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A TRIBUTE TO OUR VETERANS: 100 YEARS OF THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER



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SALUTING OUR TROOPS

Stars and Stripes is proud to serve those who currently serve or have served our country. “A Tribute to our Veterans: 100 Years of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier” is not only a celebration of the centennial, but also a homage to our nation’s Veterans. This guide reflects what the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier means to America and details its rich history.



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Fraser | Arlington National Cemetery



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Fraser | Arlington National Cemetery



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100-year anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Photo courtesy of
Elizabeth Fraser | Arlington National Cemetery

Courtesy of Arlington National Cemetery

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is Arlington National Cemetery's most iconic memorial. For nearly 100 years, it has stood as a people's memorial at the heart of the cemetery. The histories of Arlington National Cemetery and the Tomb are intertwined. Just as the cemetery embodies the diverse history of the United States, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier reveals the cemetery's changing meanings and significance. The 2021 centennial of the Tomb's creation provides an opportunity to explore this story.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE TOMB

- The Tomb serves as both a place of mourning and a site for reflection on service, valor and sacrifice. The Unknowns represent the service and sacrifice made by all Americans in the military.
- The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier provides a final resting place for three unidentified American service members: the original Unknown Soldier from World War I, buried on November 11, 1921; an Unknown

from World War II, laid to rest on Memorial Day in 1958; and an Unknown from the Korean War, also interred on Memorial Day in 1958. An Unknown from the Vietnam War was added in 1984. However, the Vietnam War Unknown was disinterred in 1998 and, through mitochondrial DNA testing, positively identified as Air Force 1st Lieutenant Michael J. Blassie. The empty crypt now honors all missing service members from the Vietnam War.

- Since its establishment in 1864, during the Civil War, Arlington National Cemetery has had graves of unknown soldiers. These include the Tomb of the Civil War Unknowns, created in 1866 for the remains of 2,111 soldiers who died on Virginia battlefields. Civil War-era unknown burials at Arlington also included unidentified African American soldiers and civilians, who were buried in segregated sections of the cemetery.
- The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was inspired by similar tombs created in Great Britain and France. In 1920, the British and French governments honored those who died in World War I by burying an unidentified soldier at Westminster Abbey in London and the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, respectively. In each case, a single unknown stood

in for all unidentified war dead. A year later, in 1921, the United States decided to create its own Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Since then, many other countries have followed suit in honoring unknown soldiers with a tomb or other memorial.

- In 1921, public ceremonies for the World War I Unknown Soldier took place both in France and the United States, culminating in a state funeral at Arlington National Cemetery on November 11, 1921.
- In the fall of 1921, the Army disinterred one set of unidentified remains from each of four American military cemeteries in France, taking special care to ensure that these remains could never be identified.
- In a ceremony in Châlons-sur-Marne, France, on October 24, 1921, Sergeant Edward Younger—a World War I veteran with a superior service record—selected one Unknown to be buried at Arlington.
- After numerous ceremonies in France, the Unknown was transported to the Washington Navy Yard aboard the USS Olympia, a celebrated Navy warship. The Unknown lay in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda before a ceremonial procession to Arlington National Cemetery.
- The Unknown's state funeral at Memorial Amphitheater took place on November 11, 1921. The ceremony, led by President Warren Harding, included American and foreign dignitaries, veterans, civic groups, and thousands of citizens from a diverse cross-section of American society.
- The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was created as a memorial to those who died in World War I, but it has since come to symbolize American wartime fatalities more generally. Although it remains connected to World War I, the addition of Unknowns from World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War expanded the Tomb into a multigenerational shrine that honors all those who gave their lives in all American wars.
- The Tomb Guards of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) honor the Unknowns through the precision and perfection of their rituals. Since 1948, these soldiers, known as "Sentinels," have guarded the Tomb 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, regardless of weather.
- The public will have many opportunities to participate in commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier—just as the public was involved in the 1921 ceremony.



A White House military aide places President Franklin D. Roosevelt's wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Memorial Day, May 30, 1940. (Library of Congress)

Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

HISTORY

OVERVIEW

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is Arlington National Cemetery's most iconic memorial.

