antonio National Cemetery
517 Paso Hondo Street
San Antonio, Texas 78202

Description

The San Antonio National Cemetery, established in 1867, is located in Bexar County. The grounds, rectangular in shape, are laid off into burial sections with a large circular plot at either end. The national cemetery is surrounded on all sides by city cemeteries. The main entrance is located on the south side and is enclosed by an iron gate, four feet wide and five feet high, with carriage gates on each side. A similar gate is located on the north side of the cemetery with carriage gates, and from it extends a drive to the eastern circle. The site was originally enclosed by a limestone wall laid in cement and covered with a heavy coping, leveled on top and projecting three inches over each side. It is now enclosed by a stone wall, 4 feet high, 20 inches wide with a concrete coping four inches thick and two feet wide, constructed in 1939. The flagpole is situated in the center of the eastern circle, and a rostrum is located just to the west of the main entrance.



There are over 250 private headstones in the cemetery ranging from simple markers to elaborate monuments dating back to 1853. These monuments have been erected at private expense and are of many designs, constructed of durable stone, granite, and marble. Twelve graves in Section A are completely covered by marble slabs. All other graves are marked with upright marble headstones.

Section A within the eastern circle is an officers burial section, and Section J within the western circle was used for burial of the soldiers who died at the military post of San Antonio. Section D was originally a section for the burial of colored people.



A stone pagoda-type rostrum was constructed in 1890 at a cost of approximately \$1,500. The structure is located to the east of the main entrance. The tin roof and the columns were removed in 1957.

Noted Burials

General John L. Bullis, for whom Camp Bullis was named. Camp Bullis was established on September 12, 1917, as a target and maneuver range for Fort Sam Houston and Camp Travis, Texas. (Grave 174, Section A).

Corporal Harry M. Wurzbach, a member of the United States Congress (Grave 274, Section J).



Gustav Schleicher, a German-born immigrant who became a Texas state representative and senator and was elected to the United States House of Representatives (Grave 140, Section A).

Lt. George E. M. Kelly, for whom Kelly Air Force Base was named (Grave 117-A, Section A). Lt. George E. M. Kelly was the first man to lose his life in a military aircraft. He was described as an adventurous, transplanted Englishman, who was born in London, England, in 1878. In 1902, he became a naturalized American citizen. He later took flying instructions from Glen H. Curtis and was assigned to Fort Sam Houston to test a Curtis biplane. While assigned there, Lt. Kelly broke a speed record by flying 75 miles per hour on a five-minute flight. On May 10, 1911, while landing, a wheel brace broke, tossing the plane out of control. To avoid plowing through a tent of 11th Infantry Soldiers, he banked the plane sharply and crashed into the ground.

Colonel G. M. Brooke, founder of Tampa, Florida, as a military fort. The private monument to him was removed in 1947 or 1948. It was of concrete and stucco construction with a marble inscription plate and had deteriorated badly. A regulation government headstone now marks his grave (Grave 69, Section A).

There are 13 Medal of Honor recipients buried in the national cemetery. The headstone at each grave is inscribed with an enlarged gold-leafed replica of the medal of the awarding service and the words "MEDAL OF HONOR." Four of these soldiers were originally buried in the cemetery as unknowns, as their remains were not identifiable. Research later revealed their names, and Medal of Honor headstones in their memory have been erected in Section MA, the memorial section. The nine known burials are as follows:

David B. Barkeley, Private, U. S. Army, Company A, 356th Infantry, 89th Division – Section G, Grave 1302.

Frederick Deetline, Private, Company D, 7th U. S. Cavalry – Section G, Grave 921.

John Harrington, Private, Company H, 6th U. S. Cavalry – Section F, Grave 1012.

Henry Falcott, Sergeant, Company L, 8th U. S. Cavalry – Section F, Grave 918.

Henry A. McMasters, Corporal, Company A, 4th U. S. Cavalry – Section D, Grave 729.

James J. Nash, Private, Company F, 10th U. S. Infantry – Section T, Grave 1461-A.

Solon D. Neal, Private, Company L, 6th U. S. Cavalry – Section G, Grave 1323.

Simon Suhler, Private, Company B, 8th U. S. Cavalry – Section I, Grave 1610.

Lewis Warrington, First Lieutenant, 4th U. S. Cavalry – Section A, Grave 60.

The four Medal of Honor recipients who are buried in the cemetery as unknowns and are memorialized in the memorial section are as follows:

William H. Barnes, Private, Company C, 38th U. S. Colored Troops – Section MA, Grave 86.

George W. Smith, Private, Company M, 6th U. S. Cavalry – Section MA, Grave 87.

John J. Given, Corporal, Company K, 6th U. S. Cavalry – Section MA, Grave 88.

William De Armond, Sergeant, Company I, 5th U. S. Infantry – Section MA, Grave 89.

Significant Monuments/Memorials

Unknown Dead - The granite monument, 58 inches wide by 50 inches high by 25 inches thick, erected in 1912, is located in Section H.



The remains are interred in Graves 27 and 28, and are soldiers who were originally buried in the post cemeteries at Fort Concho, Texas. Fort Concho was a frontier Army post in San Angelo, Texas, from 1867-1899, and over 125 soldiers and military dependents buried in its cemeteries were disinterred and moved to the San Antonio National Cemetery in 1884 and 1898. After almost a century, researchers determined the names of 35 Fort Concho soldiers previously listed as unknown, 20 of which were members of the 10th Cavalry, an Army unit made up of black soldiers. After dozens of clashes with Indian warriors, Native Americans called the men "Buffalo Soldiers." The 10th took it as a compliment and adopted the sacred buffalo as a symbol for its regimental crest.

Civil War Activity in Area

At the end of the Mexican War in 1848, San Antonio became the military headquarters of the Department of Texas and held this position until the passage of the ordinance of secession in February 1861. Soon after the fall of the Southern Confederacy, the military headquarters of this Department were again established here.



All of the military forces in Texas surrendered to rebel forces in 1861. Though some of these resources were used to support the Confederate cause, a considerable effort was required to protect the frontier from hostile Indians in the absence of Federal troops. In 1865, Federal troops returned to San Antonio to resume operations on the frontier. The Army had leased buildings for its activities until the mid-1870's, when the city of San Antonio donated land for a permanent military post (Fort Sam Houston).