



Chaplains Hill at Arlington National Cemetery

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Many of us have visited Arlington National Cemetery, located just west of Washington, DC in Arlington, VA, to walk the hallowed ground and to pay our respect to persons of national importance and to the thousands who have served in the Armed Forces who dedicated their lives for the cause of freedom.

While there, almost every person makes sure to see the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and observe the very moving and impressive changing of the guard. Probably the next most visited place is the Kennedy gravesite with the Eternal Flame to honor the legacy of JFK.

Among the many monuments and memorials on the cemetery grounds are the U.S. Coast Guard Memorial, the Spanish-American War Memorial, a Space Shuttle Challenger Memorial, and a Korean War Contemplative Bench. Near the Visitors Center, at the entrance of Arlington National Cemetery, there is a Women in Military Service for America Memorial, which honors women who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

There is one area within Arlington National Cemetery I never knew existed until recently. It is called Chaplains Hill. It is a hill, located in Section 2, and on top of the hill stands four monuments.



One monument, the first, was erected in 1926 and is dedicated to 23 chaplains of all faiths who died in World War I. The second monument, erected in 1981, is dedicated to 134 Protestant chaplains who died in World Wars I and II. The third monument, dedicated in 1989, is a Catholic Chaplains Memorial, dedicated to 83 Catholic chaplains who died in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The fourth monument, erected in 2011, is a Jewish

Chaplains Memorial dedicated to 14 Jewish chaplains who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces.

Therefore, Chaplains from four wars are honored on Chaplains Hill. However, not every chaplain honored on the memorials is actually buried there. Those who are buried there include: the Army's first Chief of Chaplains, Col. John T. Axton of World War I; World War II's Chief of Chaplains, Maj. Gen. William R. Arnold, who was the first chaplain to achieve the rank of General; and Maj. Charles Joseph Watters who served in Vietnam and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions Nov. 19, 1967.

So, the next time you visit Arlington National Cemetery make sure you stop by Section 2 and walk up Chaplains Hill to see the four monuments. When you do, you will realize several things.

- First, there is a need to build a walkway up to the monuments on the hill.
- Second, there is no memorial on Chaplains Hill to the U.S. Military Chaplains who have lost their lives in the conflicts since Vietnam.
- Third, apart from their name, there is no information about the chaplains honored on Chaplains Hill.

The Chapel of Four Chaplains based in Philadelphia, PA, whose primary mission is to honor the selfless sacrifice of four U.S. Army Chaplains who gave up their lifejackets when the troop transport U.S.A.T. Dorchester was sunk on the morning of February 3, 1943, is helping to rectify these things. They have developed "The Chaplains Hill Project" (CHP, chaplainshill.org). They are seeking to work with the U.S. Military, military historians, Veteran Service Organizations, non-profit organizations, and the families of those who are honored on the four monuments, to one day build a walkway, keep the list of Military Chaplain who died while serving in a conflict up to date, and to collect photographs, stories, videos and other information that will help us realize who these chaplains were.

These chaplains, who risked their lives to keep our troops' spiritual welfare strong, deserve our gratitude. Please consider sending in a donation by using the CHP website.

Blessings as you serve.

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