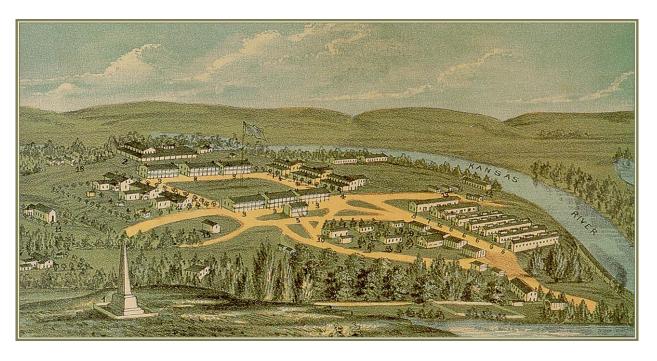
Main Post Cemetery Fort Riley, Kansas



Cultural Resources Branch Environmental Division Directorate of Public Works Fort Riley, Kansas

Main Post Cemetery, Fort Riley, Kansas



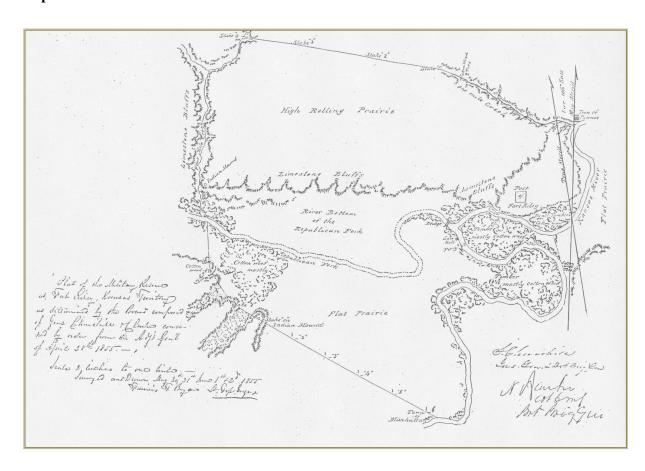
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Historic Resources at Fort Riley

Fort Riley's Main Post Historic District (MPHD) was entered into the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. Later historical and architectural studies/surveys have been conducted by USACE CERL in order to fulfill Section 106 and Section 110 Requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act. Currently a project is underway to update the nomination to meet current NPS standards. Structures, sites located within the MPHD meet NRHP Criteria A and C in that they possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Four thematic groups are represented within the district's boundary. They are the Cavalry and Artillery Thematic Group, the 1927-1940 Thematic Group, the WPA Thematic Group, and the WW II Build-Up Thematic Group. Two other recognized districts within the installation boundaries are the Marshall Army Air Field Historic District and the Packer's Camp Historic District.

Fort Riley has 886 archaeological sites, 37 of which are eligible for the NRHP. There are currently 421 sites that are known but considered unevaluated. As of spring 2013, 60 % of Fort Riley's 100,000 acres have been surveyed. Fort Riley has an active and ongoing archaeological survey program.



Fort Riley Historic Overview

The Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the first territorial acquisition made by the United States, added some 828,000 square miles of land between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains. During the ensuing fifty years, as trade and transportation routes were established, settlers and traders began moving west displacing the native Indians in the process. This general trend westward was presaged by the location of military forts which provided protection to the traders and settlers. In what is now Kansas, trade and travel began to develop along several trails including the Santa Fe Trail, the Oregon Trail and the Smoky Hill Trail. Consequently, forts were established near the trails in order to provide protection. Fort Riley was one such frontier post.

Fort Riley is in the northeastern part of Kansas (about 135 miles east of Kansas City and 130 miles north-northeast of Wichita). It was established in 1852 at the site where the Smoky Hill and Republican rivers join to form the Kansas River, just east and a little north of Junction City. Fort Riley today consists of six cantonments which are the Main Post, Camp Funston, Marshall Army Airfield, Camp Whitside, Camp Forsyth and Custer Hill. The historic areas of the fort are located along the lowlands and floodplain of the two rivers while modern housing and training areas are found on land north of the original post.