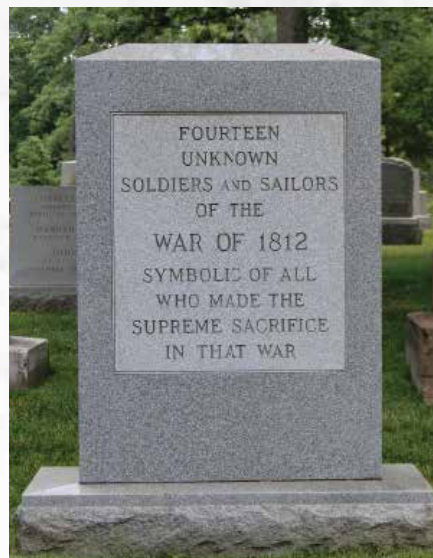
The neoclassical, white marble sarcophagus stands atop a hill overlooking Washington, D.C. Since 1921, it has provided a final resting place for one of America's unidentified World War I service members, and Unknowns from later wars were added in 1958 and 1984. The Tomb has also served as a place of mourning and a site for reflection on military service.

UNIDENTIFIED REMAINS

Through the ages, one of the consequences of warfare has been large numbers of unidentified dead. Unidentified remains resulted from poor recordkeeping, the damage that weapons of war inflicted on bodies, or the haste required to bury the dead and mark gravesites. In the United States prior to the Civil War, unidentified remains were often buried in mass graves. At Arlington National Cemetery, these include unknown soldiers and sailors from the War of 1812 who were discovered buried at the Washington Navy Yard and reburied at Arlington National Cemetery in 1905.

CIVIL WAR

During the Civil War (1861-1865), high casualty rates and a lack of personal identification methods led to large numbers of unknowns originally buried along marching routes or battlefields. The system of national cemeteries was established in 1862 to ensure the proper burial of all service members. Still, many



The monument marking the grave of fourteen unknowns of the War of 1812 in Arlington National Cemetery. (ANC, 2012)

Photo courtesy of Arlington National Cemetery

unknown remains were recovered in the years following the Civil War. At Arlington National Cemetery, there are individual Civil War unknown burials as well as the remains of 2,111 U.S. and Confederate soldiers buried beneath the Tomb of the Civil War Unknowns. While exact numbers are unknown, estimates indicate that nearly half of the Civil War dead were never identified.

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

During the Spanish-American War (1898), the U.S. military's policy was to repatriate (return to the United States) the bodies of service members who died abroad. New Army regulations required that soldiers be buried in temporary graves with identifying information. The Army's Quartermaster Corps, which oversaw burials and repatriation of bodies, employed a burial corps. Identification rates went up to significantly

burials. During and after World War I, however, Americans debated whether bodies should be repatriated. With more than 100,000 U.S. casualties (compared to fewer than 3,000 in the Spanish-American War), repatriation was more challenging.

France and Great Britain, which suffered significantly higher casualties



Caskets draped with American flags lined up for burial at Arlington National Cemetery, 1898. (LOC)

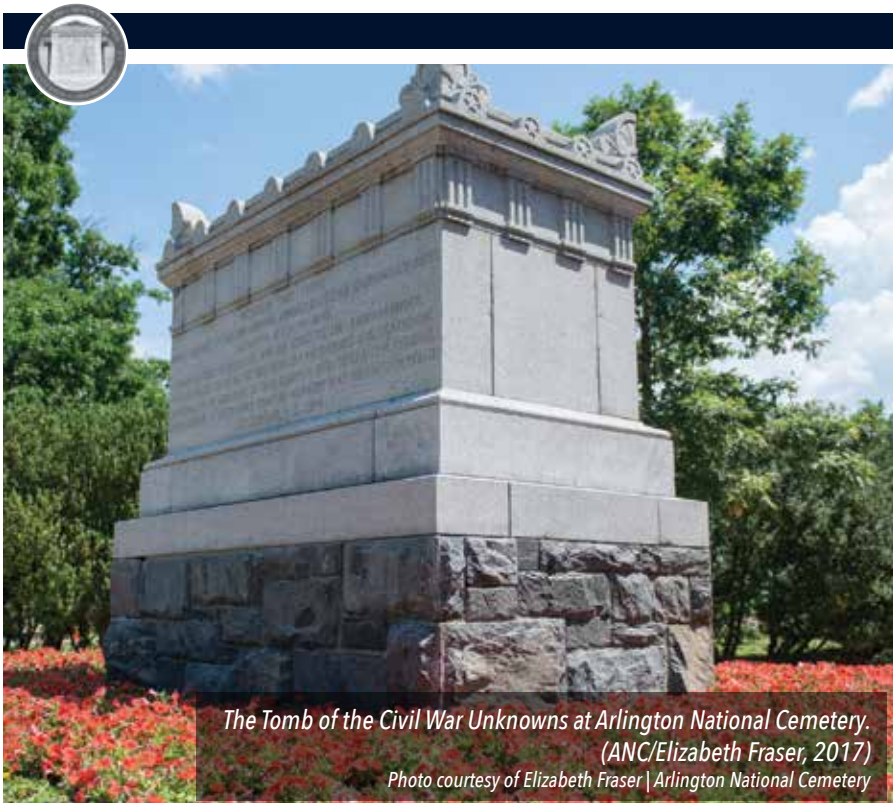
Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

