

FORT SHERIDAN'S HISTORIC CEMETERY

Info Sheet

Army's Historic Role Continues

Fort Sheridan Cemetery has played an important role in Fort Sheridan history since it was created in 1889. Generations of American military service members and their families are buried in this unique oval-shaped cemetery located within view of the Lake Michigan shoreline.

While Fort Sheridan officially closed in 1993, the U.S. Department of the Army, at Ft. McCoy in Wisconsin, continues to own and operate Fort Sheridan Cemetery as a Post Cemetery (not a National Cemetery or Veteran's Administration Cemetery). Retired service members from the Army, Air Force, Marines, Navy, Coast Guard and Reserves and their spouses are eligible for burial at the historic cemetery. Qualifying service members receive one plot per family and a headstone, both at no cost.

More than 2,000 service members are interred at Fort Sheridan Cemetery, including veterans who served in the Civil War, the Philippine Insurrection, World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Currently, more than 100 service members have reservations for burial at the cemetery, even though the U.S. Department of the Army stopped reserving spaces in 1975. Every five years, families with reservations are notified by the U.S. Army to update cemetery records.



Fort Sheridan Cemetery is located at the northern end of historic Fort Sheridan between the cities of Highwood and Lake Forest. In 1983, a portion of Fort Sheridan was declared a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service.

For more information on Fort Sheridan Cemetery burials, please call Cemetery Supervisor Joe Rafferty, 847-615-0232. Or, you may write to him in care of Fort Sheridan Cemetery Office, 305 N. Waukegan Road, Lake Bluff, IL 60044.

Memorial Day Services

The American Legion McKinlock Post #264 of Lake Forest conducts a memorial service each Memorial Day at Fort Sheridan Cemetery and places American flags on veterans' graves. The public is invited.





A monument to Chaplain Edward J. Vatman stands at the cemetery entrance. Major Vatman is buried under the monument.

Cemetery Maintenance

Federal legislation introduced by U.S. Representative John Porter and signed by President Clinton in 1995 transferred 259 acres of the northern end of the former Fort to the Lake County Forest Preserve District for open space, recreation and nature preservation, provides that: “the District shall provide maintenance and care to the remaining Fort Sheridan Cemetery.”

In fulfillment of the agreement, the Lake County Forest Preserves provides basic care and maintenance to the cemetery, including snow removal.

For more information regarding cemetery maintenance, please contact Superintendent of Maintenance Operations, Greg Townsend, at 847-968-3412, or by email gtownsend@LCFPD.org.

Fort Sheridan Cemetery is open daily from 8 am to 5 pm. Memorial Day open 8 am to 7 pm.

■ ■ ■ **Fort Sheridan Cemetery Facts**

- Fort Sheridan Cemetery was established in 1889, two years after the Fort was created in 1887.
- Three soldiers who served in the 7th Cavalry with General George A. Custer at the time of the Battle of the Little Bighorn (1876) are buried at the cemetery - 1st Sgt. August B. Siefert, 1st Sgt. John Hackett and Private Philip Spinner. It is not known if Siefert and Spinner were actually at the Battle, but it appears Hackett was part of the support personnel and personally helped in the burial of Custer.
- A monument to Chaplain Edward J. Vatman stands at the cemetery entrance. Vatman, an Army major and close personal friend of President Theodore Roosevelt, ran a home for war widows and children of soldiers of World War I. He designed, built and paid for the monument prior to his death in 1919 and is buried under the monument.
- Nine German Prisoners of War, most captured during the campaign in North Africa during World War II, are interred at the cemetery.
- Cyril H. Evans, a Private with the British Royal Army Ordnance Corps who was liberated from a Japanese Prison and died at Camp Grant in Rockford, IL, was buried at Fort Sheridan October 26, 1945.

