

SAN FRANCISCO NATIONAL CEMETERY – PRESIDIO

By Kenneth G. Felton

This cemetery is located in the north central portion of the Presidio, and it presently occupies a little over 28 acres. Originally, it was less than 10 acres in size. The cemetery rests on a slope overlooking the San Francisco Bay. The first Post Cemetery at the Presidio was located east of the present cemetery, and it was in use when California was under the rule of Spain and later Mexico.

Following the Mexican War, California and other western lands became under the rule of the United States. The first known United States/American burial at the Presidio Post Cemetery was in 1854. After a Petition to the War Department by the Presidio Post Commander, Lieutenant Colonel George Pierce Andrews, General Order 133 was issued and established “a part of the reservation of the Presidio, including the Post Cemetery thereon to be known as the San Francisco National Cemetery”, and it was placed under the control of the Quartermaster General’s Office in 1884 as the first National Cemetery on the west coast.

San Francisco National Cemetery offers a final resting place for many of the nation’s military veterans and their families. There are many Civil War era veterans buried in San Francisco National Cemetery, and the National Graves Registration Project by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War continues to discover many additional grave sites which had not yet been registered. Some prominent Civil War veterans grave sites which were just recently discovered are:

(1) Colonel George Pierce Andrews (Sec. OS; Row 39; Grave 5)

George Pierce Andrews was born in Connecticut in 1821. He graduated from West Point Military Academy on July 1, 1845. He served during the Mexican War, and he was wounded at the Battle of Molino Del Rey, Mexico on Sept. 8, 1847. During the U.S. Civil War he served as a Captain of Battery B of the Third U.S. Artillery at various posts in California, including being the Post Commander at Fort Point, San Francisco Harbor, California from April 29, 1862 to Sept. 10, 1863. Colonel George Pierce Andrews retired from the First U.S. Artillery at San Francisco, California on March 22, 1885. He died on July 2, 1887 at Fort Winfield Scott (near Fort Point), and he was buried at San Francisco National Cemetery – Presidio on July 3, 1887.

(2) Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Stewart (Sec. OS; Row 8; Grave 1)

Joseph Stewart was born in Kentucky in 1822. He graduated from West Point Military Academy on July 1, 1842. He served with the Third U.S. Artillery, during the Mexican War. He rose to the rank of Captain of Battery H of the Third U.S. Artillery, prior to the U.S. Civil War. He served as Post Commander on Alcatraz Island, San Francisco Harbor, California in 1860 and 1861. At the start of the U.S. Civil War, he served as Chief of Artillery in the defense of Washington, D.C. (McCall’s Division), from Dec. 26, 1861 to Feb. 28, 1862. He served as Post Commander at Fort Point, San Francisco Harbor, California, from July 1863 until 1865. He rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Third U.S. Artillery. Joseph

Stewart retired on August 25, 1879. He died on April 23, 1904 at his home in Berkeley, California. He was buried in San Francisco National Cemetery – Presidio on April 28, 1904.

(3) C. Mason Kinne (Sec. OS; Row 70; Grave 3)

Charles Mason Kinne was born in De Witt, Onodaga County, New York on April 11, 1841. He enlisted at the rank of Private in the “California Hundred” (Co. A – 2nd Mass. Cavalry) on December 8, 1862 at San Francisco, California. He was soon promoted to Sergeant, and then to First Sergeant, and then to Sergeant-Major of the regiment. He was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant of Company A – 2nd Mass. Cavalry on July 1, 1863. He married Elizabeth D’Arcy on April 11, 1864 at Vienna, Virginia. He was wounded at Waynesborough, VA on Sept. 28, 1864. He was commissioned a Captain and Assist. Adjutant General of the U.S. Vols. (Army Corps) on Feb. 1, 1865, and his commission papers were signed by Lincoln. These commission papers identified him as: C. Mason Kinne. Afterwards, he refused to acknowledge, respond to or accept anything not so addressed to “C. Mason Kinne”. He mustered-out on July 11, 1865 at the rank of Captain and Assist. Adjutant General of the U.S. Vols.

He returned to San Francisco, California in April of 1866. He joined the California National Guard and he rose in rank to Colonel and Paymaster General. He was a founder of the Veteran’s Home in Yountville, CA, and he became the First President of the Veteran’s Home Association. He was a Charter Member of the first GAR Post organized on the Pacific Coast (Lincoln Post No. 1 – San Francisco, California), and he was Department Commander for two terms. He was a commander and Treasurer of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of California. He died at his home in Berkeley, California on December 25, 1913. He was buried at San Francisco National Cemetery – Presidio on December 30, 1913.

By Kenneth G. Felton
Camp #24 Junior Vets Commander
Graves Registration Officer
Gen. Alfred Pleasanton Camp No. 24
Company B, 8th Regiment California Volunteers
FORCA Alcatraz Living History participant
Fort Point Living History participant
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War