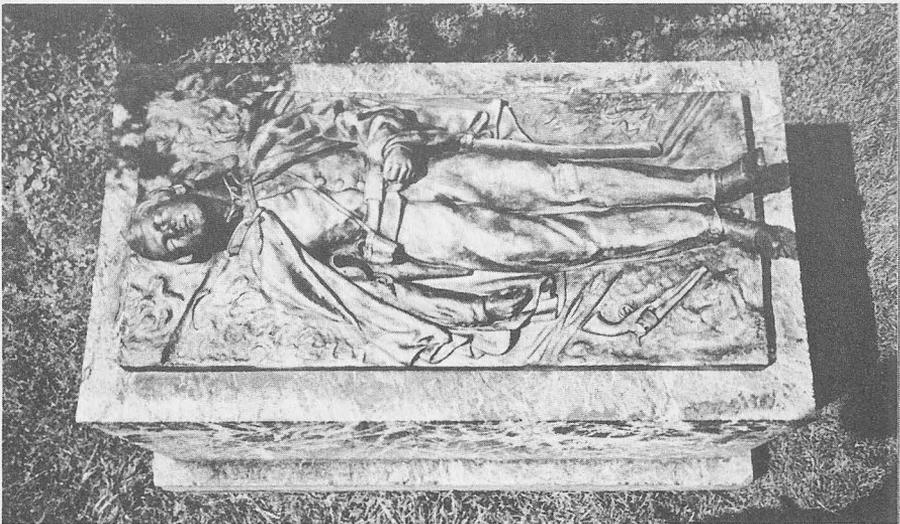


LANDSCAPE OF STONE AND BRONZE

THE VARIOUS AND UNUSUAL CIVIL WAR MONUMENTS SURROUNDING ARLINGTON HOUSE

By George W. Dodge

By the summer of 1864, the burial of Union officers had occurred at Mary Custis Lee's rose garden adjacent to Arlington House, home of General Robert Edward and Mary Custis Lee for 30 years before the Civil War. For about the next 60 years, various veterans of the Civil War were buried at Arlington National Cemetery in close proximity to Arlington House. As the stature of the cemetery grew, so did the elaboration of the private burial markers. Obelisks, sarcophaguses and markers with bas-relief were erected near Arlington House. Some memorialize major generals; some honor privates and corporals. This article is a description of certain monuments and the persons those monuments are intended to honor.



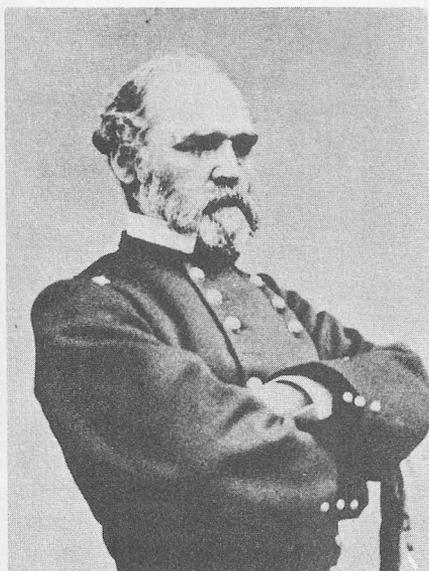
The history of Arlington National Cemetery begins with Union Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs—the originator of the cemetery. It was Meigs' plan that burials be close to Arlington House to desecrate the property and make the mansion uninhabitable. After the Civil War, a variety of monuments began to be placed in the cemetery. One of the earliest private monuments was the sarcophagus type, or stone coffin, that Montgomery Meigs obtained for his first-born son, John R. Meigs. The sarcophagus of John Meigs

is 45 inches long, 24 1/2 inches wide with a depth of 31 inches. On October 3, 1864, while on horseback with two other Union horsemen near Harrisonburg, Virginia, Major John R. Meigs was shot and killed by one of three Confederate cavalymen. Meigs was buried at Oak Hill Cemetery in Washington, D.C. but was reinterred, at his father's direction, at Arlington National Cemetery. The bronze sculpture atop the coffin portrays the manner in which Meigs' son was found on the Swift Run Gap Road.¹ The sarcophagus was built in 1865 by sculptor T. Fisk Mills and placed in Section 1, about a hundred yards behind the Old Amphitheater, equidistant between the footpath along Meigs Avenue and Humphreys Avenue.