In the winter of 1824-25, Congress passed a bill authorizing the marking of the Santa Fe Trail from Missouri to New Mexico. Fearing that Native Americans living on the plains would interfere with commerce over this trail, Congress appointed a commission to negotiate with them in an attempt to gain consent to the survey and marking of the trail. As a result, a treaty was signed with the Great and Little Osage and Kansas Indians at Council Grove on August 11, 1825. In exchange for the equivalent of five hundred dollars, the Indians agreed to

allow the survey and marking of the trail. They also agreed not to molest travelers using the trail. The survey was completed in 1827. Despite the 1825 treaty, there were many conflicts between the natives and traders along the trail. Eventually the altercations became enough of a problem that traders asked the government for protection. Up to that time, the farthest outpost was Fort Leavenworth which was established in May of 1827 to protect the developing trade along the Santa Fe Trail (opened in 1821). Located on the Kansas-Missouri border, north of Kansas City, Fort Leavenworth grew increasingly important as a supply and training base. However, with the continuing expansion westward this outpost became too far removed from the raids and disputes that demanded immediate attention. In the early 1850's, the U.S. Army realized that a fort located farther west was needed to more adequately protect traders and settlers moving along the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails.

In July of 1852, the commanding officer of Fort Leavenworth, Colonel T.T. Fauntleroy, recommended that a post be established "at or near a point on the Kansas River where the Republican fork unites with it." In September of the same year, General U.S. Clarke of the Sixth Military Department appointed a board of officers to select the location for the new post somewhere near the forks of the Kansas River. The board included Captains E.A. Ogden and L.C. Easton of the Quartermaster Department; Captain C.S. Lovell, Sixth Infantry; and Lieutenant J. C. Woodruff, Topographical Engineers. These men travelled to and chose the present site of

Fort Riley. Believing they were near the geographical center of the United States, they initially named the new post Camp Center. Camp Center was strategically located at the junction of the Republican and Smokey Hill Rivers to provide protection for users of the Santa Fe Trail to the south of the fort, the Smoky Hill Trail east of the fort, and the Oregon Trail north of the fort.' In 1853, Congress appropriated \$65,000 for the erection of buildings that the men of the Sixth Infantry occupied later that year. These early buildings were constructed partly of native timber and partly of material brought over land or up the river from Fort Leavenworth.

In June 1853, the name of the post was officially changed to Fort Riley in honor of the recently deceased Major General Bennett Riley. Bennett Riley earned distinction as an able cavalryman under Lt. Colonel Henry Leavenworth. In March of 1855, Congress made an additional appropriation for Fort Riley for the construction of permanent buildings sufficient for ten companies of cavalry and ten companies of infantry. As this construction was getting under way, a cholera epidemic broke out and claimed the lives of close to a hundred workers. Panic and disorder resulted and men began deserting the fort. By the middle of August the epidemic subsided and by the beginning of September the post was back to normal. Construction work was then resumed.



As 1855 came to a close, twelve major buildings and several auxiliary structures had been completed. The nucleus of the installation was formed by the construction of officer's quarters and barracks around a rectangular parade ground located on a high, relatively level area north of the Kansas River. The arrangement included six barracks for enlisted men along the east and west sides of the parade ground. Six sets of officers quarters were situated along the north and south sides. A hospital was constructed east of the parade ground while a guard house, a sutler's store, and carpenter, saddler, and blacksmith shops were built directly to the west. Five stables, an ice house and a commissary storehouse were erected to the southwest

while a brick magazine was built to the northwest. For some reason the chapel and parsonage were built some distance to the northwest of the parade group. Native limestone was used to construct the first permanent buildings and subsequent buildings at Fort Riley. The woodwork for the early buildings at Fort Riley was made at a factory in Cincinnati and shipped by boat to Fort Leavenworth along with the necessary lumber, hardware, and glass. After being loaded into wagons at Fort Leavenworth, the material was then transported to Fort Riley.

