



Arlington National Cemetery Washington, D.C.

Introduction and Instructions

Located in Virginia, across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C., the national cemetery of the United States is the hallowed resting place of more than 400,000 American citizens and foreign nationals who have given their lives to defending this country. Among these are notable figures, including President John F. Kennedy and civil rights activist and WWII veteran Medgar Evers. What else do you know about the history and significance of Arlington National Cemetery? In addition to any prior knowledge you may have, use your research skills and the resources provided here to answer the questions below.



Learn about Arlington National Cemetery, its history, and trivia about some of the people who are buried there.

EXPLORE: <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil>

1. What do you already know about Arlington National Cemetery?

Answers will vary.

2. When was the Arlington National Cemetery designated as a military cemetery?

Answer: June 15, 1864

3. How many unknowns are buried in the Tomb of the Unknowns? Which wars are they from, and when were they buried there?

Answer: There are three unknown soldiers buried here. They are from World War I, World War II, and the Korean War.

4. Why is there no soldier from the Vietnam War buried in the Tomb of the Unknowns?

Answer: Thanks to the development of DNA testing, there are no unidentified soldiers from the Vietnam War.

5. Name five things of interest to you that were placed in a cornerstone of the Memorial Amphitheater.

Answers will vary. A full list can be found here: <https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Explore/Memorial-Amphitheater>

6. Which presidents are buried in Arlington National Cemetery?

Answer: William Howard Taft and John F. Kennedy

7. What is the origin of the name "Arlington"?

Answer: Arlington is the name of the Custis family's original estate in the Eastern Shore of Virginia. It is named after the family's ancestral home of Arlington, Gloucestershire, England.

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8. How did Pierre Charles L'Enfant come to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery?

Answer: L'Enfant was deemed worthy of honor because he was credited with the original design of Washington, D.C. His body was originally buried elsewhere but was re-interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

9. What is the nickname of the Army's official ceremonial unit?

Answer: Honor Guard – Tomb Guard

10. Who guards the Tomb of the Unknowns? Describe the qualifications the guards must meet.

Answer: Sentinel Volunteers. Each soldier must be in good physical condition, possess an unblemished military record, and be between 5ft 10 in. and 6ft. 4in. tall for males or 5ft. 8in. and 6ft. 2 in. tall for females, with a proportionate weight and build.

11. How often does the changing of the guard take place?

Answer: 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The guard is changed every hour on the hour from October 1 to March 3. From April 1 through September 30 it occurs every half hour.

12. Who can participate in a wreath laying ceremony?

Answer: Anyone can request to participate in a wreath laying ceremony.

13. List three specific groups of people who are eligible to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

1. Active-duty or retired members of the armed forces
2. Spouses, children and dependent adult children of active-duty or retired members of the armed forces
3. Medal of Honor recipients and other medal recipients



Read about Arlington House, located within the grounds of the cemetery.

EXPLORE: <https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Explore/History/Arlington-House>

13. Explain the connection between the Arlington Mansion and the families of George Washington and Robert E. Lee. How did the mansion and its surrounding land become Arlington National Cemetery?

George Washington Parke Custis, step-grandson of George Washington, inherited the land from his father – and George Washington's stepson – John Parke Custis. George Washington's wife, Martha Washington, was previously married to Daniel Parke Custis, of the powerful Custis family. Their plantation on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, also called Arlington, gave the name to the land upon which the mansion and cemetery sit today.

George Washington Parke Custis's daughter, Mary Anna Custis, inherited her father's land and married Gen. Robert E. Lee. During the Civil War, the land was occupied by Union troops and confiscated by the federal government. To ensure that Robert E. Lee could never return home, the Army began burying its dead there and turned it into a cemetery.

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WHAT DO YOU THINK? *This is your chance to share your opinions, make connections, and apply what you've learned!*

1. Based on what you've learned and read about on the website, what do you think will be the most memorable part of your visit to Arlington National Cemetery?

Answers will vary.

2. Is it good for our country to have a national cemetery such as Arlington National Cemetery? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

3. Imagine what it is like to be a member of the Tomb Guard Sentinels. Why do you think someone would choose to become a sentinel?

Answers will vary.

4. Why do you think a family member of a fallen soldier would choose to have their loved one buried at Arlington? What are some reasons they would choose not to have them buried there?

Answers will vary.