LEAVENWORTH NATIONAL CEMETERY

Soldiers' Home in 1887. L. H. Everts, Official Atlas of Kansas *(1887). Courtesy of the David Rumsey Map Collection.*

National Home

The Western Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS) was authorized in 1884. It was the first branch west of the Mississippi River and the fifth one to be constructed. The City of Leavenworth, Kansas, donated 640 acres and funded enhancements to the grounds. The first resident was admitted on July 11, 1885.

Minneapolis landscape architect Horace W. S. Cleveland designed the park-like grounds. Leavenworth-based contractor James A. McGonigle constructed the original buildings in a variety of then-popular styles. The campus contained barracks, hospitals, entertainment, educational, and maintenance facilities. Veterans were trained and employed here.

The National Homes merged with the U.S. Veterans Bureau and the Bureau of Pensions to form the Veterans Administration (now U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) in 1930. Renamed the Eisenhower VA Medical Center, it continues to serve veterans. The campus was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2011.

Cemetery and Monument

Horace Cleveland likely designed the 113-acre cemetery that opened about a year after the National Home. Rural-style paths and roads followed the natural topography, and a limestone wall enclosed the property.

Two noteworthy structures were completed in the early twentieth century. The "rest house," 1921, features stained-glass and a porch covering a cast-iron temperance fountain. In 1936, a Classical Revival-style rostrum with fluted Doric columns was built of limestone.

A large limestone obelisk dedicated to all veterans was completed in 1919. The cemetery was designated Leavenworth National Cemetery in 1973.

The Soldiers and Sailors Monument was erected on the highest point of the cemetery. Library of Congress.

Postcard view of rest house, c. 1930. National Cemetery Administration.

Medal of Honor Recipients

Five Civil War soldiers who received the Medal of Honor, and were later National Home residents, are buried here.

Pvt. William W. Burritt, 113th Illinois Infantry, for gallantry at Vicksburg, Mississippi, April 27, 1863 (Section 16, Grave 7).

Corp. Daniel A. Dorsey, 33rd Ohio Infantry, for actions associated with Andrews Raid near Big Shanty, Georgia, April 1862 (Section 11, Grave 8).

Sgt. John S. Durham, 1st Wisconsin Infantry, for extraordinary heroism at Perryville, Kentucky, October 8, 1862 (Section 33, Grave 18).

Sgt. William Garrett, 41st Ohio Infantry, captured artillery pieces and a Confederate regimental flag at Nashville, Tennessee, December 16, 1864 (Section 32, Grave 26).

Pvt. John Gray, 5th Ohio Infantry, captured artillery at Port Republic, Virginia, June 9, 1862 (Section 9, Grave 23).

Civil War Army Medal of Honor. Gettysburg National Military Park.

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