Limestone is found in abundance in the high river bluffs that border the three rivers dividing the Junction City-Fort Riley area. The Fort Riley Reservation includes several limestone quarry sites from which the stone used in the construction of buildings was taken. The early stone structures at Fort Riley were constructed of hammered, ashlar block limestone, built of a simple, unornamented, vernacular architectural style. Major E.A. Ogden, the post's first quartermaster, realized that stone construction was necessary due to the lack of timber in the region. This required the hiring of special workers who were familiar with stone construction. In a letter written in 1855 to the Quartermaster General in Washington, D.C., Ogden reported that he had hired one hundred masons and sixteen stone cutters along with thirty carpenters and teamsters and four blacksmiths. The use of stone workers was fairly expensive as they received around \$2.00 to \$2.50 per day as opposed to the carpenters, painters, plasterers, and blacksmiths who received about

\$.50 to \$1.00 less per day. Stone masons often were recent immigrants from Ireland and Germany where stone buildings were constructed much more extensively than in America. In1853, the building of Fort Riley attracted Irish and German immigrants from Cincinnati and St. Louis. The workers arrived at Fort Riley in March of 1855 after the army had left on summer campaigns.



Activities at Fort Riley in the late 1850's were overshadowed by ominous events in other parts of the country. Torn over issues such as slavery and state's rights, the country plunged into a civil war. During the Civil War years, construction at Fort Riley was put on hold. Since the troops garrisoned at Fort Riley were from all over the country, the men's sympathies were divided when war broke out. Some officers enlisted with the Union Army while others, including J.E.B. Stuart, enlisted with the Confederate Army. During the war, the Regular Army was transferred back east leaving Fort Riley garrisoned mainly by volunteer troops. Owing to the lack of use, Fort Riley fell into disrepair.

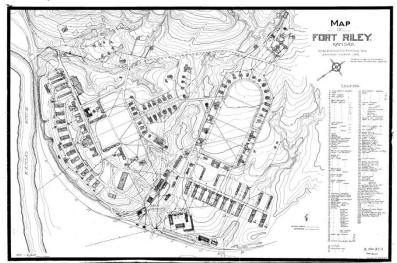
After the Civil War ended, two important events had a significant impact on Fort Riley. 1) The Union Pacific Railroad reached Ogden, Junction City, and Fort Riley; and 2) the Seventh U.S. Cavalry was organized at Fort Riley. During the construction of the railroad, serious Indian uprisings had developed. As a result, the Seventh Cavalry (under the command of Col. Andrew Smith and Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer) was organized by an act of Congress in 1866 and stationed at Fort Riley to protect settlers and railroad workers. This famous regiment participated in many important battles during the Great Indian Wars of 1867-68. Fort Riley remained the primary home of the Seventh Cavalry and George Custer until the Battle of Little Big Horn which took place in Montana on June 25,1876. During this famous battle, five troops of the Seventh Cavalry were destroyed. General George Custer, his brothers, Tom and Boston, and 212 men and officers were among those who died."

During the Civil War and afterward, hunters, travelers and settlers increasingly began to encroach on traditional native American Indian buffalo hunting grounds. The natives reacted by conducting raids in a losing effort to retain their homelands. These raids continued into the 1870s. In the late 1860s, General Phillip Sheridan, head of the Military Division of the Missouri, had been ordered by military chiefs in the nation's capital to pursue a policy of total war against the plains Indians with the intent of forcing them to stay on their reservations.15In conjunction with this policy, Fort Riley in the mid 1860s was occupied by many different organizations for short periods of time. These organizations conducted frequent forays against hostile Native Americans and other marauders.

