

Otto's Tales

HERE RESTS IN
HONORED GLORY
AN AMERICAN
SOLDIER
KNOWN BUT TO GOD



Let's Visit
**ARLINGTON
NATIONAL CEMETERY**

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Let's Visit
**ARLINGTON
NATIONAL CEMETERY**





It was a lazy afternoon in the Prager household, but Otto the bulldog's eyes were focused with determination. His best friend Dennis watched him and grinned at the sight of the bulldog circling his bed and measuring it with a ruler.

"What are you doing, Otto?" Dennis asked.

"Ruff Ruff!" I've been saving my allowance for a new, more comfortable bed." Otto held the ruler up and down and side to side. "I want the biggest, softest one they have! I just need to make sure it will fit..."

“Does that mean you’re giving away your old bed? Because I’ll take it!” The scratch of Smidge’s scampering paws startled the boy and his dog as the kitten bounded into the room.

Otto chuckled, “It’s not for sale yet, Smidge. But I do wonder how much I should sell it for...”





"I'm giving my allowance to a veteran's charity," Dennis announced. "With **Memorial Day** coming up, I've been thinking about sacrificing a bit of my own money, to show appreciation for those who have **sacrificed** for us."



"You're giving your money away?" Otto didn't like the sound of that.

"Yes! You should give something too, to help our veterans," Dennis encouraged.

Otto thought about it. "Why is it so important to give to our veterans? I've been saving up for such a long time."



Dennis put his arm around his pal. “I know a great place where you can learn all about the soldiers who’ve fought for our country. It’s called **Arlington National Cemetery.**”

Smidge wiggled her whiskers. “We’re going to a cemetery?”

Dennis grabbed their paws. “To a *famous* cemetery. Come on, let’s go!”



“Yay! We’re going to drive there in the RV!” Otto excitedly hopped up into the vehicle.

Smidge looked around and purred. “How fun! We can sleep and cook in here, too.”

“Is everyone buckled up?” Dennis, Smidge, and Otto clicked their seatbelts in unison. Smidge arranged snacks on her lap. Otto pressed his nose against the window. Dennis turned the ignition key and exclaimed, “Here we go!”





The trio was off... and Otto and Smidge drifted to sleep as the rhythm of the wheels hummed on the highway. Suddenly, **BUMP!** The friends were startled awake from their naps. Smidge's snacks went flying. "Woahhhh!"

"Sorry about that." Dennis pulled the RV over. "Well, we made it to Arlington, Virginia, but I think something just popped the tire."

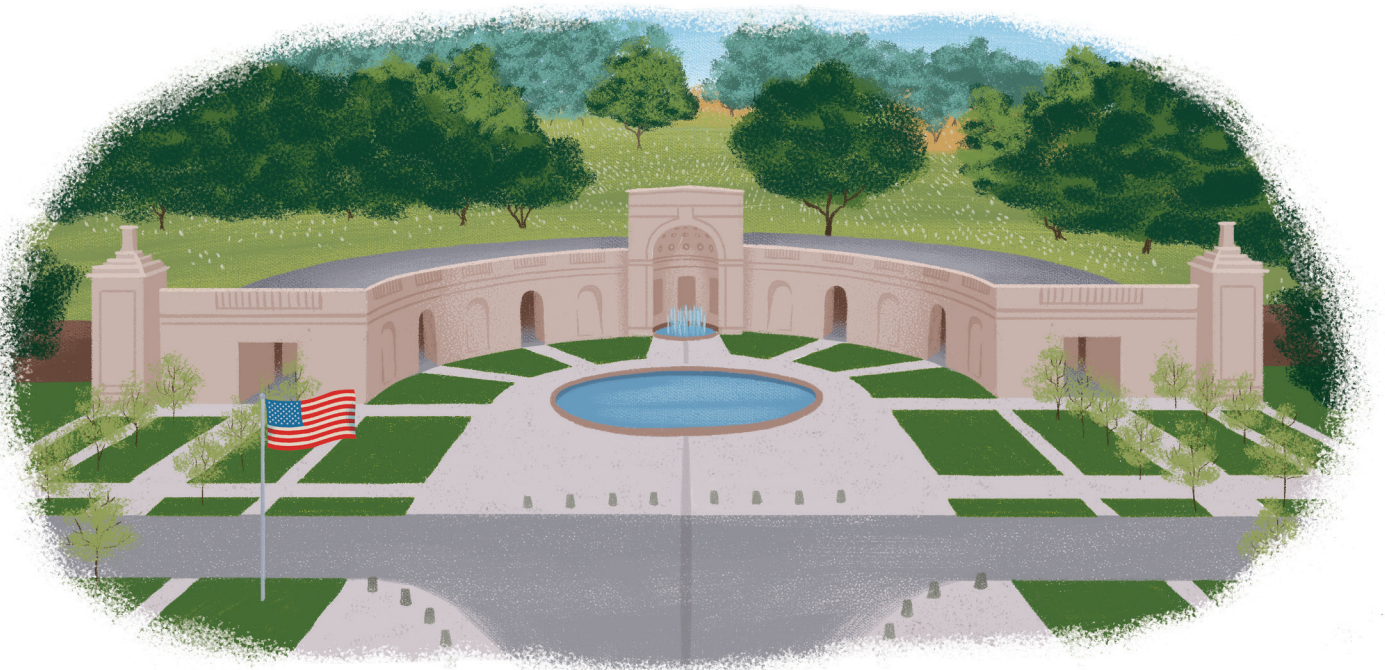
"What should we do?" Otto was anxious.

