

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
Arkansas
COUNTY:
Sebastian
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

AD LISTED

MAY 20 1980

AHPP

1. NAME
COMMON:
Fort Smith National Cemetery
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER:
Garland Avenue and South 6th Street
CITY OR TOWN:
Fort Smith
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
Third
STATE: AR CODE: 05 COUNTY: Sebastian CODE: 131

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate):

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	<u>Cemetery</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
OWNER'S NAME:
U. S. Army Memorial Affairs Agency
STREET AND NUMBER:
Department of the Army
CITY OR TOWN:
Washington
STATE:
D.C.
CODE:
11

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Sebastian County Courthouse
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN:
Fort Smith
STATE:
AR
CODE:
05

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE OF SURVEY:
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
DATE OF SURVEY: May, 1971
 Federal State County Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
STREET AND NUMBER:
Suite 1030 - Plaza West
CITY OR TOWN:
Little Rock
STATE:
AR
CODE:
05

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

At the Fort Smith National Cemetery the flag of the United States is flown daily commemorating the lives and deeds of the known and the unknown, who over many years answered the call to duty in the nation's service. In that same tradition of service, the cemetery continues to serve as an active national cemetery for interment of members and former members of the Armed Forces whose last active service terminated honorably, and for their eligible dependents.

Soldiers of the War of 1812 and of the Mexican War of 1846-1848 rest in this cemetery. Here, too, are some of those who served in the once great armies of the Union during the years from 1861 to 1865. Some 473 members of the armies of the Confederacy are also interred in this cemetery. The 1,464 gravesites in Fort Smith National Cemetery marked with headstones indicating interment of an unknown soldier include many who served in the Union and Confederate forces as well as some who served at Fort Smith prior to the Civil War and were interred in the post cemetery which is now a part of the national cemetery area.

Soldiers who participated in the brief war with Spain and in the Philippine Insurrection are here too, as are those called to service in World War I and on the battlefields of a world in conflict during World War II. Included here among the graves of World War II decedents are five gravesites marked by specially designed headstones to indicate interment of a group burial. This cemetery is also the honored resting place of members of the Armed Forces of the United States who served their nation in Korea and in Vietnam.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<u>Cemetery</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The first military establishment at Fort Smith came into being late in 1817. During the summer of that year a detachment of eighty-two men embarked at Pittsburgh for a trip down the Ohio River. Pursuant to orders of General Andrew Jackson received by General Thomas A. Smith on August 19, 1817, Major William Bradford and Major Stephen H. Long, a Topographical Engineer, set out from St. Louis, Missouri for a meeting with these troops at the junction of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. The troops under command of Major Bradford proceeded down the Mississippi and arrived at Arkansas Post on October 15, 1817. Many of the men of Major Bradford's command were ill and he remained at Arkansas Post for some time.

While Major Bradford and his men were thus detained, Major Long, with provisions for twenty-four days, proceeded by skiff up the Arkansas River to survey the area and establish a frontier post. His observation led him to a point of land a little below the junction of the Poteau and Arkansas Rivers where he selected a site for the erection of a stockade fort. The place designated was known as Belle Point, a name bestowed upon the area by French explorers because of its natural beauty. As soon as the sick under his command had recovered sufficiently to resume their journey, Major Bradford and his men left Arkansas Post and proceeded up the Arkansas River in keel boats, arriving at Belle Point on Christmas Day, 1817. The fort established at this location was named Fort Smith for Brigadier General Thomas A. Smith.

The first Fort Smith was abandoned in 1824 on orders of General Winfield Scott, the commanding officer of the Western Department of the Army at New Orleans.

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Significance (Continued - Page 2)

One reason given for the move from this location was the great amount of sickness among the troops at Fort Smith. Records indicate that about twenty-five percent of the command at Fort Smith died during the year 1832, and were interred in the post cemetery there.

The earliest known burial in the post cemetery was that of Surgeon Thomas Russell, a veteran of the War of 1812, who died at Fort Smith on August 24, 1819. Major William H. Bradford, the first commanding officer at Fort Smith, resigned from the Army in 1824. He died of yellow fever on October 20, 1826, and was buried in the post cemetery of the then abandoned Fort Smith.