WORLD WAR I

During World War I, U.S. service members received aluminum identification discs, the precursors to "dog tags," to aid the process of identifying remains. The War Department created a new unit in the Quartermaster Corps, the Graves Registration Service, to oversee

and more unknown dead than did the United States, barred repatriation of their citizens' remains. To ease the grief of their citizens, France and Great Britain each repatriated and buried one unknown soldier on Armistice Day, November 11, 1920. France buried its Unknown Soldier at the base of the Arc de Triomphe

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*The Tomb of the Civil War Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery. (ANC/Elizabeth Fraser, 2017)
Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Fraser | Arlington National Cemetery*

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in Paris, while Great Britain buried its Unknown Warrior inside Westminster Abbey in London. These unknowns would stand in for other British and French service members whose remains could not be identified.

The American policy, by contrast, gave options to families of the war dead. If requested by the next of kin, the remains of service members who died in Europe would be transported to anywhere in the United States at no cost to the family. Or, families could choose to bury their dead at permanent U.S. military cemeteries established in Europe.

LEGISLATION

In December 1920, New York Congressman and World War I veteran Hamilton Fish Jr. proposed legislation that provided for the interment of one unknown American soldier at a special tomb to be built in Arlington National Cemetery. The purpose of the legislation was “to bring home the body of an unknown American warrior who in himself represents no section, creed, or race in the late war and who typifies, moreover, the soul of America and the supreme sacrifice of her heroic dead.”

SELECTION

In October 1921, four bodies of unidentified U.S. military personnel were exhumed from different American military cemeteries in

France. On October 23, 1921, the four caskets arrived at the city hall of Châlons-sur-Marne (now called Châlons-en-Champagne), France.

Town officials and members of the U.S. Army’s Quartermaster Corps had prepared the city hall for the selection ceremony. Early on the morning of October 24, 1921, Major Robert P. Harbold of the Quartermaster Corps, aided by French and American soldiers, rearranged the caskets so that each rested on a shipping case other than the one in which it had arrived. Major Harbold then chose Sergeant Edward F. Younger, a World War I veteran with a superior service record, to select the Unknown Soldier. Sergeant Younger selected the Unknown by placing a spray of white roses on one of the caskets.

From Châlons-sur-Marne, the Unknown journeyed by caisson and rail to the port town of Le Havre. From Le Havre, France, the USS Olympia transported the Unknown Soldier’s casket to Washington, D.C. The Unknown arrived at the Washington Navy Yard on November 9, 1921. After arriving in Washington, the Unknown lay in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. About 90,000 visitors paid their respects during the public visiting period on November 10, 1921.

THE FUNERAL

On November 11, 1921, the Unknown was placed on a horse-drawn caisson

and carried in a procession through Washington, D.C., and across the Potomac River. A state funeral ceremony was held at Arlington National Cemetery’s new Memorial Amphitheater, and the Unknown was interred in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Nationwide, Americans observed two minutes of silence at the beginning of the ceremony. President Warren G. Harding officiated the ceremony and placed the Medal of Honor, the nation’s highest military decoration, on the casket. Numerous foreign dignitaries presented their nations’ highest awards, as well.