"You two go on ahead to the cemetery. I'll stay here and fix it." Dennis pushed up his glasses, took a deep breath, and gave them a reassuring smile.

"But you really wanted to go," Smidge pointed out.

"I'll join you as soon as I can," he promised.





Otto and Smidge set out for the cemetery, following a map from the RV. In no time, they found the main gate that led to a large, white building shaped like a semi-circle.

"This place is huge!" Smidge exclaimed. "Where do we start?"

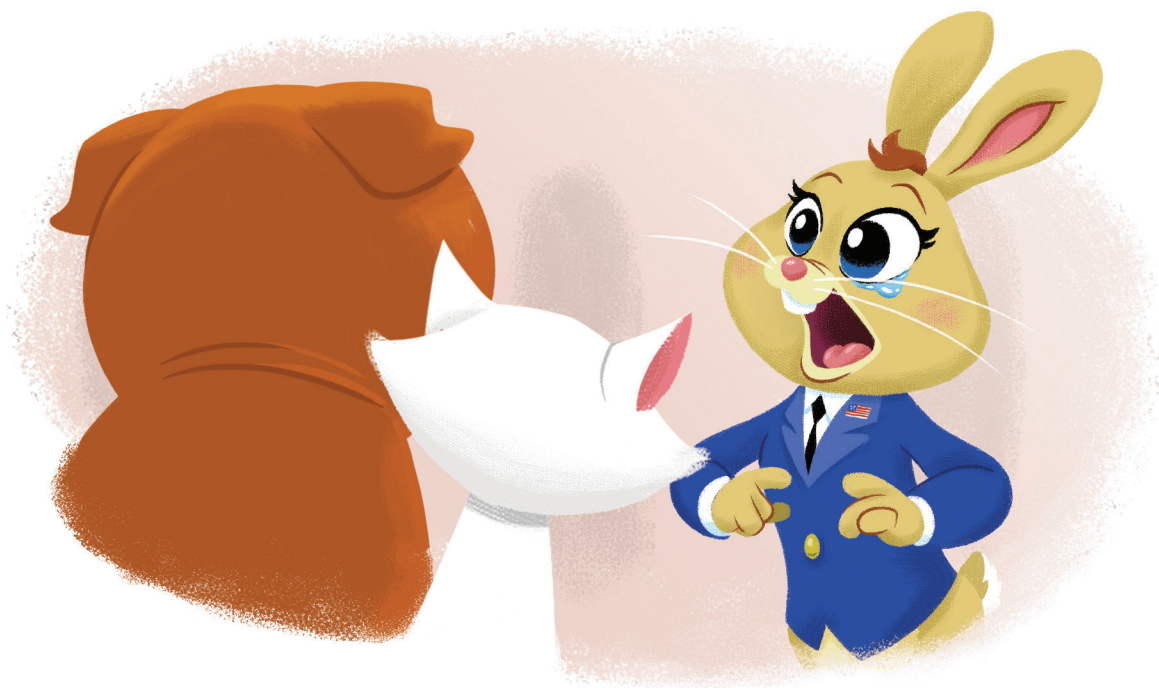
Otto glanced around. A small bunny wearing a uniform caught his eye. "Let's ask her!"

Smidge's eyes sparkled. "Her fur looks so silky! I'll have to ask how she does that."

The pair skipped over and tapped the bunny on the shoulder.



The bunny startled and turned around. "Yes, may I help you?" she sniffled.

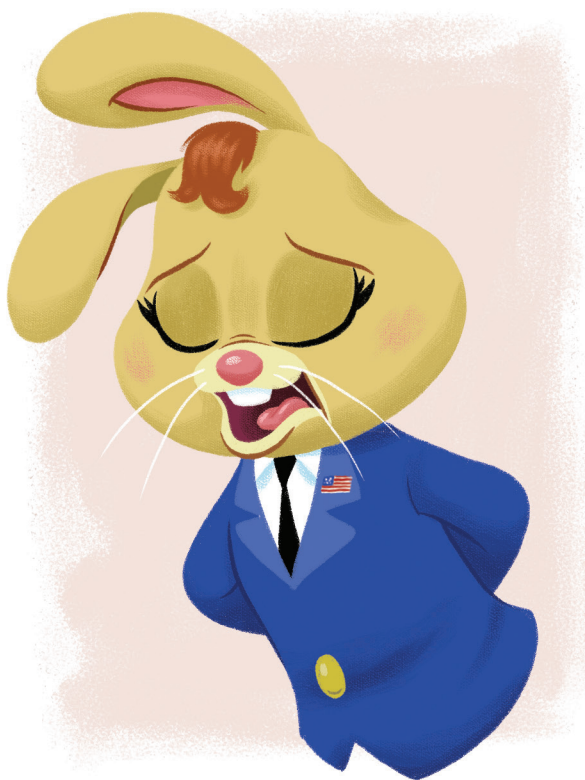


"Are you okay?" Otto noticed she was crying. "I'm Otto, and this is my friend Smidge. I'm sorry if we scared you, we didn't mean to."

