# Quantico National Cemetery

## Quantico National Cemetery: A Tribute to Service and Sacrifice

Nestled in the heart of Virginia's coastal plain, Quantico National Cemetery stands as a solemn reminder of the men and women who have served our nation. Whether you're a family member planning a visit, a history enthusiast, or simply looking to understand the significance of this burial ground, this guide offers a comprehensive look at the cemetery's history, layout, and the services it provides to honor those who gave everything.

## History and Significance

Established in 1949, Quantico National Cemetery was created to accommodate the growing number of veterans who settled in the Richmond–Petersburg area after World War II. Over the decades, it has become a revered resting place for more than 50,000 service members, including those who served in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Its name reflects its proximity to the Marine Corps Base Quantico, a historic training ground that has shaped U.S. military leadership for more than a century. The cemetery's quiet, landscaped grounds echo the discipline and respect inherent to the armed forces, offering a peaceful environment for reflection.

## Layout and Features

### Sections and Design

The cemetery is thoughtfully divided into several sections to accommodate families from different branches and eras:

- **Veterans' Section –** Reserved for those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces.
- **Military Family Section –** For spouses, parents, and children of deceased service members.
- **Memorial Wall –** A dedicated space where names of those missing in action are honored.
- **Garden of Remembrance –** A serene area featuring native trees and shrubs for quiet contemplation.

### Gravestone Options

Quantico National Cemetery offers a range of gravestone styles, from classic markers to personalized memorials. All markers are made from durable materials designed to withstand the Virginia climate, ensuring that each tribute remains a lasting testament to sacrifice.

## Visiting the Cemetery

### Hours of Operation

The cemetery is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., allowing visitors to pay their respects at any time that suits them. There is no admission fee, and the grounds are free for all.

### Guided Tours and Events

To deepen the experience, the cemetery offers guided tours on select holidays, such as Memorial Day and Veterans Day. These tours highlight key historical points, memorials, and the stories of notable interments.

### Accessibility and Amenities

- Wheelchair-accessible pathways throughout the grounds.
- Parking available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Restrooms located near the main entrance.
- Information desk staffed by knowledgeable volunteers ready to assist visitors.

## Services for Families

### Funeral and Memorial Planning

Quantico National Cemetery partners with the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide comprehensive funeral services. Families can choose from:

1. Traditional burial with a flag ceremony.
2. Cremation services, including scattering of ashes on the memorial lawn.
3. Veterans' memorial services featuring military honors.

### Financial Assistance

Eligible families may qualify for burial benefits, including the Veterans Affairs (VA) burial allowance, which covers costs such as the burial plot, headstone, and perpetual care. Detailed eligibility criteria and application processes can be obtained from the cemetery's information desk.

## Preserving History: Notable Interments

Among the many honored veterans interred at Quantico National Cemetery are:

- **Marine Corps General James H. Smith –** A decorated officer who served in World War II.
- **Army Staff Sergeant Maria L. Garcia –** A trailblazer who broke gender barriers in the 1970s.
- **Air Force Captain Robert T. Lee –** Recognized for his contributions during the Cold War era.

Each of these individuals exemplifies the courage and dedication that define the cemetery's purpose.

## How to Honor a Loved One

Planning a visit or ceremony at Quantico National Cemetery can be a meaningful way to remember a family member's service. Here are key steps to consider:

1. **Contact the Cemetery Office –** Discuss plot availability, headstone options, and scheduling.
2. **Arrange Transportation –** The cemetery is accessible by car, public transit, or rideshare services.
3. **Prepare a Tribute –** Whether it's a written eulogy, a photograph, or a favorite song, personalize the ceremony.
4. **Participate in the Flag Ceremony –** If eligible, enlist a local veterans' organization to honor your loved one with a flag folding and salute.

## Conclusion

Quantico National Cemetery is more than a burial site; it is a living monument to the valor, sacrifice, and dedication of countless American service members. From its serene landscapes to the dignified ceremonies it hosts, every corner of the cemetery invites reflection and remembrance. Whether you are planning a visit, researching military history, or simply looking to honor a veteran's legacy, this cemetery provides a respectful and enduring tribute to those who have served our nation.

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