

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

H M Prison Dartmoor: American Prisoner of War Cemetery

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

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| Name: | H M Prison Dartmoor: American Prisoner of War Cemetery |
| County: | Devon |
| District: | West Devon (District Authority) |
| Parish: | Dartmoor Forest |
| National park: | DARTMOOR |
| label.localisation: | Latitude: 50.550279 Longitude: -3.9941720 National Grid Reference: SX5881974179 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF) |
| label.overview: | Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1427525 Date first listed: 18-Apr-2016 Statutory Address 1: H M Prison Dartmoor, Yelverton, Devon, PL20 6RR |

Historique de la conservation

During the Napoleonic Wars of 1809-1816 and the Anglo-American War of 1812-1815, around 1200 French and 271 American soldiers died at Dartmoor Prison where they were held as prisoners of war. They were buried unmarked in a field immediately west of the prison outside the prison walls. In the early 1860s, in response to reports that during ploughing of the field human remains regularly came to the surface, Captain Stopford, Governor of Dartmoor Prison, decided to create two burial grounds outside the prison walls, one for the French and one for American prisoners of war. The human remains were exhumed, divided into two parts and then reburied. The two burial grounds were enclosed by a stone wall and the convicts of Dartmoor Prison (by then a civic prison) made a commemorative obelisk for each cemetery.

In 1928 the National Society United States Daughters, founded in 1892, added a Dartmoor granite memorial gate to the American cemetery, and later cast iron gates were added, presented by members of the US Navy. In 2002, on the instruction of the Governor Graham Johnson, the obelisks to both cemeteries were restored, and a cast iron entrance gate was added to the south side, including seats and a flagpole. In 2012 two further marble memorials were erected behind the obelisk, inscribed with the names of the 271 American prisoners of war who are known to have died at Dartmoor Prison.

The American Prisoner of War Cemetery at Dartmoor Prison continues to be regularly used for commemorative ceremonies.

Details

A burial ground laid out in 1866-8 to commemorate the American prisoners of war who died at Dartmoor Prison during the Anglo-American War of 1812-1815.

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The American Prisoner of War Cemetery, a rectangular shaped site of c 0.3ha, is located immediately north of Dartmoor Prison outside the prison wall. It is enclosed by a local granite

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stone retaining wall, c1m in height. The burial ground is surrounded by farmland with the rugged moorland stretching out beyond it to its north and east. Immediately to its west lies the French Prisoner of War Cemetery also laid out in 1866-8 to a similar design. **ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The burial ground is approached from either the east or the west via a track that runs along the outside of the prison wall. It can be entered from the south either via small steps built into the cemetery wall, or via an opening further along, to its right. The latter has since 2002 decorative cast-iron spear-headed gates presented by Dartmoor Prison giving access to a gravel path that leads to a commemorative obelisk to the centre of the burial ground. The burial ground can also be entered from the east via a stone granite memorial gate presented in 1928 by the United States Daughters of 1812. The memorial gate, constructed in large dressed stone granite blocks, is a copy of the main outer gate to Dartmoor Prison dating from c1808.

GARDENS The uneven ground of the cemetery is laid to lawn with a perimeter walk. The lawn rises to a bank built up against the dry stone wall enclosing the burial ground. The earth banks are planted with a row of Oak trees. The focal point of the burial ground is a granite obelisk standing at its centre. It commemorates the American Prisoners of War who died at Dartmoor prison between 1812 and 1815. It is set on a circular stepped base, introduced in c2002. Made by convicts of Dartmoor prison in c1866-8 (by then a civilian prison), the obelisk formerly stood on a granite stone rubble base forming a rockery planted with ferns, as shown on a photograph of c1900.

The obelisk is flanked to the north by two black marble memorial slabs inscribed with the names of the 271 American soldiers who died at Dartmoor prison between 1812-15. These were introduced more recently, in 2010, after a campaign led by the US Daughters of 1812 which resulted in the naming of 271 prisoners of war who lost their lives. Circa 2 or 3m north-east of the obelisk stands a flag pole, also introduced at that time.

Summary

A burial ground laid out in 1866-8 to commemorate the American Prisoners of War who died at Dartmoor Prison during the Anglo-American War of 1812-1815.

Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.

Reasons for Designation

The American Prisoner of War Cemetery, HMP Dartmoor, a landscaped burial ground laid out in 1866-8 to commemorate the American soldiers who lost their lives whilst in captivity at Dartmoor Prison during the Anglo-American War of 1812-5 is included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * Date: a good and relatively early example of a landscaped prisoners of war burial ground associated with Dartmoor Prison, reflecting changing attitudes to respecting the dead and military commemoration from the 1850s onwards; * Rarity: it is the only known example of a burial ground in England associated with the Anglo-American War of 1812-15; * Historic associations: it is an important and poignant reminder of the Anglo-American War of 1812-5, the last military conflict between the United States and Great Britain, and it continues to be a focal point for reflection and commemoration; * Quality of monuments: the obelisk and entrance gate of 1928, (listed at Grade II) reflect, despite their modest design, the importance of the burial ground as a landscape of remembrance, and having been hand-carved by prisoners of Dartmoor Prison (by then a civic prison), adds to their interest and poignancy; * Group value: the burial ground forms an important group with the adjacent French Prisoner of War Cemetery laid out and planted together in 1866-8 as a matching pair and with Dartmoor Prison.

Bibliographie

Books and journals

James, Trevor, *Prisoners of War at Dartmoor: American and French Soldiers and Sailors in an English Prison during the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812*, (2013)

Joy, Ron, *Dartmoor Prison, a complete illustrated history* (2 volumes), (2002), Vol 1, p99, vol 2, p43, p173

Other

Historic England Archive Report HMP Dartmoor - Building File No. 92318

Ordnance Survey Map 1:2500 published in 1884.