THE ORIGINAL TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

Originally, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier consisted of a simple marble slab. During its early years, thousands of visitors came to Arlington National Cemetery to mourn at the Tomb and to pay their respects to the Unknown Soldier and the military personnel he represented.

THE SARCOPHAGUS

The Tomb sarcophagus is decorated with three wreaths on each side panel (north and south). On the front (east), three figures represent Peace, Victory and Valor. The back (west) features the inscription: “Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God.”

WORLD WAR II AND KOREAN WAR UNKNOWNNS

Following World War II, some Americans supported the idea of interring and honoring an unknown



*The inscription on the west panel and three crypts. From left to right: Korean War, Vietnam War, World War II. (ANC, 2012)
Photo courtesy of Arlington National Cemetery*

service member from that war. However, the start of the Korean War in 1950 delayed those plans. In August 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower approved the selection and interment of unknowns from both World War II and the Korean War.

Fought on four continents, World War II complicated the selection of an unknown. The chosen unknown

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*The World War II and Korean War Unknowns lying in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. (Architect of the Capitol)
Photo courtesy of Architect of the Capitol*



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needed to represent all unidentified American dead, not just those from one theater of the war. In 1958, the Army exhumed 13 bodies from military cemeteries across North Africa and Europe and brought them to the Epinal American Cemetery and Memorial in France. On May 12, 1958, Major General Edward J. O'Neill placed a red-and-white wreath on one of the 13 caskets, selecting the Unknown who would represent the Trans-Atlantic (Europe and North Africa) Theater of World War II. The selected casket was then taken



Peace, Victory and Valor. (ANC, 2020)
Photo courtesy of Arlington National Cemetery

aboard the USS Blandy for its journey to the United States.

To represent the Trans-Pacific Theater of World War II, the Army exhumed five bodies from Fort McKinley American Cemetery in the Philippines (now called Manila American Cemetery) and the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific ("The Punch Bowl") in Hawaii. At the same time, they exhumed four bodies from the Korean War that were also buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. All nine caskets were brought to Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. On May 15, 1958, Army Master Sergeant Ned Lyle selected the Korean War Unknown. The next day, Air Force Colonel Glenn T. Eagleston selected the World War II Trans-Pacific Unknown. Both caskets were flown to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, before being loaded aboard the USS Boston.

The USS Blandy and USS Boston met the USS Canberra off the coast of Virginia. On May 26, 1958, all three caskets were placed on the deck of the Canberra, with the Korean War Unknown placed between the two World War II Unknowns. Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class William R. Charette, a Medal of Honor



The Unknown lies in state in the Capitol Rotunda, attended by a joint services Guard of Honor. (NARA/Robert D. Ward, 1984)
Photo courtesy of Robert D. Ward | U.S. National Archives

recipient from the Korean War, then selected the World War II Unknown.

The caskets of the World War II and Korean War Unknowns were then transported to Washington, D.C., aboard the USS Blandy, while the remaining World War II Unknown received a solemn burial at sea.

Both Unknowns arrived in Washington, D.C., on May 28, 1958 and lay in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda for two days. Two days later, the Unknowns were transported to Arlington National Cemetery and interred in crypts to the west of the World War I Unknown.



Gen. John J. Pershing places a wreath on the Tomb to observe the 20th anniversary of Armistice Day, November 11, 1938. (LOC)
Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

VIETNAM WAR UNKNOWN

Before the Vietnam War ended, Arlington National Cemetery began making preparations to add a third crypt to the Tomb. However, many people believed that advances in technology would mean that all remains from Vietnam could eventually be identified.

In response to mounting political pressure to recognize a Vietnam War unknown, President Jimmy Carter and Max Cleland, Administrator of the United States Veteran Administration and a Vietnam veteran, dedicated a

bronze plaque honoring the United States' Vietnam War veterans on Veterans Day, November 11, 1978, at Memorial Amphitheater.

By May 1984, only one set of recovered American remains from Vietnam had not been fully identified. In a ceremony held at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on May 17, 1984, Medal of Honor recipient Marine Corps Sergeant Major Allan Jay Kellogg Jr. designated the remains as the Vietnam War Unknown. The casket was then transported to Travis Air Force Base, California, aboard the USS Brewton.