As the Native Americans were pushed farther north and west, Fort Riley became less and less useful as a center for military operations." Like Fort Leavenworth before it, the fort became too far removed from troubled areas. It was therefore maintained by only a small garrison for the latter part of the 1860's and was in danger of being abandoned completely. This changed in 1869 when Fort Riley was chosen to become the location for a school of Application for Light Artillery. This development brought more men to the Post, however no permanent buildings were constructed in conjunction with the school which, as it turned out, proved to be short-lived. In 1871, the school was discontinued and most of the trainees were dispatched to deal with various Indian uprisings throughout the west. Following the closure of the school, Fort Riley was almost abandoned. Only one company of the Sixth Cavalry, consisting of 4 officers and 65 enlisted men, remained.

By the mid-1870's, the native Americans in Kansas had been subdued and placed on reservations and the state was becoming settled. As a result, General Sheridan urged the closing of most Army posts in Kansas. The only two forts not abandoned were Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth. During the next few years however, Fort Riley remained minimally occupied and its future remained in doubt.

The threat of closure of Fort Riley was effectively extinguished in 1884 when General Sheridan recommended that the headquarters of the U.S. Cavalry be located at Fort Riley. Authorization was secured in 1885 and funds were made available for repairing and expanding the fort. That same year, Major General Schofield, Commanding the Division of the Missouri, recommended that a field artillery school be established.



In the middle of September of 1885, Captain George E. Pond. Quartermaster U.S.A., arrived at Fort Riley and assumed the duty of Post Quartermaster. He was to oversee the construction of new buildings and the repairs to existing ones. Captain Pond was a graduate of West Point (Class of 1872) and served in the Army for 40 years until he retired in 1907. After his graduation from West Point, he served with the 8th Cavalry until he transferred was to the Quartermaster Corps in 1883.Pond

served at Fort Riley until 1891, officially becoming the Constructing Quartermaster in 1887 when that job was separated from the Post Quartermaster's other duties. After, arriving at Fort Riley, Pond immediately initiated construction of two new barracks and an officer's quarters. By October, work on these structures as well as repairs to some older buildings was under way. In January of 1886, as expansion and repairs at Fort Riley were progressing, both houses of the Kansas Legislature passed resolutions recommending the further enlargement of Fort Riley with the intention of "establishing at said post a school for the training of the cavalry and light artillery arms of the service." In January 1887, the United States Congress officially authorized a school for cavalry and light artillery at Fort Riley and light artillery school at Fort Riley spurred the greatest era of construction and expansion at the installation.



In early April of 1887, General Sheridan visited Fort Riley and met with Major Edward B. Williston. Together they settled on a definite location for the artillery post. Work was to begin when the funds were made available. Major Williston was placed in charge of the work under the general supervision of Captain Pond. Captain Pond, who had begun working on a new plan for Fort Riley after he arrived, designed two separate but adjoining posts thereby abandoning the original 1855 post plan. The two posts, while preserving separate identities owing to the differences in cavalry and artillery training, would share in the educational mission of the entire post.

Fort Riley played a significant role during the nation's involvement in World War I. In 1917, responding to events taking place in Europe, President Wilson enacted a draft law authorizing federal conscription for the armed forces. This action created a high demand for trained officers. As a result, Fort Riley was selected as the site for a Reserve Officer's camp. Twenty-five hundred men were trained at Fort Riley in 1917. Congress also appropriated funds to build a large training center at Fort Riley. Activities at the Mounted Service School practically ceased as construction began on the 14th National Army Cantonment. This temporary cantonment was named Camp Funston in honor of the late general. In the months before America's entry into World War I, Fort Riley's population quadrupled.

Construction of Camp Funston began in July of 1917, before the United States entered the war. It became one of the largest temporary training centers in the country. (Only Fort Lewis in Washington State is reputed to have been a bigger camp.) 1401buildings were erected in three months at a site five miles northeast of the permanent post. The cost was ten million dollars. Thousands of civilian workers completed the construction of Camp Funston under the direction of Post Quartermaster Lt. Colonel Fred Herman.

