

By May 1864 the civil war had been going on for 3 years and American military cemeteries around Washington were filling up. The quartermaster department had been tasked with finding a new site for the burial of Union soldiers. The head of the department was General Montgomery Meigs and in a move of spite, he took the recommendation of using the grounds of Arlington House which was the home of General Lee and his wife Mary Custis Lee. Arlington was built by George Washington Parke Custis, father of Mary. Mary was also the great granddaughter of Martha Washington and step great granddaughter of George Washington. By burying soldiers on the grounds, it rendered them unlivable leaving the Lee's homeless. A portion of the grounds were also used as a settlement for freed blacks for over 20 years. Now some nearly 160 years later, there are over 400,000 graves on what is just about the most sacred ground in the United States.

Among the dead are 2 presidents, Kennedy and Taft, one of my personal heroes General Omar Bradley, Gus Grissom and Roger Chaffee from the tragic Apollo 1 fire, 32 British Commonwealth soldiers, and scores of men and women who never got to experience a full life and will remain forever young. The vast majority of those buried paid for our freedom by giving their lives.

What started out as justifiable bitterness ended up being a shrine for the heroes of this great nation. Today Arlington National Cemetery holds not only our heroes but has memorials all over the grounds from some of the darkest days in our history.

Micah 7:8

Do not gloat over me, my enemy!

Though I have fallen, I will rise.

Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light.

God bless you church family and to those of you listed below who served, thank you for your service to our country. You all deserve to be mentioned for what you did. You have my highest respect.

Air Force: *Richard Hovis*

Army: *Bob Benchoff, Tony Haugh, Nevin Monn*

Navy: *Jerry Cordell, Gilbert Hovermale, Dave Patterson*