The bunny wiped her tears. "Nice to meet you. I'm Arlynn Bunnington. I'm a new volunteer here, but I'm having a difficult first day. I just said goodbye to my family."

Smidge patted Arlynn's arm. "Don't worry. You'll see them again soon."

"That's just it," Arlynn sighed sadly. "I have no idea when I'll see them again because they live so far away. My work here is very important, but it will be hard to be away from my family."





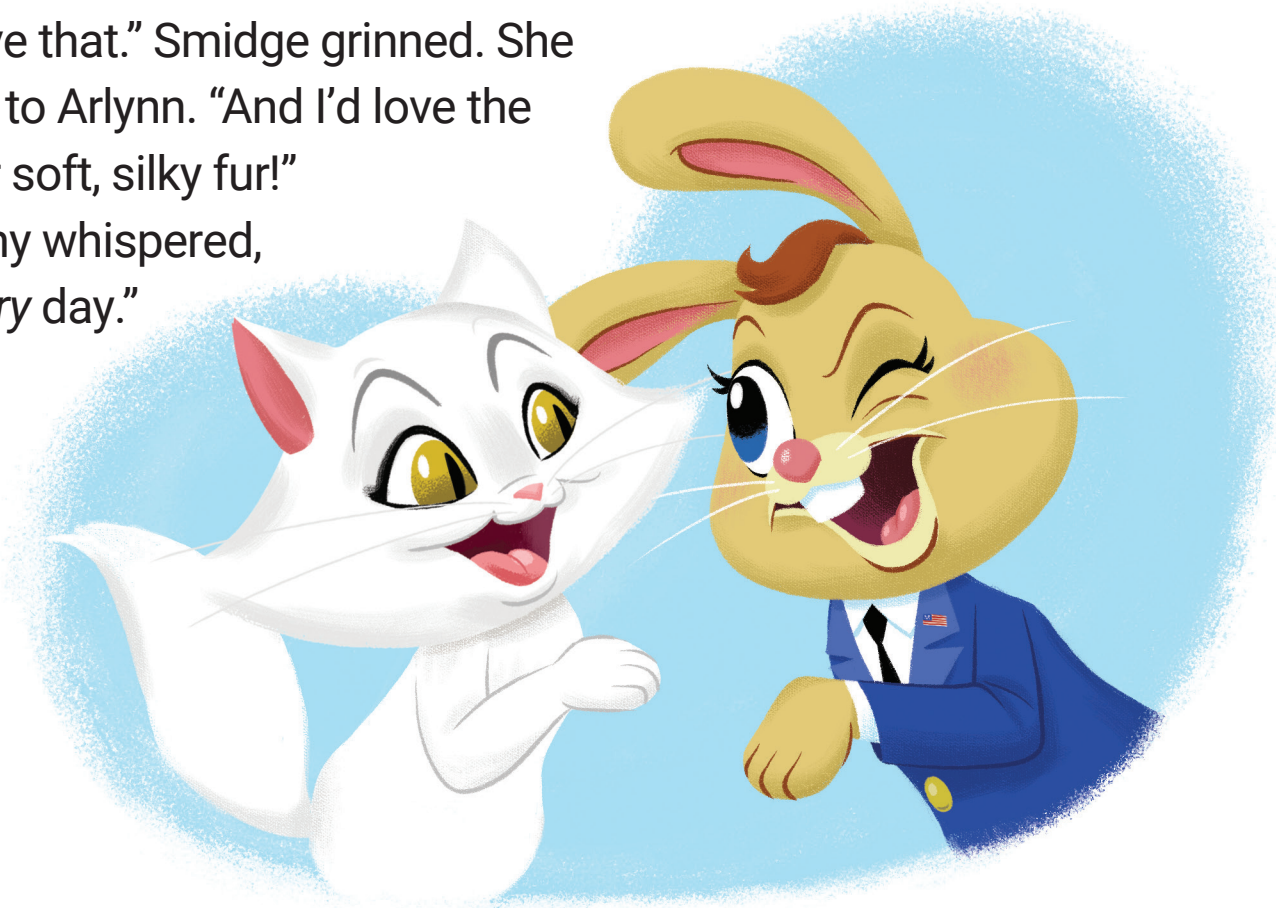
"Oh!" Otto sympathized. "What did you come here to do?"

Arlynn perked up, energized by the question. "Lots of things. I help visitors get around, assist with ceremonies, and keep the property clean. In fact, why don't I start by showing you two around?"

"We'd love that." Smidge grinned. She leaned closer to Arlynn. "And I'd love the secret to your soft, silky fur!"

The bunny whispered, "I brush it every day."

"That's dedication," Smidge remarked.



“Yes, it’s one of the many reasons I got accepted here,” Arlynn shared.

