



ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

HONOR · REMEMBER · EXPLORE

FACT SHEET

MAY 2026

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 (ANC) and the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. As the nation prepares to commemorate its 250th anniversary, Flags In connects today's soldiers to generations of military service and sacrifice at Arlington 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 will place approximately 250,000 small American flags—one at each headstone and along every row in the columbarium courts and niche walls—to honor every individual laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. It takes nearly 1,500 soldiers and 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 nearly 430,000 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.