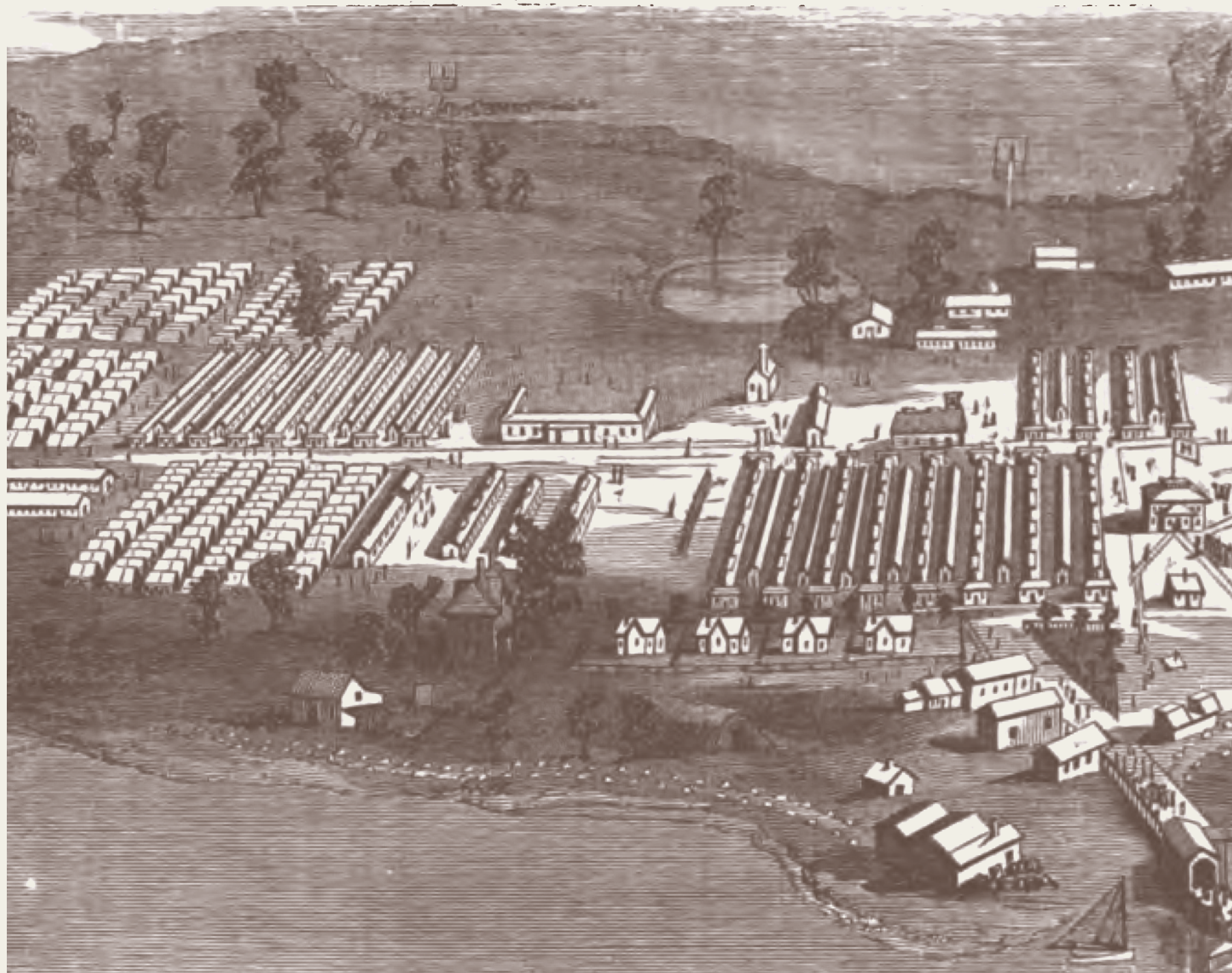


CYPRESS HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY



DeCamp General Hospital, c. 1864. Regulations of DeCamp General Hospital.

New York City Hospitals

During the Civil War, several New York City-area general hospitals treated sick and wounded Union troops. Among them were Fort Columbus, Ladies' Home, Officers' on Bedloe Island, St. Joseph's, and Transit. One of the largest was Grant General Hospital at Fort Totten on Willet's Point. The U.S. Army converted the fort into a hospital that could accommodate nearly 1,300 patients.

DeCamp General Hospital on David's Island was an extensive facility with twenty buildings that held 1,700 beds. In the summer months patients were often moved outside to sleep in tents that afforded access to fresh air and sunshine, which doctors believed essential to healing. The July 1863 Battle of Gettysburg and later fighting resulted in thousands of patients being sent to New York hospitals.

National Cemetery

Cypress Hills National Cemetery was established in 1862 with this lot of almost 3 acres. Known as Union Grounds, it is one of three separate tracts that make up the federal cemetery today. A brick superintendent's lodge occupied the southeast corner of Union Grounds in 1871. Here lie nearly 3,400 Union soldiers and 356 Confederate prisoners who died in New York City hospitals during the Civil War.

Union Grounds ran out of burial space in the 1880s. In 1884, the War Department expanded the national cemetery by purchasing more than 15 acres to the south. Soon after, the army developed the new property with a two-story lodge, access road, and flagstaff. It razed the Union Grounds lodge.

Union soldiers originally buried at Fort Hamilton, Governor's Island, and Fort Wadsworth in New York City, and Mount Hope Cemetery in Otisville, New York, were reinterred in the new Jamaica Avenue tract. This move raised the number of Union dead in the national cemetery to 5,222; of these, 373 were unknown.



Union Grounds, c. 1880, with lodge in background at right. National Records and Archives Administration.

Col. Benjamin Ringold

Born in Germany, Col. Benjamin Ringold lived in the United States for many years before the Civil War. He was commissioned on January 4, 1862, as captain and commander of Company A, 103rd New York Volunteers.

Ringold quickly rose to the rank of colonel before being killed in May 1863 near Suffolk, Virginia. His body lay in state at city hall before burial in Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery.

Colonel Ringold's remains were moved to Union Grounds in April 1883 (Grave 3846). A month later, the Veterans Association of the 103rd Regiment dedicated a 20-foot-tall granite obelisk to him on the crest of the hill overlooking the national cemetery.

The ceremony was attended by Civil War veterans including former members of the regiment, several Grand Army of the Republic posts, and Brooklyn residents.



Col. Benjamin Ringold, c. 1862. MOLLUS-Massachusetts Commandery Collection, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center.