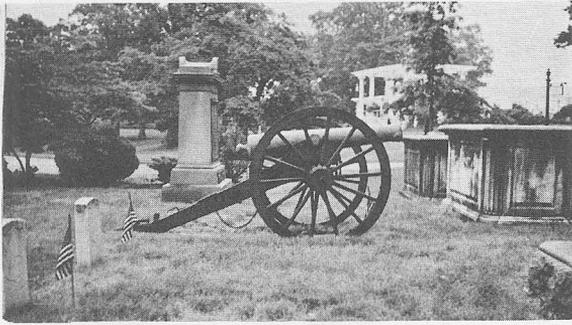
Montgomery Meigs died on January 2, 1892 and was buried, next to his son, in this 8 foot long sarcophagus.

Meigs, a West Point graduate, was in the Corps of Engineers before the war and worked with Robert E. Lee in St. Louis, Missouri in 1837. He later supervised the expansion of the wings and dome of the U.S. Capitol and the construction of Washington Aqueduct. In 1861, Meigs was named Quartermaster General and ably equipped the Union armies during the war. After his retirement from the army in 1882, Meigs designed the Old Pension Building now known as the National Building Museum.² Meigs was an honest, loyal and efficient quartermaster, but he is perhaps remembered most for establishing a soldier's cemetery at Arlington.³



A variety of unique private markers are located in the area encircled by Humphreys Avenue. The prominent stone Latin cross and angel over the grave of Thomas and Nancy McKee is located 45 degrees northeast from the markers of the Meigses, across Humphreys Avenue. The cross is ten feet high and the angel is six feet, atop a 4 1/2 foot pedestal. McKee served as lieutenant in the 1st West Virginia Infantry. After the war, he worked with the West Virginia government as a statistician and later became the federal warden in Washington, D.C. McKee was active in the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS), a post-war fraternal organization. He served as its registrar-in-chief from 1911 until his death on July 12, 1924. Nancy McKee died in 1927 and is buried alongside her husband beneath their monument which conveys a Christian message.⁴

In Section 1, 50 feet due east from the McKee monument, is a Civil War cannon over the grave of Wallace Fitz Randolph and his family: wife, Katherine Julia Randolph, who died on March 2, 1915; daughter, Annie Powell Randolph, who died May 3, 1949; and daughter, Mary Fitz Randolph, who died on August 24, 1970. Randolph was a lieutenant in Battery L of the 5th U.S. Artillery. He later became a Major General in the U.S. Army and died on December 9, 1910 at the age of 69. The bronze tube of the 12-pound Napoleon cannon is now a greenish color known as patina, a film produced by oxidation on the surface of the bronze. The iron of the 4 1/2 foot tall wheels is rusted. The length of the flared tube is 66 inches and its weight is 1,239 pounds according

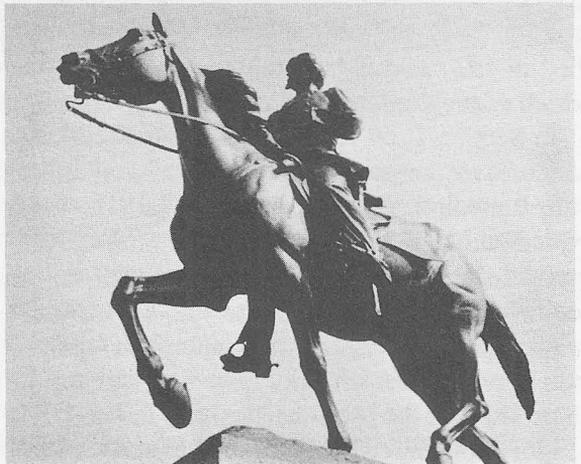


to the inscription on the tube. The bore diameter is 4.6 inches. Based on an inscription near the bore of the cannon, the manufacturer was "N.H. & Co. ... 1862." In a letter dated December 5, 1862 to the Confederate Secretary of War, Robert E. Lee listed