Following the removal of troops from Fort Smith in April 1824, the stockade was unoccupied until late in March 1833. At that time Captain John Stuart and Company C of the 7th U. S. Infantry were ordered to move from Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, to the site of Fort Smith. It was thought that this would enable them to intercept shipments of whiskey brought up the river by traders for illegal sale to the Indians.

During the time that Captain Stuart and his men were stationed at Fort Smith eight soldiers and one surgeon died and were interred in the post cemetery. On June 16, 1834, the troops were ordered out and stationed at a new and more healthful location on the south bank of the Arkansas River about ten miles above Fort Smith.

No more troops were stationed in the area until July 1838. At this time a new garrison called Cantonment Belknap was established about a mile and a half northeast of the location of the first Fort Smith.

At the outbreak of the Civil War Fort Smith was garrisoned by two troops of the 1st U. S. Cavalry under the command of Captain S. D. Sturgis. On April 23, 1861, two river steamers, the Frederick Nortrebe and the Tahleguah arrived at Van Buren just across the river from Fort Smith with three hundred Confederates. This force disembarked and moved upon Fort Smith by dirt road. Captain Sturgis,

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alerted by scouting parties that the Confederate forces greatly outnumbered his troops, thereupon evacuated Fort Smith, and it was occupied by the Confederate forces.

The State of Arkansas had not formally seceded from the Federal Union at the time of the evacuation of Fort Smith, but an ordinance of secession was passed on May 6, 1861. Shortly thereafter the State of Arkansas conveyed to the Confederate States of America the lands, buildings and other property of Fort Smith. This transfer included the post cemetery. Fort Smith remained under control of the Confederacy until September 1, 1863, when Union troops under command of Colonel W. F. Cloud, 1st Kansas Cavalry, regained possession of the fort for the United States.

During the period that Fort Smith was held by Confederate forces many burials of Confederate soldiers were made in the post cemetery. Included among the dead interred at Fort Smith during the Civil War are the remains of two Confederate generals, graduates of West Point and veterans of many campaigns with the United States Army prior to their espousal of the principles of the Confederate States. One of these men, James B. McIntosh, graduated from West Point in 1849 and participated in numerous Indian campaigns in Texas and Kansas. He was on duty at Fort Smith in May 1861, at which time he resigned his commission and joined the Army of the Confederacy, gaining the rank of colonel. In 1862, Colonel McIntosh was appointed a brigadier general and took part in the engagement at Pea Ridge, the first battle of the Civil War fought on Arkansas soil. During the second day of the battle, March 7, 1862, the thirty-four year old general was killed, and his remains were brought to Fort Smith for burial.

Alexander E. Steen, the other Confederate general who is buried in Fort Smith, was also a West Point graduate, and had served with distinction in the United States Army during the Mexican War. When the Civil War broke out Steen was living in Arkansas. He cast his lot with the forces of the Confederacy and was disowned by his family in Missouri, who favored the Union cause. He followed his convictions, however and became a brigadier general

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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in the Confederate Army. A promising military career was terminated when General Steen was killed in action during the battle of Prairie Grove on December 7, 1862.

With the conclusion of the Civil War a Joint Resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives approved April 13, 1866 authorized and required the Secretary of War "to take immediate measures to preserve from desecration the graves of soldiers of the United States who fell in battle or died of disease in hospitals . . . ; to secure suitable burial places in which they may be properly interred; and to have the graves enclosed, so that the resting place of the honored dead may be kept sacred forever." By additional legislation approved February 22, 1867 the Secretary of War was directed to enclose national cemetery grounds, appoint cemetery superintendents and provide lodges at the cemeteries for their housing. The provisions of these legislative directives were complied with at Fort Smith. The old post cemetery was enlarged and became Fort Smith National Cemetery. Patrick Hart, a Civil War veteran, who had served as a captain with the 15th Battery, New York Light Artillery, was appointed the first superintendent of the Fort Smith National Cemetery. He served in that position until 1877.

