

FORT HARRISON NATIONAL CEMETERY



Fort Harrison after its capture on September 29, 1864. Library of Congress.

New Market Heights

Fort Harrison was the strongest point in the Confederate defense line and the key to Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler's plan to capture Richmond, the Confederate capital. The Confederate fort was held by less than 200 soldiers who manned the fort's artillery and protected the walls.

On September 29, 1864, the Union captured the fort and another attack took nearby New Market Heights. The next day, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee organized a counterattack to retake the fort. The Confederate assault failed.

Fort Harrison was renamed Fort Burnham in honor of Union Brig. Gen. Hiram Burnham, who was killed in the fighting that September day.

National Cemetery



The flagstaff and artillery monument c. 1940. National Archives and Records Administration.

During the Civil War, thousands of Union soldiers perished in battles fought for control of Richmond. They are now buried in Fort Harrison National Cemetery and six other national cemeteries established in the Richmond-Petersburg area in 1866. When the cemetery was established in May, it contained the remains of 814 soldiers—more than half were unknown.

Today, this 1.6-acre cemetery contains the remains of 1,522 individuals, including four Confederate soldiers. Many of the dead are U.S. Colored Troops killed in the assault on New Market Heights.

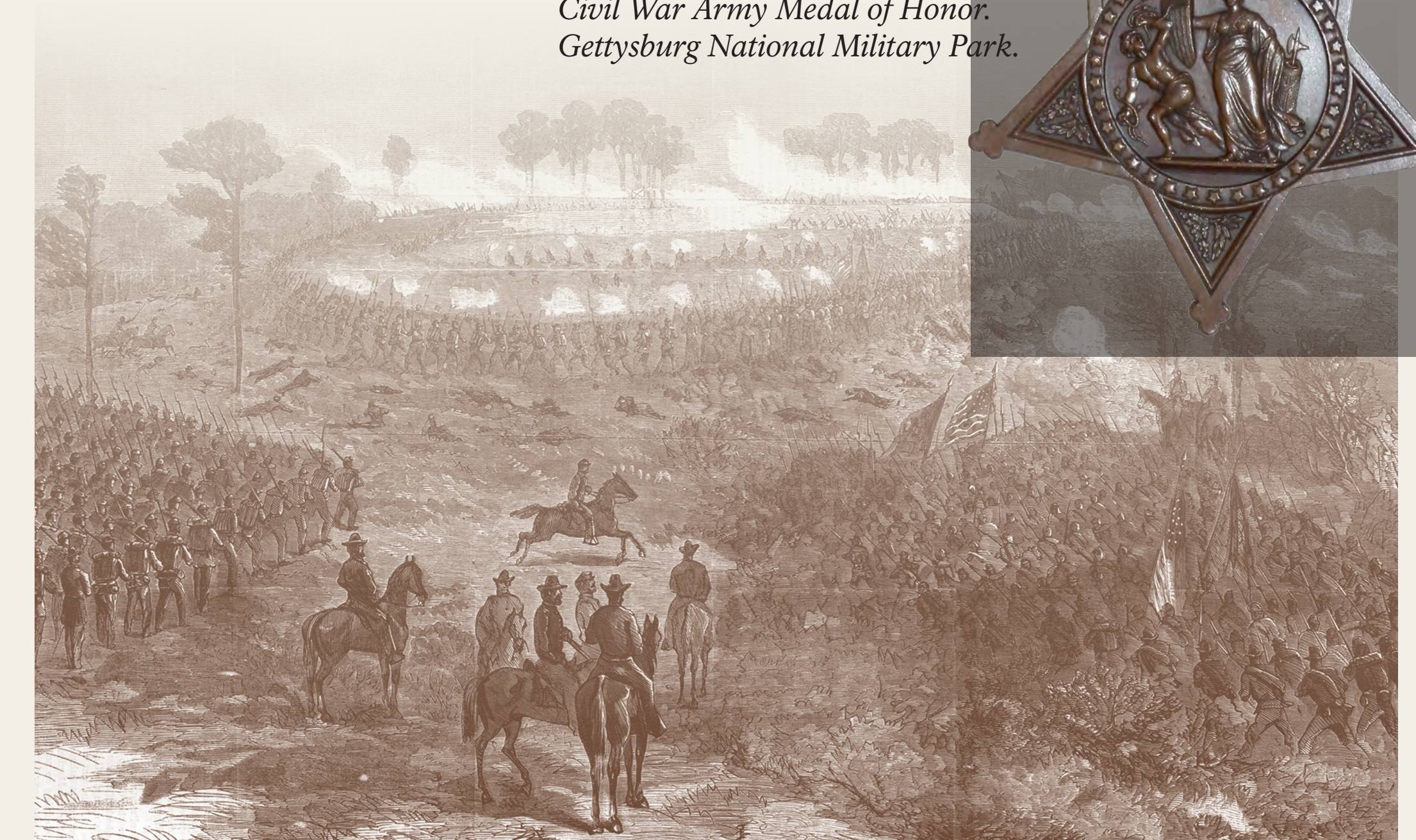
In 1872, the U.S. Army built a stone Second Empire-style lodge for the superintendent, followed a few years later with a brick enclosure wall. Other cemetery improvements included a central flagpole mound and artillery monument—a cannon barrel planted upright in the ground topped by a cannon ball.

Medal of Honor Recipient

Pvt. George A. Buchanan, Co. G, 148th New York Infantry, received the Medal of Honor for his actions at New Market Heights. Serving in advance of the Union skirmish line, Buchanan drove Confederate artillerists from their guns. He died of wounds received on October 2, 1864 (Section A, Grave 224).



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



The assault on Fort Harrison, September 29, 1864. Harper's Weekly, October 22, 1864.