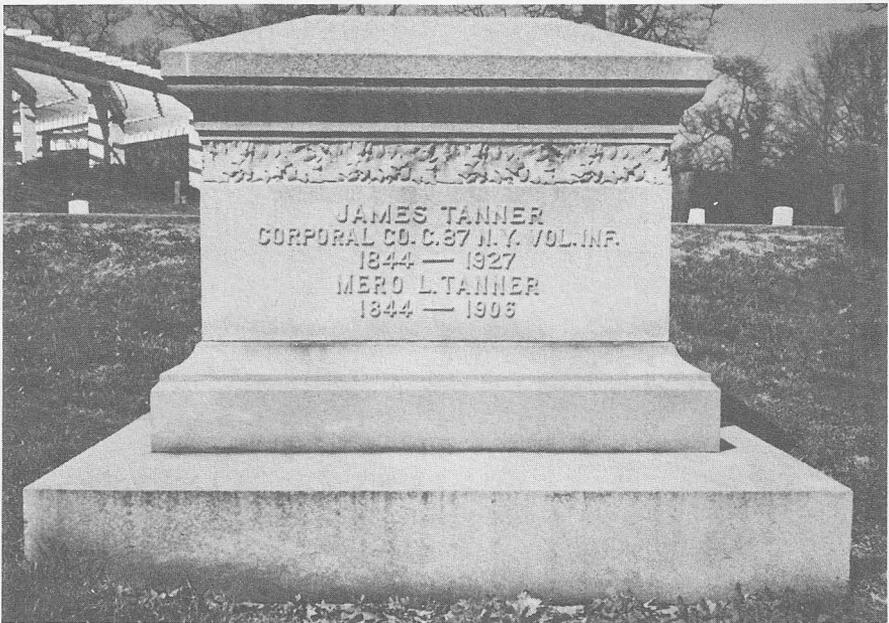
12-pounder cannons first among what he considered the most effective artillery pieces for field service.⁵ Although the cannon over Randolph's grave accurately depicts a type of artillery used during the Civil War, its garish placement in the cemetery led to regulation changes in 1947. Thereafter, only government issue monuments were permitted in the new sections. Regulations permit private monuments in certain older sections of the cemetery.⁶

Proceeding towards Arlington House, at the junction of Meigs Avenue and Sheridan Avenue near the Old Amphitheater, is the bronze equestrian monument of General Phil Kearny, presented by the State of New Jersey. Kearny and his mount face north. Sculptor E.C. Potter depicts Kearny, an excellent rider, without his left arm, which was amputated following his wound at the Battle of Churubusco in the Mexican War. Kearny became acquainted with Robert E. Lee during the Mexican War as he and Lee served on General Winfield Scott's staff. Kearny was also familiar with Arlington House, having attended parties there prior to the Civil War.⁷

Kearny was given command of the First New Jersey Brigade at the outbreak of the Civil War. He is credited with the invention of the scarlet Kearny patch on hats, forerunner of the corps badge system designed to distinguish soldiers of the various army corps. Kearny's brigade was engaged in battles at Williamsburg, Seven Pines, Glendale and Sec-



ond Manassas.⁸ Kearny was killed at the Battle of Chantilly or Ox Hill on September 1, 1862, at the age of 47, when he mistakenly rode towards a group of Confederate soldiers. General Robert E. Lee ordered the return of Kearny's body and sword to the Union lines. Kearny was buried in the family vault at Trinity Churchyard in New York City, his place of birth. As the stature of Arlington National Cemetery began to rise, a group of veterans of the First New Jersey Brigade petitioned the Kearny family requesting Kearny's reinterment in Arlington. The family consented and Kearny was reinterred in Arlington in 1912 with President William Taft speaking at the ceremony. The bronze equestrian statue of Kearny placed near the Lee's garden was unveiled in 1914 with President Woodrow Wilson presiding. An inscription on the monument erroneously lists Kearny's year of birth as 1814 when it should be 1815. In 1994, the monument was cleaned by sand blasting with crushed walnut hulls and then waxed.⁹



One hundred thirty feet due east, down the path towards the rose garden (Lee Avenue), is the sarcophagus of Corporal James Tanner, 12 feet from the south side of the path and opposite the Old Amphitheater. From its base, the monument is 64 inches high and 28 inches wide. Tanner was born on April 4, 1844 at Richmondville, Schoharie County, New York. Prior to his enlistment on September 21, 1861; Tanner had been a school teacher for a few months.