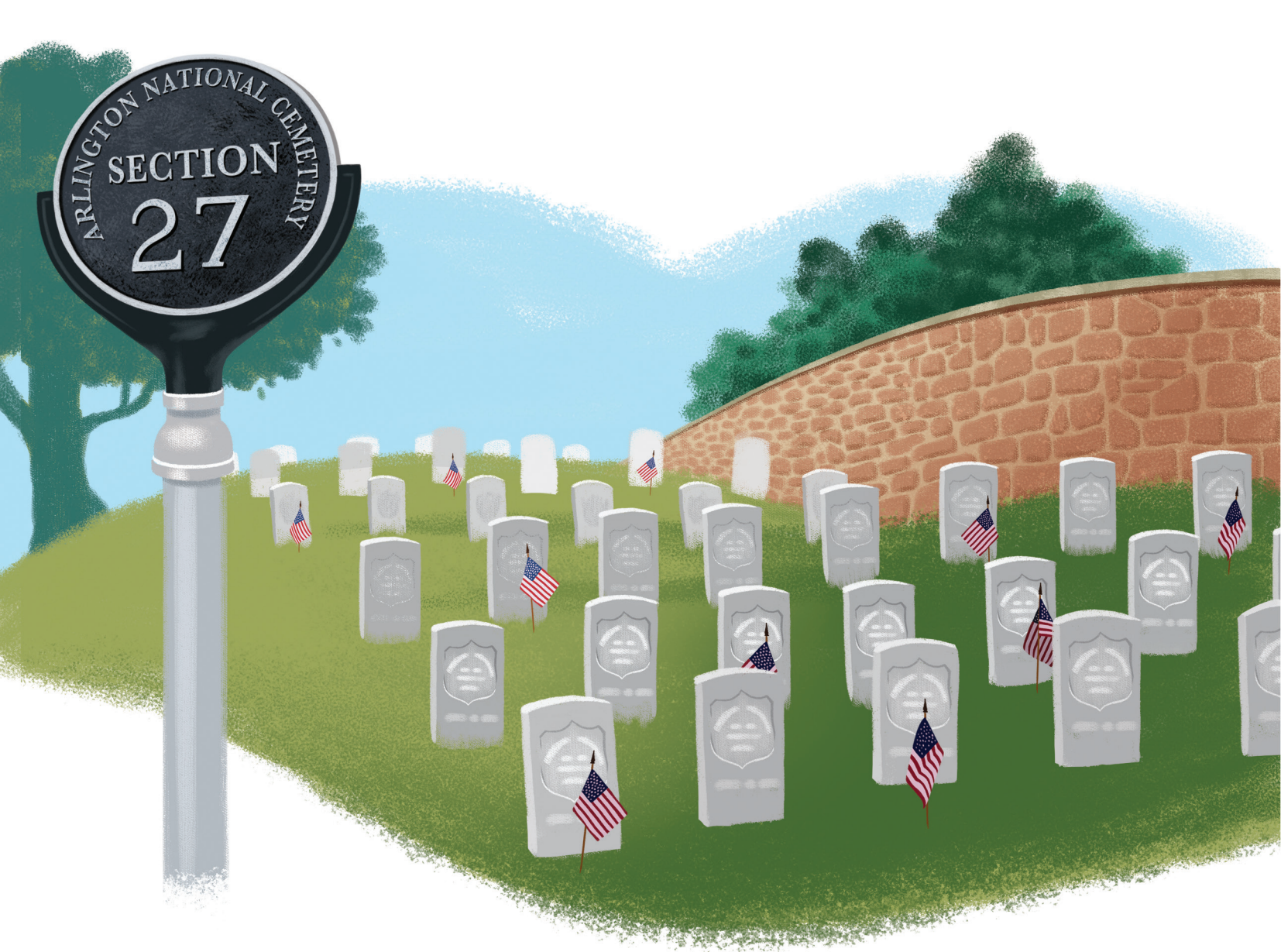
“Because you keep your fur so nice?” Otto asked, confused.

“No,” Arlynn giggled. “Because I am dedicated in everything I do. Everyone who works here has to be. We sacrifice a lot to be here, including our family time, our fun time, and our comforts.”

“Why would you do that?” Otto was curious.

“I’ll show you.” Arlynn hopped ahead, straight to the cemetery.





The curious bulldog and kitten followed Arlynn closely down a path. They soon reached an area of tombstones, labeled with the number 27.

“Welcome to **Section 27**,” the bunny announced. “This is one of the oldest sections in the cemetery, with burials dating as early as 1864.”

Smidge scanned the rows of white stones. “How is there room for all these people? There must be thousands here.”

Arlynn’s nose twitched. “There’s around 400,000 people buried here, including veterans from all of America’s major wars and their family members.”



Otto's eyes widened in awe.

"Wow, so many people have fought and died for our country."

"I know," Arlynn agreed. "When I think of what I gave up to be here, it's nothing compared to what these men and women gave up. Many of them paid the ultimate price – their lives – so we can live in a free country. We call that 'the ultimate sacrifice.'"

Otto nodded solemnly. "You're right. I wish I knew more about these brave people and what they did."

"Me too," Smidge chimed in. "I want to pay my respects."



Arlynn smiled and her ears stood tall. “I’ll take you to one of my favorite spots in this section. It’s the grave of the first soldier ever buried here: **Private William Henry Christman.**”

The friends followed their bouncy guide to another tombstone.



