

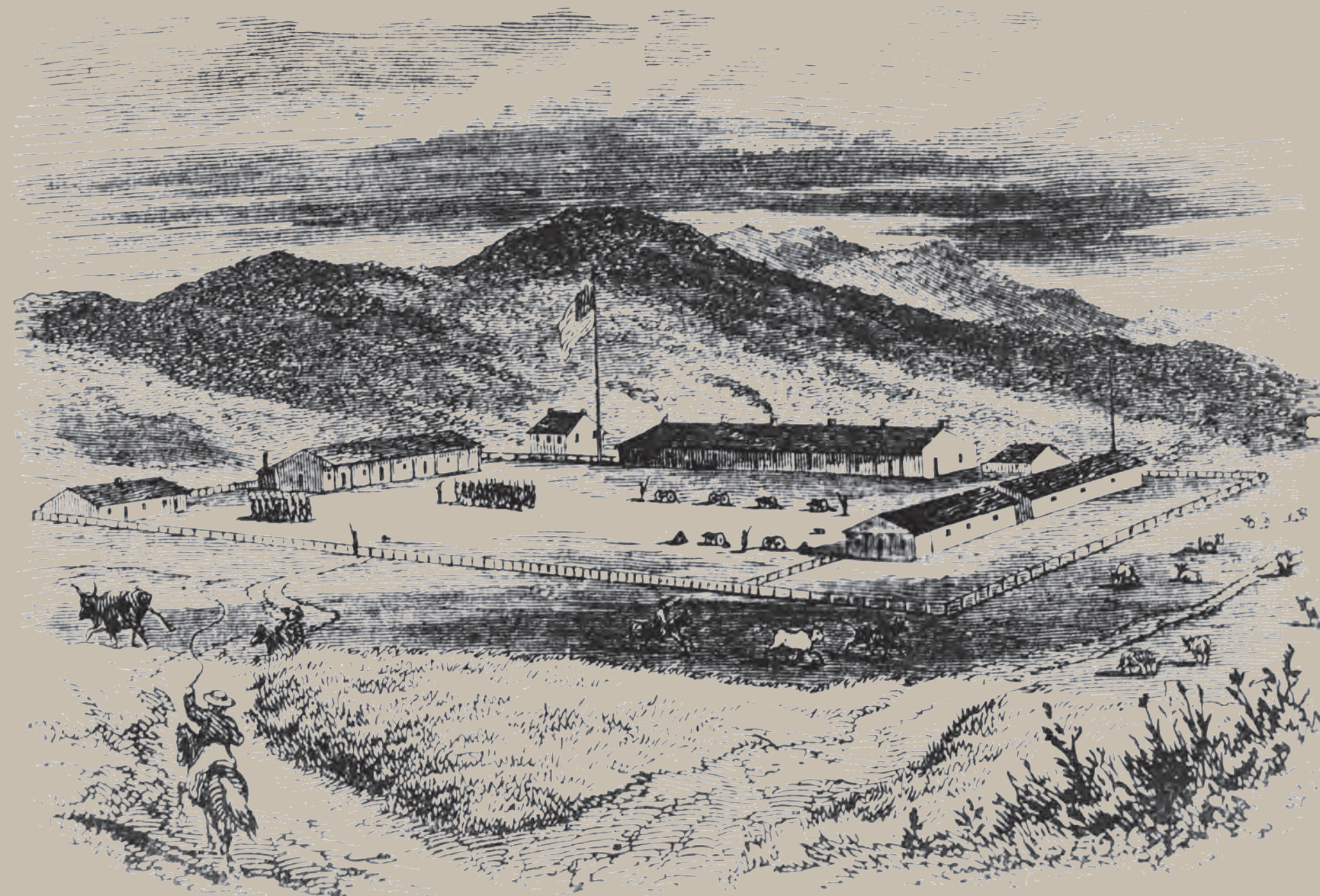
SAN FRANCISCO NATIONAL CEMETERY

Presidio

When the United States took possession of California in 1846, U.S. troops seized the old fort—which the Spanish called Presidio de San Francisco. In November 1850, this land was set aside as a U.S. military reservation by presidential executive order. During the Civil War, Union troops began to convert the former Spanish-Mexican post into a modern army facility.

Construction began in earnest in 1862. A new parade ground, 150 yards wide and 550 yards long, formed the core of the post. New frame buildings faced onto this open space. The buildings, typical of posts west of the Mississippi River, included barracks, chapel, bakery, officers' quarters, offices, and maintenance shops. The facility was manned throughout the Civil War, but Confederate forces were never a threat.

The Presidio was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1962.



The Presidio in 1854. Library of Congress.



Unidentified veterans at the Pacific Coast Garrisons Monument, c. 1897. National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area Archives.

National Cemetery

Soon after taking control of the Presidio, the U.S. Army established a post cemetery here. On December 12, 1884, the post cemetery and additional acreage was designated San Francisco National Cemetery. It was the first one built on the West Coast. With this accomplishment, the War Department realized a coast-to-coast system of more than eighty national cemeteries. Remains from abandoned military posts along the Pacific and western frontier were reinterred in the cemetery.

Two early cemetery monuments are located near the officers' circle. The George H. Thomas Post No. 2, Grand Army of the Republic, donated the granite obelisk to commemorate Union soldiers who died during the Civil War. It was dedicated on Memorial Day 1893. The Pacific Coast Garrisons Monument, a zinc figure of a soldier on a pedestal, was dedicated to the U.S. Army and Union Navy on Memorial Day 1897.

Medal of Honor Recipients

Four long-lived Civil War Medal of Honor recipients who died in the twentieth century are buried here.

Maj. James Coey, 147th New York Infantry, seized the regimental colors and led an advance on the enemy that inspired a brigade to follow. Though wounded, he rallied the line twice at Hatchers Run, Virginia, February 6, 1865 (Section OS, Grave 89-1).

Sgt. James Congdon (Madison), 8th New York Cavalry, recaptured Gen. George Crook's headquarters flag at Waynesboro, Virginia, March 2, 1865 (Section OSA, Grave 15-7).

Maj. Oliver D. Greene, U.S. Army, formed men into columns while under heavy fire and positioned them at Antietam, Maryland, September 17, 1862 (Section OS, Grave 49-8). Greene retired in 1898 with the rank of colonel.

First Lt. William Rufus Shafter, 7th Michigan Infantry, was wounded when he led a charge across an open field. He hid his injuries for three days until other wounded had left Fair Oaks, Virginia, May 31, 1862 (Section OS, Grave 30-3). Shafter later joined the Regular Army. He was promoted to brigadier general in May 1898 and led troops in Cuba during the Spanish-American War.



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