He was appointed corporal in Company C of the 87th New York Infantry and served in the Army of the Potomac during the Peninsula campaign of 1862. Tanner, the son of a farmer, would prove to be no ordinary corporal.¹⁰

At the Battle of Second Bull Run or Second Manassas, on August 30, 1862, Tanner was struck by a Confederate artillery shell and both legs were amputated on the battlefield. He then clerked in the Ordinance Bureau of the War Department and was brought to Lincoln's deathbed at the Peterson House to take dictation of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton's orders and instructions. He studied law and was admitted to practice in 1869. Tanner held various public positions in New York and Washington, serving as Register of Wills for Washington, D.C.¹¹

Tanner was active in veteran affairs and was elected in 1905 as Commander in Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), a veterans organization which was also a powerful lobbying group, but Tanner did not hold ill will towards the South. Although a double amputee, he was remarkably agile with his cane and artificial limbs. The prominent veteran, referred to as "Corporal Tanner" by those who knew him, was often invited to speak to gatherings of Southerners and was seen as a figure of reconciliation.¹² In fact, he was invited to speak at the ceremony dedicating the Confederate burial section at Arlington National Cemetery in June 1912.¹³

Tanner died on October 2, 1927 and was buried near Arlington House. His marker was placed by the GAR among various prominent officers of the Civil



War. In fact, of the officially commissioned 583 Union generals of the Civil War, over 50 of them are buried in Arlington National Cemetery, mostly around Arlington House.¹⁴ All were post-war burials in a cemetery whose origin was chiefly for privates and corporals. Mero Tanner, mother of four children, is buried with her husband, Corporal Tanner, near the Old Amphitheater. She was killed in a car accident in Helena, Montana, in 1906.¹⁵



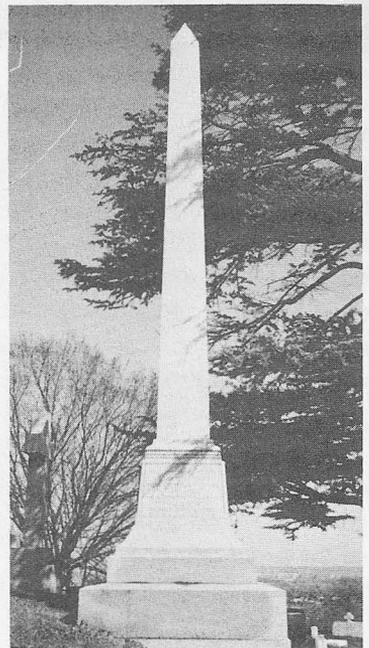
About 100 feet east on Lee Avenue is a path to the left that leads to the Civil War monument to the Unknown Dead. Located next to the Lee's rose garden, a circular pit, 20 feet deep and 20 feet in diameter, was dug in 1865 to place the remains of unknown soldiers gathered chiefly from northern Virginia battlefields.¹⁶ According to the inscription, 2,111 soldiers were reinterred in the pit between 1865 and September 1866. Until the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (built in 1921 and placed under military guard in 1926), the Civil War Tomb of the Unknown Dead was the first significant marker honoring unknown soldiers in Arlington Cemetery.¹⁷ However, its placement within approximately 180 feet from Arlington House was not appreciated by all. In 1866, Lee's wife, Mary Lee Custis, visited Arlington and complained, in a private letter, about the Union burials: "They have done everything to debase and desecrate [the property]."¹⁸ This post-Civil War monument to the unknown soldiers is of the sarcophagus type, which had its origin in Egypt. Its classic design is an adaption of the sarcophagus of Roman General Cornelius Scipio Barbatus, located in the Vatican.¹⁹



The Tomb of the Unknown Dead is more likely than not the resting place of ten men of Company F of the Second Wisconsin Infantry. On August 28, 1862, they were killed at the Battle of Brawner Farm, one of a series of battles over a three-day period known as Second Bull Run. Among those buried on the battlefield and likely reinterred in the summer of 1865 in the pit near Arlington House is Joseph Mann, pictured here, a 21 year old student who enlisted on April 23, 1861.²⁰ Mann, a native of Wisconsin, resided in Racine before the war. He was in action at First Bull Run. At Brawner Farm, Mann was only a few miles away from the site of his first battle. He was one of the 86 soldiers of the Second Wisconsin killed or mortally wounded in the battle.²¹ In Company F

(Mann's company) 26 out of 38 soldiers received gunshot wounds. Civil War rifles were extremely accurate up to 300 yards. On the fields at Brawner Farm on August 28, 1862, the battle lines ranged from 60 to 100 yards apart, the missiles at this short distance having an even more devastating effect. Company F left ten dead on the field, their battle line marked by their prostrate figures. They were buried where they fell, and in 1865 a re-interment detail located their remains.²² Now they rest in a massive grave near Arlington House.