They paused when they saw a giant, hard-shelled tortoise standing there. The tortoise looked very serious, and his shell was decorated with shiny medals.



“Greetings.” The tortoise’s voice was gruff. “I’m General William Henry, proud to be named after Arlington’s first soldier.”



The bunny stepped forward. "My name is Arlynn Bunnington. I'm a new volunteer. This is Otto and Smidge. They're visitors today, and I'm showing them around."

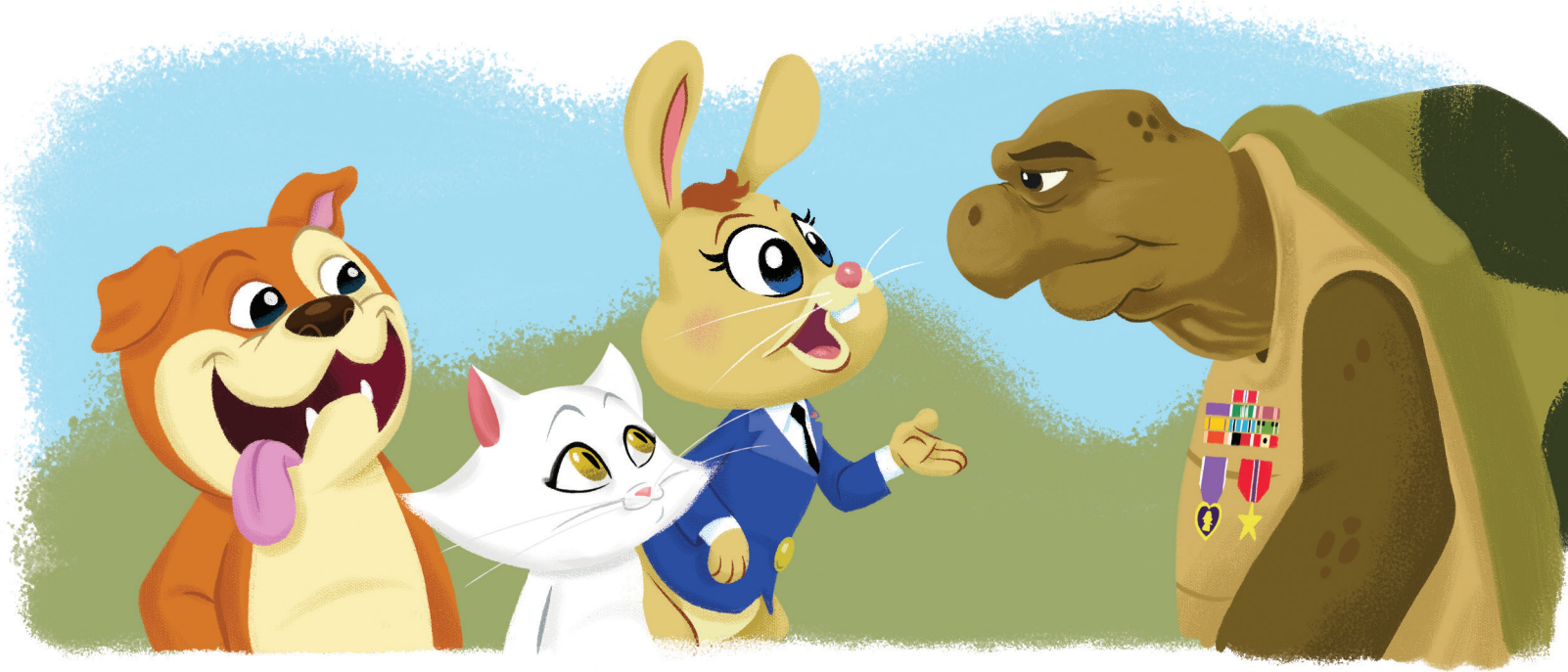
Otto and Smidge waved. "Hi, General!"

"Welcome, all of you," the tortoise replied. "And thank you for your service here, Arlynn."

"That's very kind!" Arlynn blushed. "But really, I should be thanking you, sir. Looking at all your medals, I'll bet you've served a long time."

"I have." The tortoise nodded. "I've seen war and battles that haven't been easy, and it's been an honor to serve my country. The medals mean a lot, but they aren't nearly as important as protecting our freedoms. I've fought alongside so many brave soldiers who've become like family to me."





“That sounds like a special bond.” Otto beamed with admiration for the general. “You all have something in common: what you value.”

“Bravery and sacrifice,” Arlynn pointed out. “General, do you have a favorite spot at Arlington?”

The tortoise raised his head, and a slight smile appeared on his lips. “I’m glad you asked. Let me show you. It’s called the **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.**”

The general lumbered off and the eager friends followed.



Eventually, the foursome approached what looked like a huge white box, with two guards standing at strict attention around it. Moving closer, Otto noticed the box was actually a tomb made of marble with words and designs carved on it.