When Camp Funston was completed in December of 1917, it was capable of housing and training fifty thousand men. Consisting mainly of two story wood buildings, it had complete waterworks, electrical, and refrigeration systems. Other facilities built simultaneously and associated with Camp Funston include a training camp for medical officers, a cavalry camp, veterinary camp and remount depot, and an engineer camp.

World War I was the first large scale war in which the United States was involved. The regiment, the basic unit of the Army, was too small for the needs of a war the magnitude of World War I. Therefore the "division", consisting of approximately 20,000 troops, was created and replaced the regiment as the basic unit of the Army. Four divisions in all were trained at Camp Funston during World War I. Two of these, the 89th division and the 10th division, were trained by Major General Leonard Wood before deploying to France.

On May 6, 1935, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was established by an executive order of President Roosevelt. This new program was made responsible for "the honest, efficient, speedy, and coordinated execution of the work relief program as a whole, and for the execution of that program in such manner as to move from the relief rolls to work on such projects or in private employment the maximum number of persons in the shortest time possible". Fort Riley was a beneficiary of this program as many men from all over Kansas were brought to Fort Riley to work on WPA projects. At first the men were housed at Camp Whitside, the National Guard camp. Later they were housed in a camp that utilized abandoned CCC buildings.

An impressive amount of work was done by WPA workers at Fort Riley. WPA work at Fort Riley included construction of transportation facilities, parks and recreational facilities(including grounds, landscaping, grading, and drainage), roads, highways, streets, drainage ditches, sanitary and sewer systems, distributing systems and water supply systems. Additionally, WPA labor was used in the demolition of old buildings and in the construction or improvement of many buildings and facilities at the post.WPA workers repaired, renovated, improved and modernized a good deal of barracks, quarters, and stables at Fort Riley. In a letter written in 1941 to the Assistant Chief of Staff, Lt. Colonel Arthur Wilson wrote that since 1935 the WPA had expended approximately \$4,000,000 on post improvements at Fort Riley including the rehabilitation of practically all barracks and quarters.

In 1939, when war was again raging in Europe, the United States began arming itself. The Army initiated a vast expansion program that included the mechanization of the U.S. Cavalry. Early in the 1930s the cavalry began to use motor vehicles with its units, blending the firepower of the cavalry with the increased mobility of the motor vehicle. Gradually, the cavalry developed an entirely mechanized force that was the forerunner of the Armored Force. Reorganization, retraining, and reequipping of the Cavalry for combat as separate units, and as elements of Armored and Infantry divisions, were necessary. To train officers and enlisted men for this purpose, an area directly west of the main post, called the Republican Flats, was chosen to be the site of the Cavalry Replacement Training Center. This area was later named Camp Forsyth. During the war, 150,000 horse and mechanized cavalry troops were trained there. Construction of Camp Forsyth, a large temporary cantonment, began in December of 1940 and was completed in March of 1941. This is a remarkably brief period considering that the camp consisted of 210 barracks, 50 mess halls, officer's quarters, warehouses, and administration and headquarters buildings.

As the facilities at Fort Riley expanded during World War II, so too did its boundaries. In 1941 and 1942, farmland located directly north of the original reservation and west of the town of Ogden was acquired. Approximately 31,720 acres were added to the existing 19,446 acre reservation. The area became a troop training ground and is now part of the artillery impact area.



Throughout World War II it became increasingly apparent that a horse cavalry did not meet the requirements of modern warfare. Armored units eventually began replacing the cavalry. The last major action to be undertaken by mounted cavalry came early in 1942 when the 26th Cavalry covered the Army's retreat to Bataan during the Philippine Campaign. The era of mounted cavalry was ending. Two graduates of the Mounted School at Fort Riley greatly contributed to the Allied victory in

World War II. General George Patton outfoxed Rommel in Tunisia, commanded the 7th Army in the conquest of Sicily and led the 3rd Army in the battle for France. Jonathan Wainwright served as General Douglas MacArthur's Senior Field Officer and later commanded troops on Corregidor. He was captured by the Japanese and imprisoned for 39 months yet he survived and was present on the deck of the U.S.S. Missouri at the Japanese surrender.