Proceeding to the southeast corner of Lee Avenue, 24 feet from the path is the obelisk of Colonel Roy Stone. Stone's monument is a modern adaptation of ancient Egyptian monolithic spires which date back prior to the 40th century BCE.²³ A large pedestal of recessed panels supports the 20 foot tall monument which weighs 180 pounds per cubic foot. Stone began the war as captain of Company D of the 42nd Pennsylvania Infantry, recruited in Warren County.^{24,25} Stone



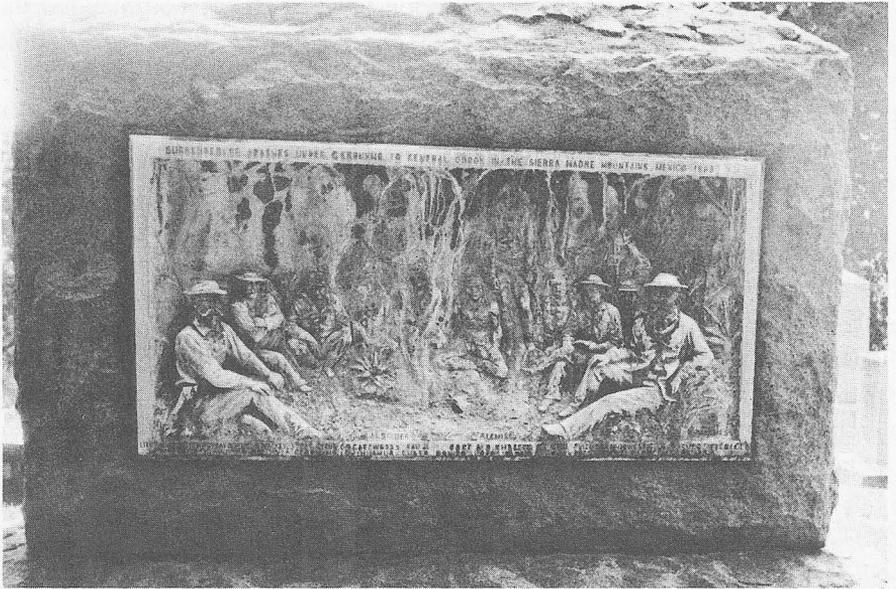
was soon elected major of the regiment and so effectively commanded the regiment at the Battles of Mechanicsville and Gaines' Mill, Virginia, that he was recommended for promotion.²⁶ The organizer of the "Bucktails," Lieutenant Colonel Thomas L. Kane, and others, praised Stone and proposed that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania create a "Bucktail Brigade [four regiments] of light infantry."²⁷

The U.S. Secretary of War then authorized the newly promoted Colonel Stone to recruit such a brigade of backwoods hunters. After organizing the 149th and 150th Pennsylvania regiments, Stone was ordered to join the Army of the Potomac in the field for the spring campaign of 1863. The Pennsylvanians then pursued General Robert E. Lee's army into Pennsylvania and Stone was given command of the 143rd, 149th, and 150th Pennsylvania Volunteers, which became known as Stone's Brigade.²⁸

On July 1, 1863, Stone's Brigade fought along the Chambersburg Pike and helped slow the Confederate advance so that the remainder of the Army of the Potomac could take position on the higher ground outside of the town of Gettysburg. Stone wrote in his battle report that the men under his command "fought as if each man felt that upon his own arm hung the fate of the day and the nation. Nearly two-thirds of my command fell on the field. Every field officer save one was wounded and disabled."²⁹ Among the wounded was Colonel Stone.

Stone was brevetted, or honorarily titled, Brigadier General for his meritorious conduct at Gettysburg as inscribed on his obelisk. (During the Civil War, about 1,700 Union officers were brevetted Major General or Brigadier General.³⁰) He also was commissioned as a Brigadier General during the 1898 war with Spain. Stone died on August 5, 1905, at the age of 68 and is buried near Arlington House with his wife, Mary Elizabeth (November 1, 1844 - September 28, 1925) and son, Richard Stone (November 10, 1877 - March 26, 1896).

