

NRHP- 4/4/80

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1** NAME

HISTORIC

Arlington Memorial Bridge

~~AND/OR COVENANTS~~and related ~~architectural~~ features**2** LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

On either side of and spanning the Potomac River FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

D.C.

11

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	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<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

STATE

Washington

VICINITY OF

D.C. 20242

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE
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 LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

National Capital Planning Commission

CITY, TOWN

Washington,

D.C. STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

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.

(continued)

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

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 3

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.)

(continued)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 4

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.

