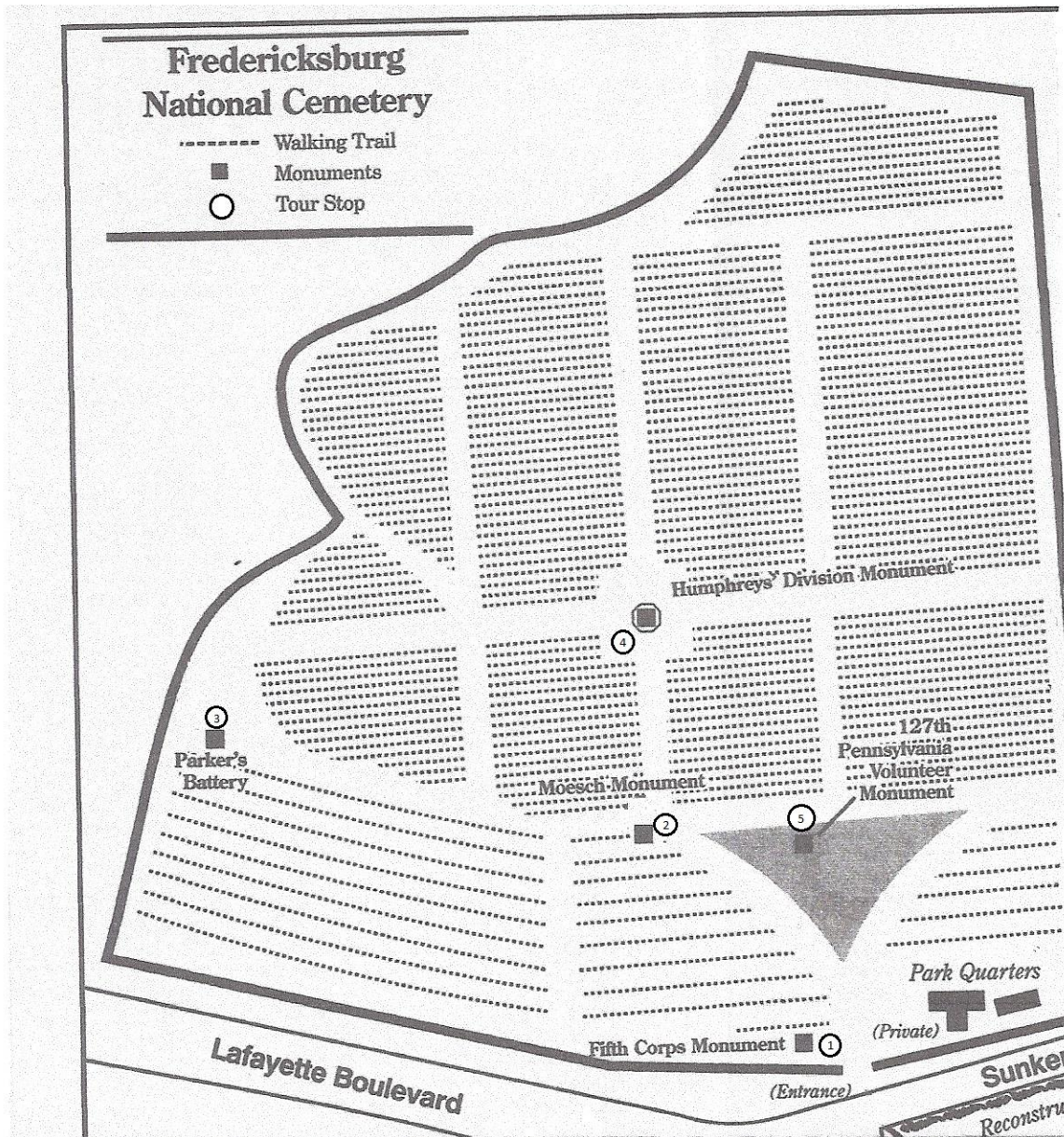


Monuments in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery

While the focus of the Fredericksburg National Cemetery is the graves of its 15,436 soldiers, there are a few monuments within the cemetery commemorating the battles fought in the Fredericksburg area.



Stop 1: Fifth Corps Monument: The “Butterfield Monument”

The Fifth Corps lost more than 2,000 men attacking Marye’s Heights during the Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862. Many years later, the Corps’ commander, Daniel Butterfield, sponsored the monument that stands at the entrance of the Fredericksburg National Cemetery:

I have always felt that the magnificent services of the Fifth Corps on the occasion of the battle of Fredericksburg, as well as on other fields, deserve a lasting memorial. As I read the order issued by me after the battle, I feel today the same heartfelt appreciation that (it) expresses, and it gives me great pleasure to place a lasting memorial of enduring granite to record my feeling towards the Fifth Corps...over the graves not only of the many brave men of the corps who are buried there, but also in honor of all the gallant and splendid soldiers in that famous battle.

Illness kept Butterfield away from Fredericksburg, however, and he never saw the monument constructed or dedicated. In May 1900, the Society of the Army of the Potomac held its 31st annual reunion in Fredericksburg (and event attended by many dignitaries including President William McKinley); as part of the celebrations, the cornerstone was laid for the Fifth Corps Monument. Lt. Col. Edward Hill, now buried in the cemetery in grave #6640) spoke at the dedication of the monument. Hill served with the 16th Michigan and is one of the highest ranking officers buried in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery. Hill also has the distinction of being just one of two soldiers buried here to have earned the Medal of Honor, the nation’s highest military award. Four months after the ceremony Hill died and is buried here near the spot where he delivered his speech.

The monument was officially dedication on Memorial Day in 1901, two months before Butterfield’s death.