From Stone's obelisk, 30 feet slightly north-east is the unique monument of General George Crook, placed by the Society of the Army of West Virginia. The bronze bas-relief depicts Crook with Geronimo's Southern Chiricahua Apaches. The south side of the monument lists the various Indian tribes that Crook encountered. Prior to his duty on the western frontier, Crook was active in western Virginia campaigns in 1861 and 1864 and also led a victorious Union force in the May 23, 1862 Battle of Lewisburg, West Virginia. He also participated in the 1862 Maryland campaign, the 1863 Chickamauga campaign and the 1864 Shenandoah campaign.³¹ Crook's bas-relief was one of Arlington National Cemetery's earliest attractions as the pathway known as Crook's Walk initially approached the Lee's rose garden from the east. How-

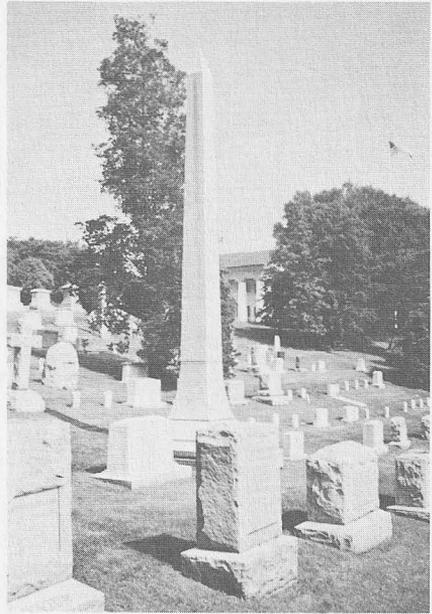


ever, Crook's Walk has since been re-routed to its current northern approach. Large pine trees now block the view of the bas-relief from Lee Avenue and the detailed bas-relief is marred by a greenish patina.

Twenty feet north of Crook's monument is the recumbent slab or ledger-stone of Colonel Hiram Berdan, organizer of two regiments of U.S. Sharpshooters.³² Its simple rectangular form is 38 inches wide, 6 1/2 feet long and one foot deep and is visible 15 feet from the east side of Lee Avenue.

About 90 feet east of Crook's marker is one of the cemetery's tallest monuments—the 45 foot obelisk of General Joe Wheeler. Confederate

General Wheeler's burial with Union officers in Arlington National Cemetery, as opposed to burial in the Confederate section at Arlington, perplexed many Southerners. Joe Wheeler served as a General of Confederate cavalry during



the Civil War and was commissioned as a United States General in 1898 for the Spanish American War.³³

Under an ancient holly tree, 58 feet from the southeast corner of Arlington House, is the truncated obelisk monument of General Philip H. Sheridan. The obelisk has a heavy taper on both sides and is situated on a base and sub-base. The detailed bas relief on the east side of the obelisk features a circular profile of a medal-adorned Sheridan. The bas relief includes a decorative flag and palms which symbolize spiritual victory.³⁴ The picture, circa. 1905, shows the proximity of Sheridan's obelisk to Arlington House. At present, the





same view is impossible due to the over-growth of the holly tree visible in the right hand portion of the picture.³⁵

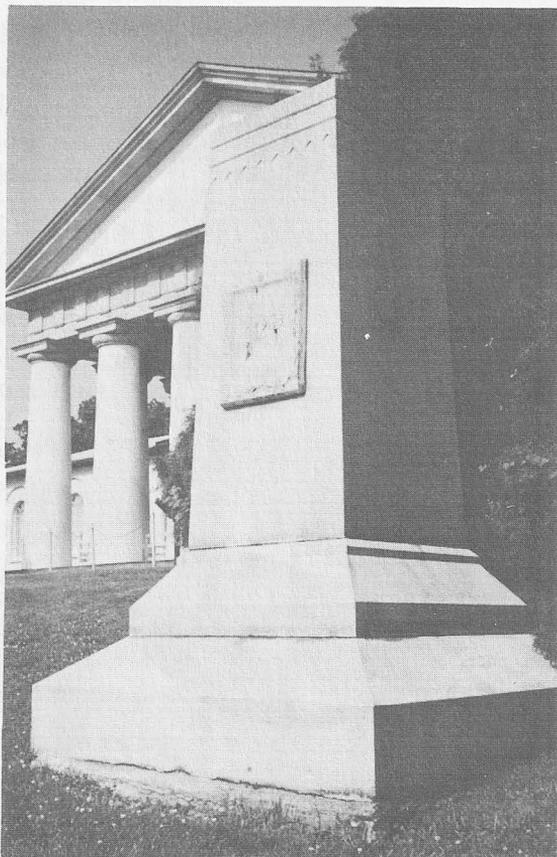
Sheridan has been characterized as one of the three Union generals who won the greatest fame during the Civil War, the other two being, of course, Ulysses S. Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman. The contribution of the Albany, New York native to the federal war effort was outstanding, and his rise in rank was