In California, the Vietnam War Unknown was loaded on a C-141B Starlifter and flown to Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland. The Vietnam War Unknown lay in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda from May 25 to 28, 1984. On Memorial Day, May 28, a military procession transported the casket to Arlington National Cemetery for burial. President Ronald Reagan presided over the interment ceremony. In his eulogy, Reagan assured the audience that the government would continue looking for the Vietnam War's missing in action (MIA) personnel. Meanwhile, the Vietnam War Unknown would lay at rest at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier for almost 14 years.

The Department of Defense and civilian partners continued working to identify remains recovered from Vietnam. Through these efforts, they reviewed evidence that suggested the Vietnam War Unknown was likely Air Force 1st Lieutenant Michael Joseph Blassie, a pilot who had been shot down in 1972. At the request of Blassie's family, the Department of Defense exhumed the remains from the Vietnam Unknown's crypt on May 14, 1998. Using DNA testing, scientists positively identified the remains as those of Blassie. In accordance with the wishes of his family, Blassie was reinterred at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri.

The crypt designated for the Vietnam War Unknown remains vacant. On September 17, 1999—National POW/MIA Recognition Day—it was rededicated to honor all missing U.S. service members from the Vietnam War.

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*A wreath laid at the Tomb commemorates the U.S. Army's 245th birthday on June 14, 2020. (ANC/Elizabeth Fraser)
Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Fraser | Arlington National Cemetery*

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GUARDING THE TOMB

In March 1926, soldiers from nearby Fort Myer were first assigned to guard the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The guards, present only during daylight hours, discouraged visitors from climbing or stepping on the Tomb. In 1937, the guards became a 24/7 presence, standing watch over the Unknown Soldier at all times.

The 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment, known as “The Old Guard,” was designated as the Army’s official ceremonial unit on April 6, 1948. At that time, The Old Guard began guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Soldiers of The Old Guard also serve as escorts to the president and conduct military ceremonies in and around Washington, D.C., including military funeral escorts at Arlington National Cemetery.

Soldiers who volunteer to become Tomb Guards must undergo a strict selection process and intensive training. Each element of the Tomb Guard’s routine has meaning. The Guard marches 21 steps down the black mat behind the Tomb, turns

and faces east for 21 seconds, turns and faces north for 21 seconds, and then takes 21 steps down the mat. Next, the Guard executes a sharp “shoulder-arms” movement to place his/her weapon on the shoulder closest to the visitors, signifying that he or she stands between the Tomb and any possible threat. The number “21” symbolizes the highest symbolic military honor that can be bestowed: the 21-gun salute.

WREATH LAYINGS AND VISITORS AT THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

Laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier has long been a way for individuals and organizations to honor the sacrifices of American

service members. Presidents, politicians, public figures and foreign dignitaries have all paid their respects in this way. The opportunity to participate in a wreath-laying ceremony is also open to the general public, including school groups and Honor Flights.

In addition, each year, millions of people from around the world visit the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Some visit to honor military service and sacrifice; some to mourn a loved one; and some because of the Tomb’s historical and national significance.

One hundred years after the World War I Unknown’s burial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier continues to be a powerful symbol of service and sacrifice, mourning and memory.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

Arlington National Cemetery’s new Education Program was developed for both virtual and in-person learning. It includes resources specifically designed for teachers and educators, for students of all grade levels, for families visiting ANC, and for adult “lifelong learners.” Audiences will

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*A Tomb Guard on duty during a thunderstorm on June 19, 2017.
(ANC/Elizabeth Fraser)
Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Fraser | Arlington National Cemetery*



*At 100 years old, Jack Eaton was the oldest living Tomb Guard when he visited on October 23, 2019. (ANC/Elizabeth Fraser)
Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Fraser | Arlington National Cemetery*

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discover the diverse history of the United States through the unique lens of the cemetery and its history.

Over the next five years, ANC will develop and distribute a total of 27 educational modules on topics ranging from the United States' military conflicts to the contributions of American service members in the

arts, medicine, politics, science and technology, and more. In addition to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier module (see next page), the following three modules are available now:

The African American Experience at Arlington National Cemetery module examines how African Americans have been connected to Arlington since the property's origins as a plantation. Topics include slavery, emancipation

and civil rights; African American military heroes; and the achievements of segregated military units such as the Tuskegee Airmen.

