

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	FEB 25 1980
DATE ENTERED	4 1980

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Arlington Memorial Bridge

~~AND/OR COMMON~~

and related ~~architectural~~ features

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

On either side of and spanning the Potomac River <sup>Spans</sup>

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE

D.C.

*Washington*

CODE

11

COUNTY

10

CODE

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURES	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*

National Capital Region, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE

D.C. 20242

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

(see above)

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Landmarks of the National Capital

DATE

January 1979 listing

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

National Capital Planning Commission

CITY, TOWN

Washington,

D.C. STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Arlington Memorial Bridge spans the Potomac River on the axis between the Lincoln Memorial in Washington and Arlington House in Virginia, joining the Lincoln Memorial Circle and Columbia Plaza on Columbia Island (Lady Bird Johnson Park). The low, neo-classical bridge is 2,163 feet long and 90 feet between balustrades, carrying a 60-foot-wide roadway and 15-foot sidewalks. Nine broad arches cross the river; roadways pass through additional segmental-arched openings at either end. Except for the central bascule draw span, the bridge is of reinforced concrete construction faced with dressed North Carolina granite ashlar. The draw span is of the double leaf, underneath counterweight type and is faced with pressed ornamental molybdenum steel to blend with the masonry spans. Once one of the longest (216 feet), heaviest (3000 tons), and fastest (one minute) such draw spans in the world, it is now sealed and inoperative.

The piers between and supporting the arches are from 32 to 41 feet thick and rest on bedrock some 35 feet below water. Except for those on either riverbank which display unadorned square panels, they are ornamented with bas relief eagles in discs 12 feet in diameter. The discs are flanked by fasces with axe blades projecting at the top. These details were designed by sculptor Carl Paul Jennewein. The masonry arches spanning the river are capped by six-foot-tall bison keystones sculpted by Alexander Phimister Proctor. Granite balustrades with recessed benches atop each pier delineate the upper edges of the bridge; the benches are set between granite blocks ornamented with Greek key banding. Specially designed lampposts are spaced along the curbs of the roadway.

The southern terminus of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway enters the Lincoln Memorial Circle on the northwest symmetrically with Memorial Bridge on the southwest. It was designed and constructed with the bridge and matches it in architectural treatment. The granite-faced, balustraded river wall extends northwestward along the riverbank to terminate in an exedra at the western end of Constitution Avenue. (This Constitution Avenue terminus was cut off from the rest of the avenue by the later construction of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge and its approaches.) Directly west of the Lincoln Memorial in the angle between the bridge and the parkway terminus is the Watergate, a broad flight of steps curved in an arc concentric with the Lincoln Memorial Circle, leading from the circle down to a grass strip and low granite wall at the river's edge. The riverside roadway passing beneath the end of the bridge breaks the flight of steps near its lower end and passes through a matching opening beneath the parkway terminus.

Flanking the eastern ends of the bridge and the parkway are two pairs of monumental neoclassical equestrian sculpture on identical pedestals. "The Arts of War" by Leo Friedlander stand at the end of the bridge. In "Valor" on the left (looking from the Lincoln Memorial), the male equestrian is accompanied by a female striding forward with a shield; in "Sacrifice" on the right, a standing female symbolizing the earth looks up to the rider Mars. "The Arts of Peace" by James Earle Fraser flank the end of the parkway. "Music and Harvest" on the left consists of a winged horse,

(continued)

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Pegasus, between a male figure with a bundle of wheat and a sickle and a woman with a harp. In "Aspiration and Literature" on the right, another Pegasus is flanked by figures holding a book and a bow. The statues, approximately 17 feet tall atop their granite pedestals, are of gilded bronze. The pedestals each bear 36 gilded bronze stars representing the states of the Union at the end of the Civil War. The sculptors were commissioned in 1925 and their designs approved in 1933, but the statues were not erected until 1951 after they were cast and gilded by Italy as a gift to the United States. The gilding was restored in 1971.