meteoric.³⁶ Sheridan participated in both the eastern and western theaters of the war. His leadership as a division commander at the Battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga attracted the attention of General Ulysses S. Grant, who assigned him as cavalry corps commander of the Army of the Potomac. Sheridan would achieve notable success at various battles in Virginia: Yellow Tavern, Cedar Creek, Five Forks and Saylor's Creek. Sheridan's military career concluded with his promotion to the rank of full general in 1888. He died the same year.³⁷ Sheridan's burial is significant because he was the highest ranking Civil War officer buried in Arlington National Cemetery in the 19th century. The location of his burial site in front of Arlington House and the placement of an impressive obelisk with bas-relief in prominent view contributed to elevating the stature of Arlington National Cemetery, which had heretofore been seen as a cemetery for soldiers of low rank who could not



be brought home after their deaths.

The closest monument to Arlington House is the obelisk of General Horatio G. Wright. It is 45 feet from the front porch steps behind a large evergreen tree. Wright graduated second in the West Point class of 1841 and was assigned to the Corps of Engineers. During the Civil War, Wright was stationed primarily in the eastern theater of the conflict. After the war, Wright oversaw various harbor improvements and the completion of the Washington Monument—arguably the most famous and most impressive obelisk monument on this continent, and visible across the Potomac River from Wright's burial site.³⁸



Wright died on July 2, 1899. A blunt or truncated obelisk, eight feet tall, was placed over Wright's grave. A plaque on the east side of the obelisk has a bas-relief of Wright's profile that measures 21 inches by 25 inches. It was made by a sculptor named Kelly. The script on the plaque reads: "H G Wright Maj Genl of Volunteers 6th Army Corps Washington DC." The sculptor details Wright's service ribbon on his uniform, shoulder strap with two stars, mustache and goatee. Kelly included a Maltese Cross above the plaque—the insignia for the 6th Corps. The picture of Wright on page 24 is strikingly similar to the bronze bas-relief profile by sculptor Kelly.³⁹ On the rear of the monument is a plaque 32 inches wide and 30 inches high with the following inscription: "Horatio G. Wright Brig. & Brevet Maj. General and Chief of Engineers USA, Maj. General U.S. Vol's. The Survivors of the 6th Army Corps, Army of the Potomac, Which He Commanded From Spotsylvania Until the End of the War, Erect This Monument In Affectionate Remembrance of Him."

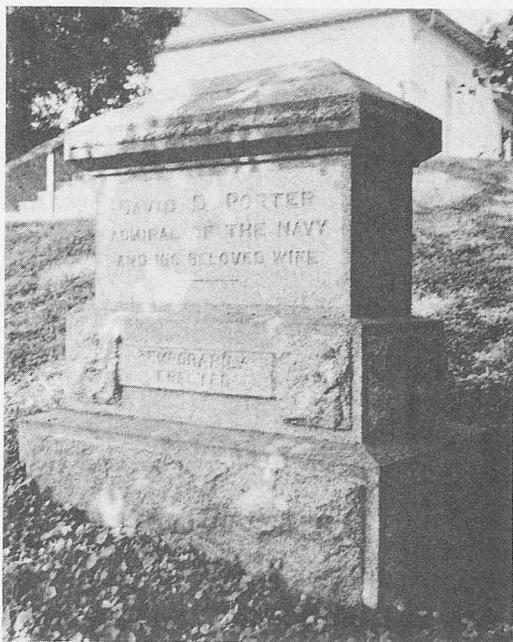
Wright's wife is buried six feet east of the monument, about 100 yards



the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.⁴¹ After the war, Porter was Superintendent of the Naval Academy from 1865 to 1869 and died on February 13, 1891.⁴² Ten feet below or east of the pictured marker is the flat grave marker of David D. Porter and George Ann Porter.

above the burial site of President John F. Kennedy. Generals Wright and Sheridan were placed in front of Arlington House facing Washington, D.C. to honor them as defenders of Washington during Confederate General Jubal Early's attack in the summer of 1864.⁴⁰

A few feet from the steps opposite Wright's obelisk is the burial site of Admiral David D. Porter. Porter was born on June 8, 1813 in Chester, Pennsylvania. He served as a U.S. Navy midshipman and was in active service during the Mexican War. In the Civil War, Porter's commands included a mortar fleet at New Orleans, the Mississippi River Squadron and



Notes and References

George W. Dodge is an Arlington resident. He holds both an M.A. Degree in American History and a J.D. Degree from George Mason University. He has contributed frequently to the *Magazine*, writing primarily about Arlington National Cemetery. Unless otherwise noted, all pictures accompanying this article were taken by the author.