The Spanish-American War module enables audiences to understand how this important yet often overlooked 1898 conflict transformed American society and the world. Topics include the role of female nurses in the military, historical arguments for and

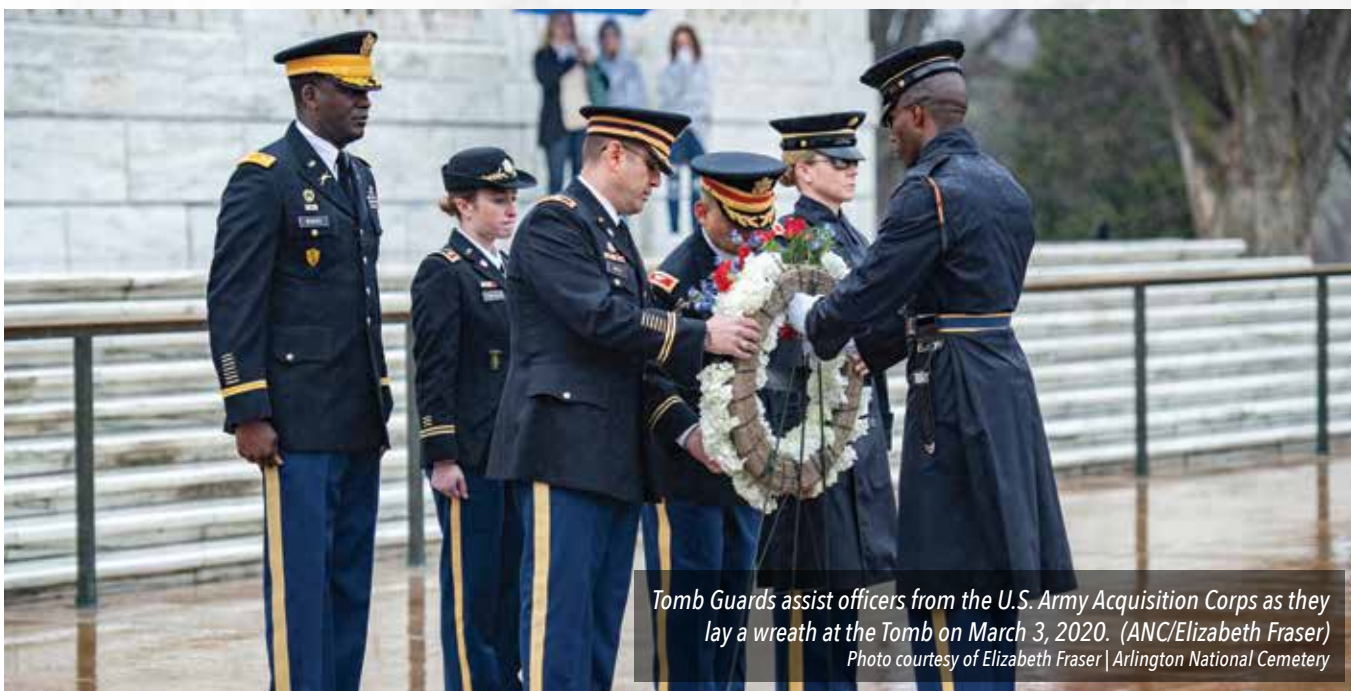
against the war, and the expansion of U.S. global power.

The Understanding Arlington module allows audiences to explore Arlington National Cemetery either in person or virtually, with downloadable guides on ANC's history, traditions and operations.

Resources for teachers and students include primary source readings, worksheets and lesson plans tailored to grade level. Lesson plans align with national and state social studies standards and can easily be adapted for homeschooling or virtual learning. For families and "lifelong learners" (anyone curious to know more about the cemetery and/or American history), we also offer curated readings and walking tours. The walking tours may be used either during an in-person visit or for virtual exploration of the cemetery.

The ANC Education Program is available at: <https://education.arlingtoncemetery.mil>.