Directly after the war, with the passing into history of all horse units, the War Department ordered the Cavalry School at Fort Riley deactivated. This brought the long and colorful history of the cavalry at Fort Riley to an end. In November of 1946, the Ground General School was established at Fort Riley, replacing the Cavalry School. `Its mission was the training of officers and enlisted men in

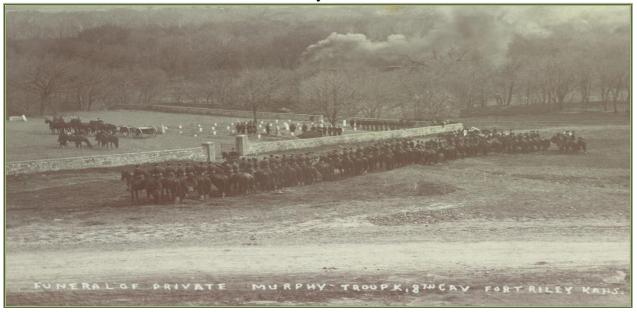
intelligence activities. In 1947, the Officer Candidate School was moved to Fort Riley and in 1950, the Ground General School was re-designated the Army General School. Both schools remained active until the mid-1950's when both were closed.

Fort Riley's mission during the Korean War was personnel replacement for returnees and casualties. After the war, Fort Riley's mission changed to the training of infantry divisions. In 1955, the 1st Infantry Division, known as the "Big Red One" was moved to Fort Riley. This was accomplished by Operation Gyroscope in which the 10th Division, formed at Fort Riley in 1948, exchanged places with the 1st Division, which had been stationed in Germany. The 1st Division, activated in 1917, has distinguished itself by being the first American division to engage the enemy in World War I and the first division to reach England, North Africa, Sicily, Normandy Beach, and the Siegfried Line during World War II. In the late 1960s, the 1st was sent to Vietnam to perform search and clear missions and to conduct training programs for the Vietnamese. Since the end of the Vietnam War, the 1st Division has participated in several NATO training exercises in West Germany. In 1991, the 1st Division played a significant role in the Persian Gulf War. The arrival of the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley prompted the need for new facilities and additional housing.



In the late 1950s it became apparent that the Fort Riley reservation was not large enough for the proper training of an infantry division. Additional land was needed for maneuvering equipment and for firing tank weapons. Therefore, in 1965 Fort Riley acquired 46,065 acres of land lying around the west, northwest, and north perimeters of the existing 51,902 acre reserve. This acreage is used for field exercises, cross country maneuvers and gunnery practice. The total size of the installation today is over 100,000 acres.

Main Post Cemetery Fort Riley, Kansas

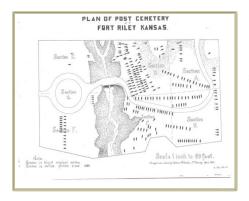


The Main Post Cemetery at Fort Riley was established in 1853 making it the oldest historic property at Fort Riley with the exception of the Cavalry Parade Field. As the westward expansion of the American Frontier chronicles the growth of the United States, so does the development of the Fort Riley Main Post Cemetery. The cemetery of 1853 is in the location of the present cemetery. Two later areas of expansion to the west increased the size of the cemetery to its current appearance. Earliest graves are located on a knoll on the northeast side, the highest point in the cemetery. Topography played a role in the siting of graves, and is indicative of mid-19th Century cemetery design. Moving from east to west, the cemetery transitions from a free-form layout with elaborate funerary monuments, to a more regimented design with uniformly spaced grave stones of identical design. The cemetery's original wall was dry-laid limestone. Mortar-laid limestone walls were constructed ca. 1880. Additional walls were added ca. 1908 and 1944. The wall frames the perimeter, and also provides a discernible visible clue to the cemetery's development and expansion. The delineation of construction dates and techniques can be seen in original walls and later walls. The older walls are flush cut compared to the chisel cut finish of the newer sections.