- ¹ George F. Skoch, *Civil War Times Illustrated* (Harrisburg, PA: Historical Times, Inc., September 1984), pp. 34-39.
- ² Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1992) pp. 318-19.
- ³ Picture of Montgomery Meigs on page 13 from the author's collection.
- ⁴ William Marvel, *Biographical Sketches of the Contributors to the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States* (Reprint, Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1995), p. 204; American Monument Association, *Memorial Symbolism, Epitaphs and Design Types* (Boston, MA: American Monument Association, 1947), p. 47.
- ⁵ Dean S. Thomas, *Cannons, An Introduction to Civil War Artillery* (Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1985), p. 28.
- ⁶ James E. Peters, *Arlington National Cemetery: Shrine to America's Heroes* (Woodbine Press, 1986), Appendix III.
- ⁷ Interview with William B. Style, a descendant of General Philip Kearny, on September 25, 1996.
- ⁸ Warner, *Generals in Blue*, pp. 258-59.
- ⁹ Interview with Style.
- ¹⁰ S.A. Cunningham, ed., *Confederate Veteran* (Reprint, Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1987), Vol. XX, p. 551.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. XIV, p. 121 and Vol. III, p. 112.
- ¹² Interview with Brian C. Pohanka, Civil War historian, July 1996. Tanner's picture is reprinted from *Confederate Veteran*, with permission. It was very unusual for *Confederate Veteran* to publish items about Union veterans.
- ¹³ Cunningham, *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XX, pp. 550-551.
- ¹⁴ Warner, *Generals in Blue*.
- ¹⁵ Mero Tanner's picture reprinted from *Confederate Veteran*, with permission.
- ¹⁶ Philip Bigler, *In Honored Glory* (Arlington, VA: Vandamere Press, 1987), p. 30.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 66.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.
- ¹⁹ American Monument Association, *Memorial Symbolism*, p. 55. The wreath shown in the photograph was placed by President and Mrs. Clinton.
- ²⁰ Picture reprinted from George H. Otis, *The Second Wisconsin Infantry* (Dayton, OH: Morningside Bookshop, 1984).
- ²¹ Otis, *The Second Wisconsin Infantry*, p. 334.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 248.
- ²³ American Monument Association, *Memorial Symbolism*, p. 51.
- ²⁴ Samuel P. Bates, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers* (Reprint, Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1993), Vol. II, p. 929.
- ²⁵ The regiment was also known as the 13th Pennsylvania Reserves and the troops were known as the "Bucktails", as the men wore the tail of a buck on their hats to symbolize their rifle skill. Mark M. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary* (New York, NY: McKay Publishing Company, 1988), pp. 636-637.
- ²⁶ Bates, *Pennsylvania Volunteers*, Vol. II, pp. 908, 914.
- ²⁷ Bates, *Pennsylvania Volunteers*, Vol. VII, p. 611.
- ²⁸ William F. Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War* (Dayton, OH: Morningside Press, 1985), pp. 300, 303, 304.
- ²⁹ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1881-1902), Vol. 27, Part I, p. 331.

- ³⁰ Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 84.
- ³¹ Warner, *Generals in Blue*, pp. 102-104.
- ³² American Monument Association, *Memorial Symbolism*, p. 48. and Fox, *Regimental Losses*, pp. 418-419.
- ³³ Peters, *Arlington Cemetery*, pp. 238-240. Photograph of General Wheeler reprinted from Warner, *Generals in Blue*.
- ³⁴ American Monument Association, *Memorial Symbolism*, p. 21.
- ³⁵ Photograph from the author's collection.
- ³⁶ Warner, *Generals in Blue*, pp. 437-438.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.* Photograph of General Sheridan reprinted from Warner, *Generals in Blue*.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 575-576.
- ³⁹ Photograph reprinted from Warner, *Generals in Blue*.
- ⁴⁰ Interview with Bill Styple.
- ⁴¹ Peters, *Arlington Cemetery*, pp. 175-176.
- ⁴² U.S. Naval Academy, Office of the Superintendent.