Otto read the words aloud: *"Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God."*



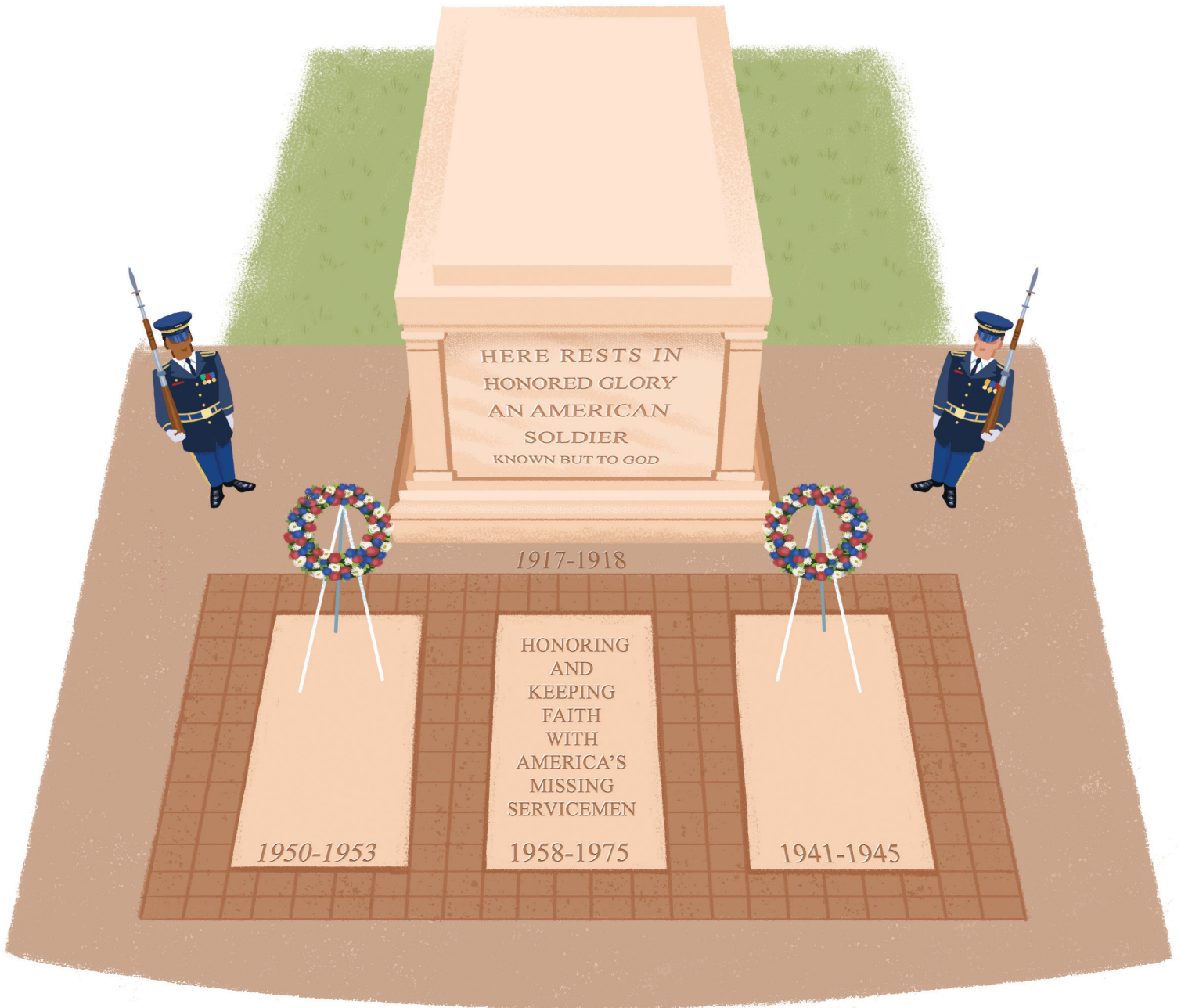


“Why is the soldier in the tomb unknown?” Smidge asked.

“During war, it can be hard to identify every soldier that dies,” the general explained. “They are often buried in the country where they were fighting, and have no name on their tombstone.”