Walking through the Main Post Cemetery, visitors experience excerpts from the history of Fort Riley as told by those interred there. A lone marker tells the story of the Cholera Epidemic of 1855. A mass unmarked grave is the final resting place of those who succumbed to the epidemic that broke out as construction of permanent fort buildings began in July, and continued through mid August of 1855. The plague claimed the life of Major E.A. Ogden, Fort Riley's first Quartermaster, who is credited with the design of the original Main Post plan. The Cholera Epidemic of 1855 was the most significant event associated with the cemetery.

Another Cholera Epidemic, "Asiatic Cholera", in the summer of 1867 claimed the lives of 79 souls. A solitary marker is located adjacent those who were buried in rows near the north wall. Prisoners were used to dig graves and inter the bodies, in black walnut coffins made in the Quartermaster's carpentry shop.



As with any historic cemetery, there are number of unmarked graves. The earliest original grave markers were wood, and either deteriorated over time or were destroyed by prairie fires. A portion of the southeast corner of the cemetery is not in use because gravediggers discovered human remains while digging new graves. Original wood markers were simply inscribed "A U.S. Army Soldier". Some deteriorated wood markers were replaced later replaced with stone grave markers. The earliest marked burial was that of Mrs. Corneila Armistead, wife of Major Lewis Armistead. Historical accounts of Mrs. Armistead's grave describe it as having a wooden trellis with vines.

The Main Post Cemetery is the final resting place of three Medal of Honor recipients. SGT. George Loyd received the Medal of Honor for Valor during engagement with the Sioux at Wounded Knee Creek, SD, 1890. James F. Ayers received the Indian Wars Congressional Medal of Honor for Bravery at Sappa Creek, Kansas, 1875, and John E. Clancy received the Indian Wars Congressional Medal of Honor for Bravery at Wounded Knee Creek, SD 1890.



Burials in The Main Post Cemetery correlate to the success of the U.S. Army in wartime dating back to the American Civil War. An area of the cemetery is final resting place of 7 Confederate Prisoners of War, captured at the Battle of Glorietta Pass in New Mexico in 1862. Their headstones are differentiated between Union soldiers from the same time period in that the white marble markers have pedimented tops, while the Union soldiers are arched. Following World War II, Fort Riley was the site of a number of POW camps. As a result, the Main Post Cemetery contains the final resting place of a number of Japanese, Italian and German Prisoners of War. In the 1980s,

the Japanese Government requested that all Japanese POWs be disinterred and returned to Japan. The area in the cemetery where this disinterment occurred now delineates the European POWs from American Soldiers. Every November, memorial ceremonies honoring the Italian and German soldiers interred here are held to commemorate those POWs who were buried on foreign soil.

A high percentage of the interments in the Main Post Cemetery are military spouses and children. Two areas within the cemetery, including one of two circular islands, contain memorials to infants and children, and date from the mid 1970s through the late 1980s. Today, the cemetery is considered a closed location, however existing reservations are acknowledged.

The Main Post Cemetery is included in Fort Riley's Main Post Historic District, however it is eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Main Post Cemetery is significant as a historic landscape since it meets Criteria A, B and C. Under Criterion A, the cemetery is associated with the Cholera Epidemics of the 19th Century which greatly impacted Fort Riley. Under Criterion B, the cemetery is associated with Major Ogden, who founded Fort Riley and later died in the first cholera epidemic and was buried in the Post Cemetery. Under Criterion C, the cemetery embodies distinctive characteristics of a uniform layout common to military cemetery design.



A Historic Landscapes Survey conducted in 1996 and updated in 2012 notes that mature oaks and eastern red cedars greatly enhance the character of the cemetery and are contributing elements within the historic landscape. Sadly, several mature trees were destroyed by a tornado in 2005. Fort Riley has followed the HLS recommendation and young species have been planted to replace dying or diseased trees.

Main Post Cemetery Photographs









Main Post Cemetery Maps