- Content courtesy of Arlington National Cemetery (<https://arlingtoncemetery.mil/Portals/0/Docs/News/TUS100%20Resource%20Guide.pdf?ver=2021-03-15-180326-887>)



*Tomb Guards assist officers from the U.S. Army Acquisition Corps as they lay a wreath at the Tomb on March 3, 2020. (ANC/Elizabeth Fraser)
Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Fraser | Arlington National Cemetery*

100 YEARS - PHOTOS OF PRESIDENTS - WREATH LAYING PROCESSIONS

1921-1923 - Warren G. Harding



Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

1923 - 1929 - Calvin Coolidge



Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

1929 - 1933 - Herbert Hoover



Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

1933 - 1945 - Franklin D. Roosevelt



Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

1945 -1953 - Harry S. Truman



Photo courtesy of Abbie Rowe | U.S. National Archives

1953-1961 - Dwight D. Eisenhower



Photo courtesy of Old Guard

100 YEARS - PHOTOS OF PRESIDENTS - WREATH LAYING PROCESSIONS

1961 - 1963 - John F. Kennedy



Photo courtesy of Abbie Rowe | U.S. National Archives

1963 - 1969 - Lyndon B. Johnson



Photo courtesy of Yoichi Okamoto | White House

1969 -1974 - Richard M. Nixon



Credit: Richard Nixon Presidential Library via YouTube

1974 - 1977 - Gerald R. Ford



Photo courtesy of U.S. National Archives

1977 - 1981 - Jimmy Carter



Photo courtesy of U.S. National Archives

1981 - 1989 - Ronald Reagan



Photo courtesy of U.S. National Archives

100 YEARS - PHOTOS OF PRESIDENTS - WREATH LAYING PROCESSIONS

1989 - 1993 - George Bush



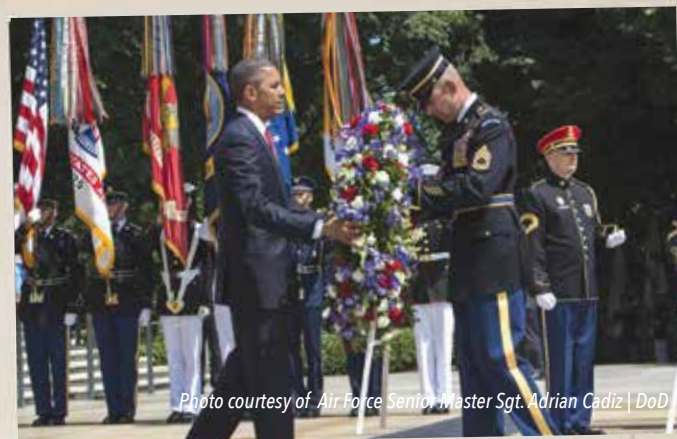
1993 - 2001 - Bill Clinton



2001 - 2009 - George W. Bush



2009 - 2017 - Barack Obama



2017 - 2021 - Donald J. Trump



2021 - Joseph R. Biden





WALKING THE MAT: WORDS FROM A FORMER TOMB GUARD

Q & A By Alyssa McBeth

All photos courtesy of Gavin L. McIlvenna

Gavin L. McIlvenna is the current President of the Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (SHGTUS) McIlvenna served as Assistant Sergeant of the Guard, Commander of the Relief from November 1997 until November 1998.

McBETH: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. Can you start by telling me about your service background as well as when you served as a Tomb Guard?

McILVENNA: I served in the Army from 1989 through 2012, almost 23 years of service, and I was assigned to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Platoon from 1997-98.

McBETH: How did that experience as a Tomb Guard impact you?

McILVENNA: It definitely focused me a little bit more on service and sacrifice and why it's so important to honor and remember people like the Unknown Soldiers that we stood the watch over and all of the Veterans that have fallen in battle. It also helped me learn a lot more about paying attention to detail and

being meticulous in my planning and execution of my duties. Whether it was in a ceremonial function or even in a tactical route.

McBETH: This year marks 100 years of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which is a huge milestone. In your own words, what does this centennial signify?

McILVENNA: The centennial is an opportunity for America to once again get united with their Unknown Soldiers. I believe that over time, people have forgotten the 'why' behind the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and why Sentinels actually stand the watch and have stood the watch since 1926. And it's about service and sacrifice, it's about honoring those that gave all for others, including their identity.

