

GLENDALE NATIONAL CEMETERY



Battle of Glendale, also known as Frayser's Farm. The Century War Book, 1894.

Battle of Glendale

Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee assumed command of the Army of Northern Virginia in June 1862. His first actions were a series of assaults on Union forces that were moving toward Richmond, Virginia, the Confederate capital.

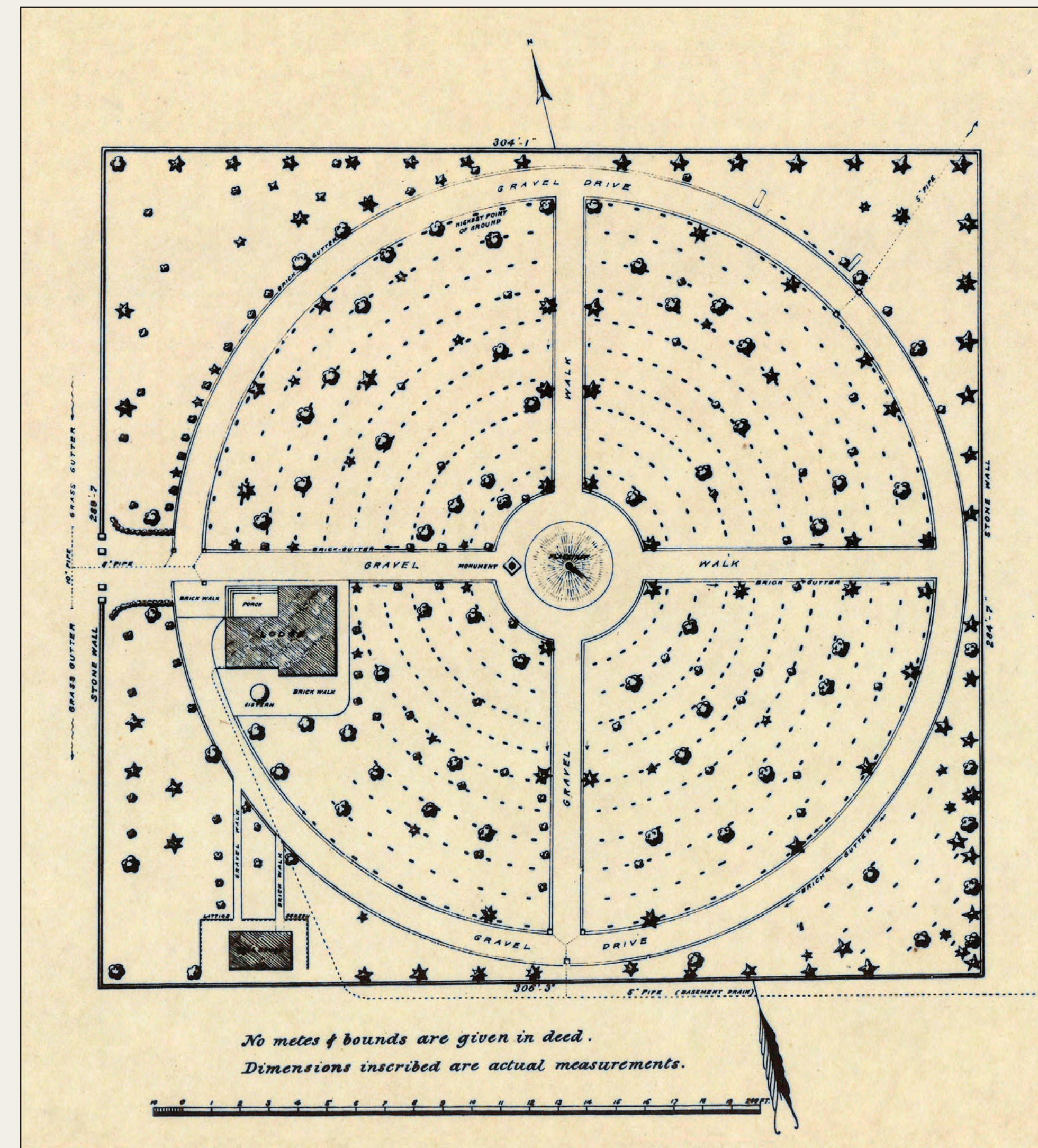
Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac, some 100,000 strong, was within 5 miles of Richmond. A defeat at Gaines Mill in late June forced McClellan to fall back. Hoping to trap McClellan, Lee ordered Maj. Gen. James Longstreet forward. The two forces met near Glendale on June 30. Fighting was fierce. A Union officer wrote, "It was muzzle to muzzle, and powder actually burned the faces of the opposing men."

Hours of bloody fighting ended as night fell. Confederate forces captured six Union guns and a few acres of woods but failed to halt McClellan's retreat. Lee and McClellan each lost approximately 3,500 men in the engagement. The Battle of Glendale was the fifth action Lee undertook in what became known as "The Seven Days Battles." Glendale was a loss for both sides.

National Cemetery

During the Civil War, Union and Confederate armies fought numerous battles for control of Richmond. Thousands of Union soldiers perished. They are now buried in Glendale National Cemetery and six national cemeteries established in the Richmond-Petersburg area in 1866.

Here lie the remains of 1,192 soldiers who died on the battlefields of Glendale and Malvern Hill, in hospitals at Harrison's Landing, and elsewhere in the vicinity. The names of only 234 were known.



Cemetery plan, 1892. National Archives and Records Administration.



Cemetery entrance, 1904. National Archives and Records Administration.

The Cemetery Develops

When the cemetery was created, it was a little less than 2 acres. It featured walkways radiating out from a central flagstaff mound. The design divided the burials, in rows of concentric circles, into four sections.

By the 1870s, the U.S. Army reported several improvements. A brick Second Empire-style lodge, the superintendent's home and office, was constructed. An inverted cannon was installed in the walkway between the lodge and flagstaff. A bronze plaque with the number of known and unknown burials was affixed to the gun monument. A stone wall enclosed the cemetery.

An 1872 law directed the secretary of war to appoint a superintendent for each national cemetery from among "meritorious and trustworthy soldiers, either commissioned officers or enlisted men of the Volunteer or Regular Army." To qualify, an individual must have been honorably mustered out or discharged from the service of the United States.