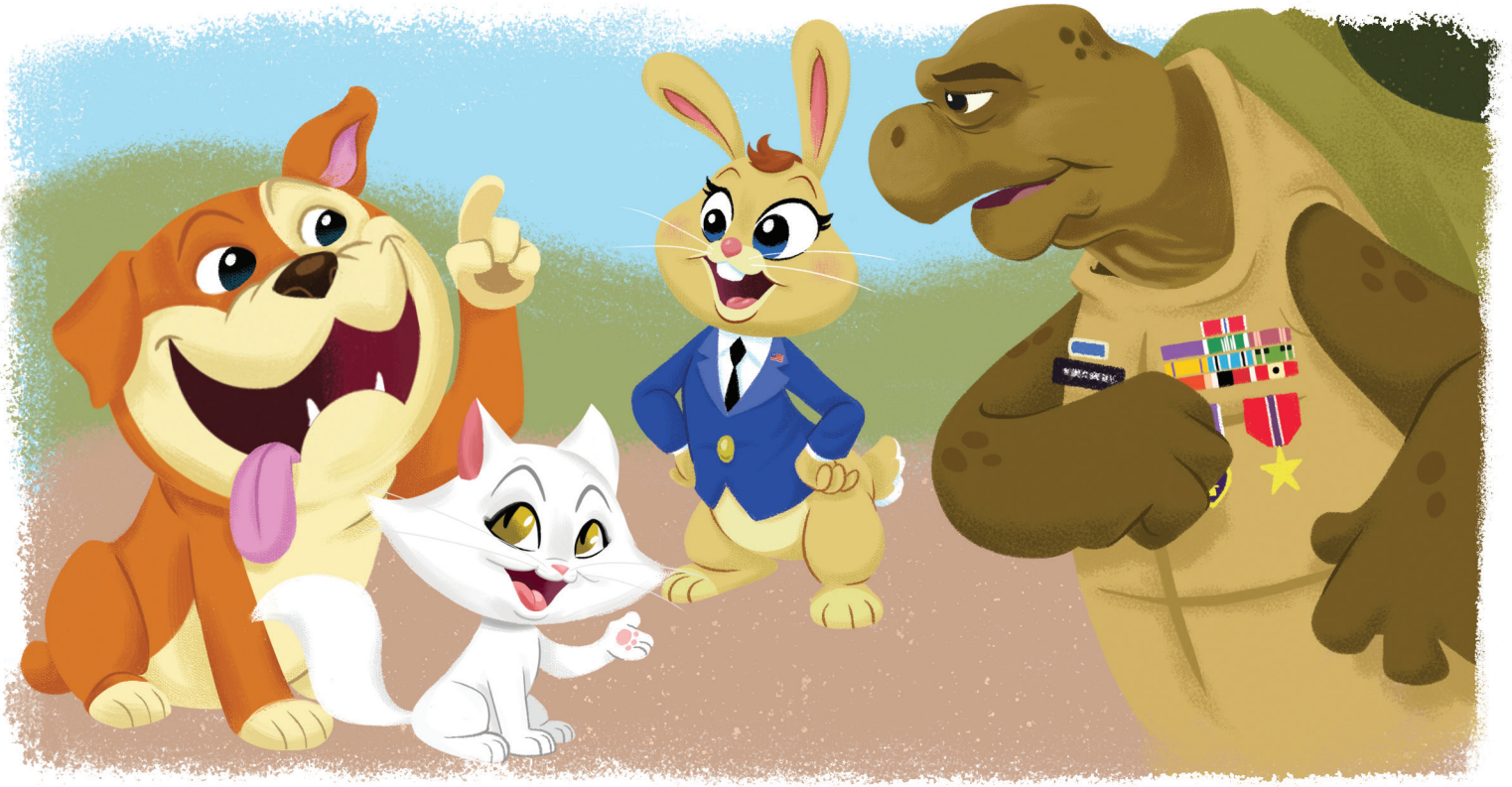
“But, after **World War I**, a veteran and congressman named **Hamilton Fish III** proposed that one unidentified soldier who died fighting in Europe should be buried at a special tomb here in Arlington.”





“That was very thoughtful of Mr. Fish.” Smidge nodded in appreciation.

“Yes,” the tortoise agreed. “The soldier was to represent ‘the soul of America and the supreme sacrifice of her heroic dead.’ Now, there are three unidentified soldiers from different wars buried in this tomb.”



“I’m beginning to understand why sacrifice is so important,” Otto shared. “To ‘sacrifice’ means to give up something you want for the good of others, or for your country.”

Smidge nudged Otto. “It’s selfless.”

“I think this is what Dennis wanted me to see,” Otto realized. “Getting a new bed is important to me, but it’s not as important as donating to those who’ve sacrificed their own comfort – and more – for all of us!”

“Affirmative!” the general bellowed.

“Thank you, General and Arlynn, for showing us what true sacrifice looks like.” Otto felt more grateful than he had ever remembered feeling before.

The tortoise gave a final salute. “Keep up the good fight.”





The bulldog and kitten made it back to the main gate just as an RV rolled up. A familiar boy with white hair and glasses smiled and waved at them through the windshield.

“Dennis!” They climbed in.



"Sorry I missed the tour, but the RV is all fixed now."

Dennis wiped grease from his face. "How was Arlington?"

"It was a great experience." Otto bounced excitedly. "We learned about sacrifice and how so many have given their lives to keep us safe and free. I've decided I *do* want to give my allowance to the veteran's charity when I get home. It's an important thing to do!"

"That's amazing!" Dennis celebrated. "I think people who help the fighters are just as important as the fighters themselves. And we can always help by donating and offering what we have."

"I want to give something too!" Smidge exclaimed. "I can sacrifice some of my snack fund."





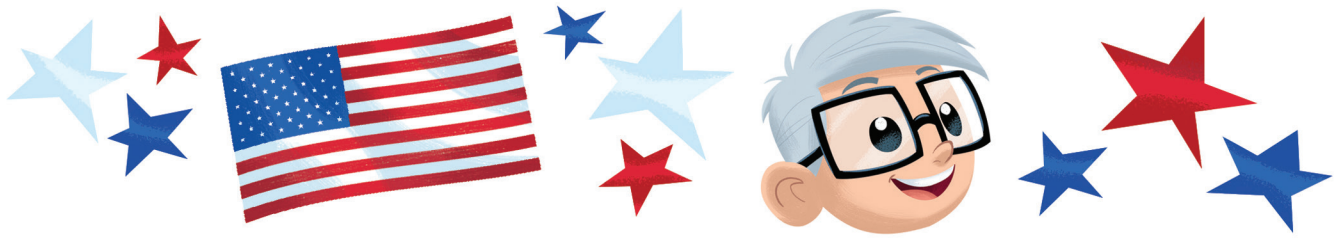
Otto leapt up and laughed.
“That was my favorite adventure yet!”