Legislation enacted February 24, 1871 provided for the disposition of certain useless military reservations by transfer from the War Department of the Department of the Interior, which office would then offer the property for sale. The military reservation at Fort Smith was among the surplus properties slated for disposal, and transfer of the Fort Smith military reservation was effected on March 25, 1871. In May of that year Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs advised Secretary of War William W. Belknap that a national military cemetery had been established on the Fort Smith reservation and that it then contained 1,998 graves of deceased Union soldiers. General Meigs requested that the national cemetery be excepted from the sale directed by Congress. The response was a brief Executive Order signed by President U. S. Grant on May 22, 1871, which removed the area occupied by the Fort Smith National Cemetery from sale by the Department of the Interior and restored it to the custody of the War Department.

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During the years following the great struggle of 1861-1865 the number of surviving veterans of that war steadily diminished. Many of these veterans residing in the vicinity of Fort Smith were accorded honored burial in Fort Smith National Cemetery. One such gravesite marks the final resting place of Issac C. Parker, a corporal in Company A 61st Missouri Infantry during the Civil War. Issac C. Parker's post war activities had gained for him a reputation and a degree of recognition which extended beyond his war time service. Parker was known as "the hanging judge." A lawyer by profession and a circuit judge in Missouri prior to the Civil War, Mr. Parker served two terms in the U. S. Congress after the war. Then in 1875 President Grant appointed him United States District Judge for the Western District of Arkansas. The area within the jurisdiction of Judge Parker's court was for the most part frontier territory and included the Indian Territory, which was later to become the State of Oklahoma. Here during the last quarter of the nineteenth century in a typical frontier environment, the forces of law and order were in frequent conflict with those who considered themselves above the laws of the United States. Crimes of every description were common. It is said that more than 13,000 cases came before Judge Parker's court during the twenty-one years that he presided as United States District Judge. Of the 12,000 criminal cases which came before Judge Parker, there were 88 cases in which the penalty of death by hanging was upheld and carried out on a gallows erected near the United States Court House in Fort Smith. Judge Parker died on November 17, 1896, and was buried in the Fort Smith National Cemetery.

Many of the United States Deputy Marshals who "rode for Parker," performing with courage and daring their tasks of bringing criminals to justice, were also campaign tested veterans of the Civil War. The records of Fort Smith National Cemetery list the burials of some of these courageous frontier law officers: Randolph B. Creekmore, who served with Company E, 6th Kentucky Cavalry; Joseph Gramlich, war time member of Company E, 14th Illinois Infantry; Calvin Whitson, who served with the Thrid Regiment, Arkansas Cavalry, a regiment of loyal Union soldiers organized at

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Little Rock in 1864; and Jacob Yoes, another Union soldier from Arkansas, serving as a sergeant with Companies D and F, 1st Arkansas Cavalry.

Fort Smith National Cemetery is also the burial place of one of its early superintendents. Private William Dillon, Company G, 2d New Hampshire Infantry, was severely wounded at Gettysburg and was honorably discharged from the Union Army on September 5, 1864. He was appointed a national cemetery superintendent on September 1, 1875, and in 1877 became the second superintendent of Fort Smith National Cemetery until 1884, and again from December 1902 to September 1930. Many of the large trees which now beautify the cemetery were planted during Superintendent Dillon's long period of service. He died on November 17, 1930, and is interred in the cemetery.

At Fort Smith National Cemetery more than four thousand headstones and monuments mark the final resting places of members of the Armed Forces of the United States. Though many such military cemeteries exist throughout the United States, this one is especially significant because of its long history as a frontier cemetery. For over three-quarters of the 19th century this cemetery laid to rest those Veterans of all wars who died on the Indian frontier. The Fort Smith National Cemetery reflects the events, military engagements, and war time casualties of United States history from the first major conflict in 1812 to the most recent military engagements in Southeast Asia.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

U. S. Department of the Army. U. S. Army Memorial Affairs Agency. Fort Smith National Cemetery. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1973.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1-1/2 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Dianna Kirk, Staff Historian

ORGANIZATION: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program DATE: Feb., 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:
Suite 1030 - Plaza West

CITY OR TOWN: Little Rock STATE: AR CODE: 05

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS