



Lying in State or Honor in the U.S. Capitol by Non-Members of Congress

Updated May 1, 2024

On April 29, 2024, [Colonel Ralph Puckett, Jr.](#), the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from the Korean War, lay in honor in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. In a [press release](#), House Speaker Mike Johnson and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced that

The extraordinary valor of Colonel Ralph Puckett, Jr. represents the best of the 1.7 million Americans who left home to fight for freedom in the Korean War. He demonstrated tireless sacrifice for our country and his fellow Rangers and is an exceptional model for servicemembers and civilians alike. To recognize Colonel Puckett’s remarkable heroism and service, and the contributions of all Korean War veterans, it is our privilege to permit his remains to lie in honor in the Rotunda of the Capitol.

Colonel Puckett was the 42nd individual to have [lain in state or honor](#) in the Capitol Rotunda or National Statuary Hall. Before Colonel Puckett, the most recent to lie in state in the Capitol Rotunda was [Senator Harry Reid](#), on January 12, 2022, and the most recent to lie in state in National Statuary Hall was [Representative Donald Young](#), on March 29, 2022. The most recent to lie in honor was Chief Warrant Officer 4 [Hershel Woodrow “Woody” Williams](#), on July 14, 2022.

Lying in State v. Honor

Lying in State

Current or former government officials (e.g., Member of Congress, President, Vice President); military leaders; unknown servicemembers from World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam era.

Lying in Honor

Other Honorees

Of the 42 individuals to have lain in state or honor (excluding four [unknown soldiers](#) from World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam who lay in state), 17 did not serve in Congress (see [Table 1](#)). [Figure 1](#) shows President and Chief Justice William Howard Taft lying in state on March 11, 1930.

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Figure 1. Lying in State of President and Chief Justice William Howard Taft
March 11, 1930



Source: B.C. Mossman and M.W. Stark, “Chapter 2: Former President William Howard Taft State Funeral, 8-11 March 1930,” *The Last Salute: Civil and Military Funerals 1921-1969*, (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1991) at https://history.army.mil/books/Last_Salute/Ch2.htm.

Since President Lincoln’s death in 1865, the caskets of most individuals who have lain in state or honor have rested on the Lincoln catafalque. The [Lincoln catafalque](#) is a platform constructed in 1865 “to support the casket of Abraham Lincoln while the president’s body lay in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda.”

Authorization Process

When an individual lies in state or honor in the Rotunda—a space jointly controlled by the House of Representatives and the Senate—a concurrent resolution is often used to authorize the event. For example, for [Representative John Lewis](#) in [July 2020](#), two concurrent resolutions (H.Con.Res. 106—use of the Lincoln Catafalque; and H.Con.Res. 105—use of the Rotunda) were agreed to. In at least one instance, for [President Gerald Ford](#), Congress was out of session and a concurrent resolution was not adopted.

When an individual lies in state or honor in [National Statuary Hall](#), a space controlled by the House of Representatives, the Speaker often announces the event through a press release. For example, in September 2020, [Justice Ginsburg](#) lay in state in National Statuary Hall and Speaker Pelosi issued a [press release](#) to announce the occasion.

Non-Members of Congress Lying in State or Honor

Colonel Puckett was the 17th individual to lie in state or honor who was not also a Member of Congress. Additionally, four [unknown soldiers](#) (World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam) have lain in state. **Table 1** lists the individuals who have lain in state or honor who did not serve as Members of Congress, the date of their death, the date of lying in state or honor, and the positions they held in government, if any.

Table 1. Lying in State and Honor by Non-Members of Congress

Individual	Date of Death	Date of Lying in State or Honor	Position
Lying in State			
Pierre Charles L'Enfant	June 14, 1825 ^a	April 28, 1909	Planner, Architect
George Dewey	January 16, 1917	January 20, 1917	U.S. Navy Admiral
William Howard Taft	March 8, 1930	March 11, 1930	President, Chief Justice
John Joseph Pershing	July 15, 1948	July 18-19, 1948	General of the U.S. Armies
Douglas MacArthur	April 5, 1964	April 8-9, 1964	General of the U.S. Army
Herbert Clark Hoover	October 20, 1964	October 23-25, 1964	President, Cabinet Secretary
J. Edgar Hoover	May 2, 1972	May 3-4, 1972	FBI Director
Ronald Reagan	June 5, 2004	June 9-11, 2004	President, Governor
Ruth Bader Ginsburg	September 18, 2020	September 25, 2020	Associate Supreme Court Justice
Lying in Honor			
Officer Jacob J. Chestnut, Jr.	July 24, 1998	July 28, 1998	Capitol Police Officer
Detective John M. Gibson	July 24, 1998	July 28, 1998	Capitol Police Officer
Rosa Parks	October 24, 2005	October 30-31, 2005	Civil Rights Leader
Reverend Billy Graham	February 21, 2018	February 28-March 1, 2018	Minister
Officer Brian D. Sicknick	January 7, 2021	February 2-3, 2021	Capitol Police Officer
Officer William "Billy" Evans	April 2, 2021	April 13, 2021	Capitol Police Officer
Chief Warrant Officer Hershel Woodrow "Woody" Williams	June 29, 2022	July 14, 2022	Last surviving World War II Medal of Honor recipient
Colonel Ralph Puckett, Jr.	April 8, 2024	April 29, 2024	Last surviving Korean War Medal of Honor recipient
Unknown Soldiers			
Vietnam Conflict	—	May 25-28, 1984	—
World War II	—	May 28-30, 1958	—
Korean War	—	May 28-30, 1958	—
World War I	—	November 9-11, 1921	—

Source: Compiled by CRS from U.S. Congress, Architect of the Capitol, "Those Who Have Lain in State or in Honor in the Rotunda," March 2022, at https://www.aoc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-04/lain_state_honor_2024-04.pdf; and U.S.

Congress, House, Office of the Historian, “Individuals Who Have Lain in State or in Honor,” at <https://history.house.gov/Institution/Lie-In-State/Lie-In-State-Honor/>.

Notes:

- a. Pierre Charles L’Enfant’s remains were brought to the Capitol to lie in state prior to being reinterred at Arlington National Cemetery. See S.Con.Res. 2 (61st Congress), agreed to March 26, 1909, and Arlington National Cemetery, “Pierre Charles L’Enfant,” at <https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Explore/Notable-Graves/Science-Technology-Engineering/Pierre-Charles-L’Enfant>.

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