On the Columbia Island end of Memorial Bridge the roadway, Memorial Avenue, turns around the circular Columbia Plaza before continuing on across the Boundary Channel Bridge to terminate at the Arlington Hemicycle. Flanking the plaza are four identical 35-foot granite pylons, two at the western end of Memorial Bridge and two at the eastern end of Boundary Channel Bridge. Each is ornamented with corner pilasters, a bas relief wreath, and a freestanding eight-foot eagle by C.P. Jennewein.

Boundary Channel Bridge carries Memorial Avenue across the narrow channel between Columbia Island (in the District of Columbia) and the Virginia shore. Its central semicircular arch spans the channel; segmental-arched openings on either side allow the passage of roadways parallel to the channel. Its design complements that of Memorial Bridge: it is similarly faced with granite ashlar and edged with identical balustrades, benches, and lampposts, and the central arch is capped by the bison keystones. Its piers display the unadorned square panels found at the river edges of Memorial Bridge. Low pylons with corner pilasters but without other sculptural decoration terminate the western end. The roadway is surfaced with granite block.

Memorial Avenue, 64 feet wide, runs approximately four-tenths of a mile from Boundary Channel Bridge to the Arlington Hemicycle. Design continuity with the bridges is maintained through its alignment and continuation of the special lampposts. Since 1961 four pieces of statuary have been placed along this stretch of the avenue. Just west of Boundary Channel Bridge on the north side is the Seabee Memorial by sculptor Felix W. de Weldon and architect Anthony Harrer, erected in 1974. The memorial is centered on a nine-foot standing bronze figure of a Seabee greeting a three-foot child, on a base of polished Swedish black granite. Behind is a curved black granite wall bearing a bronze relief, eight feet high by 24 feet wide, depicting Seabees working at their various naval construction trades. Two more freestanding granite blocks of the same height flank the rear wall and bear various inscriptions. This piece was commissioned by the Seabees Memorial Association.

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Directly across the avenue is "The Hiker," erected by the United Spanish War Veterans in 1965. Theodore Alice Ruggles Kitson sculpted the eight-foot standing bronze figure, a realistic American soldier with rifle in hand dressed for tropical warfare at the turn of the century. A cruciform bronze plaque on the granite base bears a bas relief representing the American army and navy coming to the aid of the Spanish colonies in the Spanish-American War.

About one-fifth of a mile west of the Seabee Memorial on the north side of the avenue is the memorial to Rear Admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd, the polar explorer, erected by the National Geographic Society in 1961. The architect was Albert Peets; the sculptor was Felix W. de Weldon. Atop a pedestal of white Carrara marble stands an eight-foot statue of Byrd in polar dress. The marble directly under the figure is roughly cut to suggest Arctic snow.

Just west of the Byrd Memorial is the 101st Airborne Division Memorial, erected by that division's association in 1977 to to commemorate the service of the division in World War II and Vietnam. A bronze eagle with wings lifted stands on a gray granite plinth tapering outward toward the top. The plinth bears the division emblem in color. Behind is a low curving granite wall containing inscriptions associated with the division. Bernhard Zuckerman was the sculptor; Harold J. Schaller was the architect.

The Arlington Hemicycle terminates Memorial Avenue and serves as the central feature in the ceremonial entrance to Arlington National Cemetery. The hemicycle itself, having a radius of 90 feet, is 180 feet wide. Its walls rise 31 feet and are surmounted by a two-foot balustrade. In the center is a projecting and raised pavilion containing an arched recess approximately 20 feet wide by 40 feet high. Five smaller recesses of similar proportions flank it in the curving walls on either side. The massive wrought iron gates to the cemetery are at either side of the hemicycle parallel to the axis of Memorial Avenue. Pylons supporting the gates are capped with eagles and are flanked by additional taller pylons topped with tripods. The hemicycle was designed as an integral element of the Memorial Bridge composition and is also constructed of North Carolina granite ashlar.

(Just west of the Seabee Memorial is an entrance to the Metro subway line running beneath the avenue at this point. To the west of that, the avenue is bridged over a road passing beneath it. Neither the subway entrance nor this bridge contribute to the significance of the area for the National Register.)