With the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier being a memorial and graves and not a monument, I think people misunderstand a lot of what's going on there. This is going to give them an opportunity to realize that there's more to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier than just what's inside Arlington National Cemetery. The history behind the Unknown Soldiers, each of the services that have had a part to play in the transportation home and rendering of honors as well as our allies is incredibly important, and I think that there's more people in the United States that have a connection to the Unknown Soldier than they think. So, this is going to be that opportunity to pay homage to one lone, unknown American who set aside his personal liberties, put on the uniform of our nation, went overseas—probably for the first time in his life—, and [joined] the battle to free other people. The same people that had come to our



aid in the Revolutionary War and helped us gain our independence. And then whatever experiences that soldier went through, ultimately ended in his death and subsequent burial in different cemeteries until he was selected on October 24, 1921 and brought home to the land of his birth.

McBETH: As the current president and one of the founders of the Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, can you share more about the organization's mission and outreach?

McILVENNA: Our primary mission is to continue to honor the Unknown Soldiers and the duty that we perform there. We bring ties in, Sentinels from all different units not just the Third Infantry there at Fort Myer, the Old Guard, where majority of the Sentinels have come from. Over many years, different units and different MOSs have provided Sentinels so we capture all of them into our Society.

We have strong ties with the current platoon, we ensure that if there's something that has fallen between the cracks, whether it's the Army's supply system or Arlington's supply system, we can be there to make sure they've got everything they need to accomplish their mission. At the same time, we work with them in mentoring to give them some guidance in maybe their military

career if they decide to step out of their military career, we've got plenty of people that can help them if they choose a certain path in life.

Education is the next big thing that we focus on besides the platoon and that mission. That has been a struggle over the years because there's so much misinformation out there. So, the Society does free presentations upon request. With COVID, we have been doing a lot of

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remote presentations, which is very helpful to reach a deeper audience. But when we can, we try to get a Tomb Guard out to a community so they can talk about their experiences and teach about the Unknown Soldiers and the history behind why we do that we do and why our government decided to have a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Right now, of course, the centennial has been a huge project for the last five years. We've reached out pretty much everywhere outside of Arlington that we can whether it's tying in the Navy or the Marine Corps or France or Gold Star Mothers and Daughters of the American Revolution, we've got a lot of different programs that are going on centennial wise.

McBETH: What would you say has been the most rewarding experience working with this organization?

McILVENNA: Besides being able to get out and talk about the Unknown Soldiers and teach America about that, I think one of the larger aspects I love about this Society is the ability to interact, get to know, and become friends with my brother and sister Tomb Guards. I have very dear friends who are Tomb Guards that actually walked the mat before I was even born. It's really something special to be able to walk into a room and have an instant bond with generations of people because we all served in the same unit at the same mission. We become instant friends and our families become instant friends, so that's been a lot of fun outside of being able to actually get out there and talk about the mission.

McBETH: If one wanted to show their support for the Society of the Honor Guard how can they go about doing so?

McILVENNA: There's a couple of different ways and the simplest one is if you see something on our social media posts or a website that you find impacts you, then by all means, echo that on your social media platforms and with your friends to spread the word. If you feel you wish to donate to the society we are a nonprofit organization, we're all volunteer, so we gladly accept those. We have educational scholarships that we provide, one specifically to the platoon, others to former and current Tomb Guards that maybe aren't active in the platoon itself, and another general scholarship. We're trying to promote that education is a good base. So there are a couple different ways that you can [show] support.

While Arlington National Cemetery is the government's agent to plan and execute the national commemoration for the centennial, SHGTUS been working hand-and-hand with them for about five years now, says McIlvenna.

SHGTUS has several centennial projects and events planned that can be attended in-person or virtually. For more information about upcoming events, projects, resources, and how to contribute to the Society's mission, visit www.tombguard.org.

To review the senate resolution commemorating the centennial of the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, visit www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-resolution/396.





THANK YOU TO OUR VETERANS

This Veterans Day, University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) salutes our military veterans for their unwavering commitment, selflessness and service. We wish to extend our gratitude to all who have served in the U.S armed forces. We thank you for your dedication, and we are honored to serve you as you strive to achieve your higher education goals.

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