Smidge and Dennis looked at each other. “You say that every time, Otto.”

“Ruff Ruff!”

The trio buckled into their seats and drove away from the cemetery, as the golden, setting sun cast a warm glow over the white tombstones of the brave.





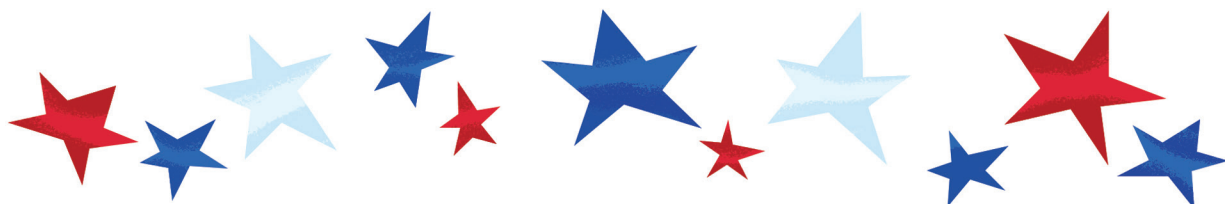
We Love Our History

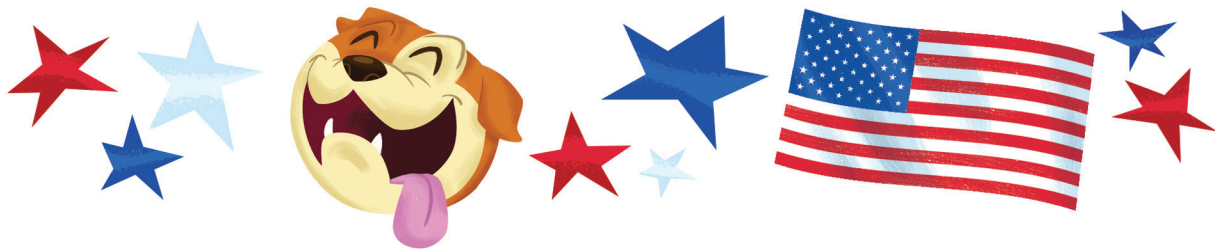
Memorial Day: A national holiday celebrated in the United States on the last Monday in May. Those who have served and died in the U.S. armed forces are honored and mourned on this day. The first Memorial Day was celebrated on May 30, 1868, and at the time, it was known as Decoration Day. The Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, John A. Logan, proclaimed the holiday to honor the Union soldiers who died in the Civil War.

Sacrifice: To give up something that's valuable or important to you for the sake of helping someone else.

Arlington National Cemetery: One of two national cemeteries run by the United States Army. It is located in Arlington, Virginia, and was first established during the Civil War. The property is over 600 acres and is the final resting place of around 400,000 people—including some of America's greatest heroes.

Section 27: One of the oldest sections in Arlington National Cemetery. This area dates back to around 1864 when the U.S. Army first began conducting burials there.





Private William Henry Christman: He was the first soldier to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. William was a laborer from Pennsylvania, and he enlisted in the Union Army during the Civil War on March 25, 1864. He served in the 67th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment, and unfortunately died from illness on May 11, 1864.

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier: A monument at Arlington National Cemetery that's dedicated to all the unidentified U.S. soldiers who have died during war. The first unknown soldier buried there was a World War I veteran who died fighting in Europe. Today, three unidentified soldiers from different wars are buried there.

World War I: Also known as The Great War, WWI began on July 28, 1914, after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This launched war across Europe between the Central Powers and the Allied Powers. It was one of the deadliest conflicts in history, with over 16 million dead, both soldiers and civilians alike. The Allied Powers were victorious, and the war ended in 1918.

Hamilton Fish III: A New York congressman and World War I veteran who proposed the legislation to have the first unknown soldier buried at Arlington National Cemetery. This special burial is now the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a celebrated historical monument.



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**See you in
our *next* adventure!**

- Dennis, Otto,
and Smidge

ABOUT

Otto's Tales

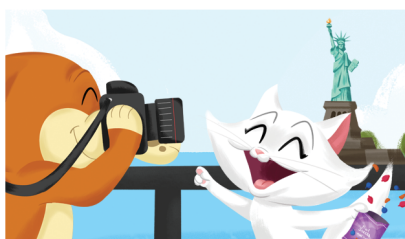
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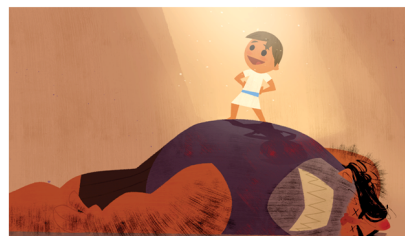
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