



ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

HONOR · REMEMBER · EXPLORE

FACT SHEET

MAY 2025

Flags-In

The United States flag is one of the most significant symbols of Memorial Day, representing freedom, sacrifice and remembrance. Just before Memorial Day weekend, the 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (also known as The Old Guard) honors America's fallen heroes by placing American flags at gravesites for service members buried at Arlington National Cemetery and the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery.

This tradition, known as "Flags-In," has taken place annually since the 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment was designated as the Army's official ceremonial unit in 1948. Every available soldier in the Old Guard participates. They place small American flags at approximately 260,000 headstones and 7,000 niche rows within the columbarium. Each flag is inserted into the ground, exactly one boot length from the headstone's base. It takes nearly 1,500 soldiers, including approximately 100 joint service members, four hours to complete Flags-In.

At the [Tomb of the Unknown Soldier](#), the [Sentinels](#) (who are members of the Old Guard) place flags to honor the Unknowns.

It is an honor and a privilege for The Old Guard to conduct this mission as not every honor guard member conducts memorial affairs at Arlington National Cemetery. Flags-In offers a special opportunity for them to show respect and honor to every service member who has served our country—including, in many cases, friends and family members.

All flags are removed after Memorial Day, before the cemetery opens to the public.

Arlington National Cemetery

Arlington National Cemetery, consisting of 639 acres, is the final resting place of more than 420,000 veterans and their dependents. Service members from every one of America's major wars, from the Revolutionary War to today's conflicts, are interred at ANC. We conduct 27-30 funerals each weekday and host over 3,000 ceremonies per year, including the National Memorial Day Observance and the National Veterans Day Observance. Our mission is to represent the American people for past, present and future generations. We honor the sacrifices and extraordinary lives of American service members and their families.