



On Hallowed Ground: The Story of Arlington National Cemetery

Robert M. Poole

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On Hallowed Ground opens with the long-delayed funeral of four servicemen, brought home for final honors at Arlington National Cemetery almost forty years after they disappeared in Vietnam. To understand how this tradition of extraordinary care for our war dead began, Robert Poole traces the founding of Arlington Cemetery on what had been the family plantation of Robert E. Lee. After resigning his commission in the U.S. Army, Lee left Arlington to command the Army of Northern Virginia. Arlington, strategic to the defense of Washington, D.C., became a U.S. Army headquarters and a cemetery for indigent Civil War soldiers before Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton made it the new national cemetery.

Initially, there was no honor attached to being buried at Arlington; this began to change after the war, as the Union gathered thousands of hastily-buried casualties from nearby battlefields and reinterred them at Arlington, where they received the honors of a grateful nation. But the rites, rituals, and reverence associated with Arlington evolved over the next hundred years, paid through the blood of those who fought in the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, the Korean War, the Cold War, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and Iraq and Afghanistan.

Robert Poole paints an intimate, behind-the-scenes picture of the history and day-to-day operations of Arlington National Cemetery.

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