

ARLINGTON National Cemetery

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News Release
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HONOR THE TRADITION • REMEMBER THE SACRIFICE • EXPLORE THE HISTORY

May 19, 2014

Arlington National Cemetery to rename “Old” Amphitheater after Civil War Wounded Warrior, James R. Tanner

ARLINGTON, Va. – On May 30, Arlington National Cemetery is renaming the “Old Amphitheater” to honor Corporal James R. Tanner in conjunction with the annual Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Decoration Day observance. The event is part of the cemetery’s 150th commemoration and starts at 5 p.m. It is free and open to the public.

Tanner, a corporal in the 87th New York Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War, suffered a gruesome wound at the Second Battle of Bull Run in August 1862 which resulted in the loss of both legs. After the war, this wounded warrior became a stenographer and was present both at Abraham Lincoln’s deathbed and during the trial of the Lincoln conspirators. He was an advocate for veterans’ rights and served for a time as the Commissioner of Pensions. He later became the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic. He is now buried a few yards from the structure that will bear his name in Section 2, grave 877.

The Lincoln-Cushing Camp No. 2 of the Sons of Union Veterans is hosting a traditional Memorial Day Observance at Arlington National Cemetery’s Old Amphitheater. Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, was officially proclaimed in 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic. The first national observance was held at Arlington National Cemetery on May 30, 1868. In the early 1870s, Arlington’s national observance drew crowds of 25,000 a year – more than the population of Washington, D.C. at the time. The observance provides a glimpse of how Memorial Day was conducted after the Civil War, including participants in period uniforms.

About the Old Amphitheater:

Originally built in 1873 for the celebration of the fifth Decoration Day, the “Old” Amphitheater played a crucial role in all May 30 celebrations at Arlington National Cemetery until 1920 when the larger Memorial Amphitheater was dedicated.

During those 47 years, Presidents, Commanders-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic (a veterans organization for those who had served in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marines, and Revenue Cutter Service during the Civil War), and other dignitaries addressed tens of thousands who traveled to Arlington National Cemetery to honor America’s fallen service members.

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“Arlington at 150” events (Free and open to the public)

- “Arlington at 150 Observance Program: A tribute to Arlington’s Past, Present and Future,” featuring historical vignettes and musical performances, pre-show starts at 8 p.m. June 13
- Wreath-laying ceremony, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, 9 a.m. June 16

Details about “Arlington at 150” events are available at:

<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Events/ANC150.aspx>

Ten days of tours

Arlington has partnered with *ANC Tours by Martz Gray Line* to provide a series of narrated tours exploring Arlington’s rich history. Tours are \$9 per person and include transportation around the cemetery, a speaker and a narrator from the Arlington National Cemetery History Office. These tours are perfect for individuals or groups.

“Arlington at 150” Special Guided Tours

- The American Civil War, 2 to 5 p.m. May 19 and June 2
- Uncle Sam’s Little Wars, 2 to 5 p.m. May 20
- World War I: Bringing our Heroes Home, 2 to 5 p.m. May 21 and June 3
- World War II: The Greatest Generation, 2 to 5 p.m. May 22
- U.S. Military and the Cold War, 2 to 5 p.m. May 23
- Late 20th Century to the Present, 2 to 5 p.m. June 4
- Monuments and Memorials, 2 to 5 p.m. June 5
- Medal of Honor, 2 to 5 p.m. June 6

Tickets for “Arlington at 150” tours are available for purchase online through:

<http://www.ancours.com/Arlingtonat150.php>, or by phone at (202) 488-1012.

Arlington National Cemetery is committed to honoring the legacy of our fallen heroes, veterans and their families through dignified military interment services. The work that Arlington is undertaking today will further enable the cemetery to be a place for people to *Honor, Remember* and *Explore* this nation’s rich history well into the future.

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Twitter: @ArlingtonNatl

Event hash tag: #ANC150

Event logo: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtoncemetery/14006545904/>

Overall observance poster: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtoncemetery/14076392794/in/photostream/>

Tour poster: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtoncemetery/13889319038/in/photostream/>

Evening program: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtoncemetery/14052810226/in/photostream/>