Stop 2: Moesch Monument

Fredericksburg National Cemetery is a soldier’s cemetery. There are no generals buried here and only a few field officers. The vast majority of the soldiers interred here are enlisted men or company-grade officers who are not represented by a monument like that dedicated to Humphreys’ men. Their memories are honored by a simple stone marker of which you will mainly see two types. Those shaped like a headstone mark the gravesites of identified soldiers. The smaller, square stones mark the graves of the unknown. These stone carry two numbers: the top number identifies the plot, the bottom number tells the number of bodies in that plot. There are also larger white headstones which mark the graves of soldiers who served in the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II.

Colonel Joseph Moesch is honored by one of the few privately funded headstones in the cemetery. Moesch commanded the 83rd New York and was killed on May 6, 1864 in the Battle of the Wilderness. Moesch’s body was originally buried in the cemetery at Ellwood and reinterred in the National Cemetery after the war. Cemetery Superintendent Andrew Birdsall oversaw the interment of Moesch’s remains into the National Cemetery on October 10, 1887 in

grave #6618. Shortly afterwards, veterans of his regiment planned to place a monument on his grave. These plans were delayed because the regiment was also raising funds for its monument at Gettysburg, but once the Gettysburg monument was finished they turned their attention back to the Moesch monument. The monument was dedicated on September 24, 1890 in a ceremony largely attended by regiment veterans.

Stop 3: Parker's Battery

The ridge on which you are now standing, called Marye's Heights, was a Confederate artillery position in two battles. In the First Battle of Fredericksburg, fought on December 13, 1862, nine guns of the Washington artillery of New Orleans fired down upon Union soldiers stretched out across what was then an open plain. Eight thousand Union soldiers were killed or wounded in multiple unsuccessful attempts to seize these heights. The following spring, during the Chancellorsville Campaign, Union forces again attacked Marye's Heights. The Confederates had a small force defending the hill, and this time the Federals succeeded in taking it.

During that second battle, soldiers of Capt. William Parker's battery manned two guns on the southern end of this ridge, in addition to five guns of the Washington Artillery. Soldiers in the army called this unit the "Boy Company" because many of its men were so young. When Union troops broke through the Confederate line, a few hundred yards to the north of here—near the modern-day Richardson House—they swept in behind Parker's men and captured the guns.

The battery's involvement in the Second Battle of Fredericksburg went largely unnoticed until a descendent of Lieutenant J. Thompson who had commanded the two guns visited the park. In a series of negotiations with the park, Chief Historian Robert Krick agreed to commemorate Parker's Battery with a small monument at their position in the cemetery. This monument was dedicated on May 3, 1973, the 110th anniversary of the Second Battle of Fredericksburg.

The Parker's Battery monument is the only Confederate monument in the National Cemetery. Despite this being a Confederate position in both battles, you will not find any Confederate soldiers buried in Fredericksburg National Cemetery. This cemetery and others like it were reserved for Union soldiers only. Confederate soldiers were buried in private graveyards throughout the south. There are two such cemeteries in this area: the Fredericksburg Confederate Cemetery and Spotsylvania Confederate Cemetery.

This monument is also the only one dedicated to Virginia troops in the Fredericksburg area and the only monument in the park connected to the Second Battle of Fredericksburg.

Stop 4: Andrew Humphreys Monument

The Humphreys Monument, standing prominently in the center of the cemetery, commemorates the charge of Brigadier General Andrew's Humphreys' Pennsylvania division at the Battle of Fredericksburg. The bronze statue on the top of the pink granite pedestal depicts Humphreys himself, with his hand on his sword, scanning the eastern horizon. The Pennsylvanians

participated in one of several attacks that occurred on the plains below us during the battle on December 13, 1862. From late-morning to darkness, waves of Union soldiers crossed the open fields between the town of Fredericksburg and Marye's Heights where we are standing, attacking the Confederates who were entrenched behind the stone wall along the Sunken Road. These attacks took place in conjunction with another attack a couple miles to the south of us; all of these attacks would fail leaving the Union with a death toll of 12,653 and the Confederates with 5,377 casualties. The Battle of Fredericksburg would be Confederate General Robert E. Lee's most lopsided victory against his Union opponents.

Attacking close to sunset in one of the final Union attacks on this portion of the field on December 13th, some of the troops got to within fifty yards of the stone wall before being stopped, closer than most of their comrades. This division, composed largely of men who had never seen combat before, suffered more than 1,000 casualties and for many of these men this would be their defining action in the war. Humphreys himself had two horses shot from under him but otherwise escaped harm. Humphreys' charge against Marye's Heights was only one small piece of the Battle of Fredericksburg, but the multiple attacks against this position have come to define this battle and the slaughter of the Civil War.

The Fredericksburg Battlefield Memorial Commission of Pennsylvania, assisted by the State of Pennsylvania, erected the monument to Humphreys and his men. When they could not find a suitable place in Fredericksburg, they decided to place the monument in the National Cemetery. The ceremony on November 11, 1908 was fairly large, with many veterans in attendance (the Pennsylvania Assembly subsidized the transportation costs of the veterans).

Stop 5: 127th Pennsylvania Monument

The 127th Pennsylvania was a nine-month regiment, organizing in August 1862 and disbanding in May 1863. The unit participated in just two engagements, the Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862 and the Second Battle of Fredericksburg in May 1863. Because Fredericksburg was the only field they fought on, the regiment placed its monument here. The Pennsylvania legislature appropriated \$3,000 for the project and Governor Samuel Pennypacker appointed a five-man commission to oversee the construction. The monument was dedicated on June 26, 1906 in front of veterans and dignitaries.