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Landscape plantings are an integral part of the overall design. Most important are the holly hedges on either side of Memorial Avenue west of the Boundary Channel Bridge. Ornamental yews and crabapple trees are features of the Arlington Hemicycle lawn area. Columbia Plaza is distinguished by its circular lawn and by annual floral plantings. On the east bank of the river, lawn areas and plantings flank the Lincoln Memorial Circle and the Watergate steps.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1926-32

BUILDER/ARCHITECT McKim, Mead and White

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Arlington Memorial Bridge and its related architectural, engineering, sculptural, and landscape features are significant as important elements in the neoclassical urban design of the National Capital as it evolved during the first third of the 20th century. Successfully integrated with Washington's grand plan, the bridge composition enhances the monumental city as well as the riverscape.

Widely regarded as Washington's most beautiful bridge, Memorial Bridge symbolically links North and South in its alignment between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial. The adjacent Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway terminus, Watergate steps, and monumental equestrian statuary join with the bridge in constituting a formal western terminus of the great Washington Mall composition at the edge of the Potomac. The bridge axis, angled southwesterly from the east-west Mall axis, is carried on Memorial Avenue across the Boundary Channel Bridge to the Virginia shore. There it terminates at the Arlington Hemicycle, keystone of the grand renaissance gateway to Arlington National Cemetery, with Arlington House rising as the focal point on the hill above. The Virginia portion of Memorial Avenue approaching the cemetery serves as an "Avenue of Heroes" for the placement of commemorative sculpture.

The entire composition was designed by the prominent architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White during the 1920s. Sculptural ornament was provided by Carl Paul Jennewein, Alexander Phimister Proctor, James Earle Fraser, and Leo Friedlander. Construction took place between 1926 and 1932, although some details were left for later years and the monumental equestrian statuary of Fraser and Friedlander at the east end of the bridge and the parkway terminus was not installed until 1951. The placement of statuary along Memorial Avenue in Virginia is recent but compatible with the character of the overall conception; such placement may appropriately continue within the space available.

Design and construction of the project was overseen by a commission specially authorized for the purpose in 1913. The work of the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission, whose five members included the President, got underway after Congress appropriated planning funds in 1922. That December the commission abandoned previous intentions to construct a fixed high-level span on a more northerly alignment in favor of a low draw-span bridge aligned with the Lincoln Memorial, as had been prescribed in the 1901 Senate Park Commission (McMillan Commission) plan for Washington. The firm of McKim, Mead and White was selected in 1923 to provide architectural services, and the work proceeded thereafter under the commission's supervision.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- James M. Goode. The Outdoor Sculpture of Washington, D.C. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1974.
- Sue A. Kohler. The Commission of Fine Arts; A Brief History, 1910-1976. Washington: Commission of Fine Arts, 1976.
- Donald B. Myer. Bridges and the City of Washington. Washington: Commission of Fine Arts, 1974.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED UTM NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 40

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	3 2 1 6 8 0	4,3 0,6 7,4 0	B	1,8	3 2 2 1 7 d	4,3 0,6 1,5 d
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,8	3 2 0 5 6 0	4,3 0,5 4,6 0	D	1,8	3 2 0 4 8, d	4,3 0,5 6,6 d
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

E: 18 3 2 1 6 4 0 4 3 0 6 1 6 0

Starting at the river terminus of Constitution Avenue, the boundary runs southeasterly along the inland side of Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway to the Arts of Peace statuary; thence southerly to enclose the Watergate and the Arts of War statuary; thence southwesterly paralleling the southern side of Memorial Bridge and Avenue to the Arlington Hemicycle; thence northwesterly behind the Hemicycle; thence northeasterly paralleling the northern side of Memorial Avenue and Bridge to the Watergate; thence northwesterly along the river side of the Watergate and the parkway terminus to the point of beginning, enclosing the Constitution Avenue exedra.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
District of Columbia	01	District of Columbia	001
Virginia	51	Arlington	013

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE

Barry Mackintosh, Historian

ORGANIZATION

National Capital Region, National Park Service

DATE

December 7, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.

TELEPHONE

(202)426-6660

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20242

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES X

NO

NONE

*[Signature]*

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*[Signature]*  
Assistant Director,

TITLE

Cultural Resources

DATE

FEB 19 1980

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*[Signature]*

*[Signature]*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4/2/80

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

April 2, 1980