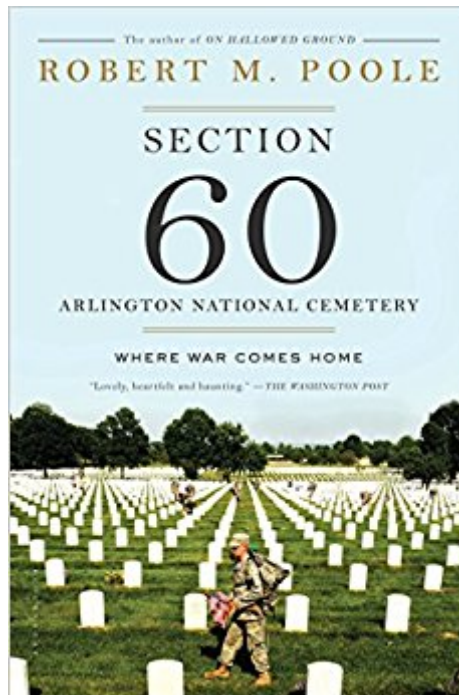




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Section 60: Arlington National Cemetery: Where War Comes Home



Synopsis

Gifted writer and reporter Robert Poole opens Section 60: Arlington National Cemetery with preparations for Memorial Day when thousands of families come to visit those buried in the 624-acre cemetery, legions of Rolling Thunder motorcyclists patrol the streets with fluttering POW flags, and service members place miniature flags before each of Arlington's graves. Section 60, where many of those killed in Iraq and Afghanistan have been laid to rest alongside service members from earlier wars, is a fourteen-acre plot that looms far larger in the minds and hearts of Americans. It represents a living, breathing community of fellow members of the military, family members, friends, and loved ones of those who have fallen to the new weapons of war: improvised explosive devices, suicide bombs, and enemies who blend in with local populations. Several of the newest recruits for Section 60 have been brought there by suicide or post-traumatic stress disorder, a war injury newly described but dating to ancient times. Using this section as a window into the latest wars, Poole recounts stories of courage and sacrifice by fallen heroes, and explores the ways in which soldiers' comrades, friends, and families honor and remember those lost to war--carrying on with life in the aftermath of tragedy. Section 60 is a moving tribute to those who have fought and died for our country, and to those who love them.

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Customer Reviews

I have not read Robert Poole's "On Hallowed Ground," which is a more historical account of Arlington itself. His "Section 60" is not a history of the cemetery, but a series of linked accounts that explains the circumstances of how a few of these soldiers and veterans ended up here. Obviously,

the stories are all tragic - but heroic in their own ways. While many of these men are from Iraq and Afghanistan, others have been recently recovered from Korea and Vietnam, and even far-flung regions from World War II. I have read 50+ books about Iraq/Afghanistan, as well as reported from Iraq as a photojournalist embedded with US troops - so you might think I'd be the perfect audience, but I'm really not. I've read many accounts (David Finkel's "Good Soldiers" and "Thank You For Your Service" are two of the best) that chronicle soldier's stories, and while "Section 60" has a vast scope, they are often similar to what I've seen before. However - that's the point. To a less familiar reader, these stories WILL be new, and WILL be powerful. Poole has done a good job of covering a lot of ground to give readers a 'biography' of Section 60. So while the stories themselves aren't exactly connected, they tell a full story of all the different (tragic) ways a veteran can be interred here. The most powerful section, about David Sharrett, recounts a friendly fire incident and the father's determined efforts to get to the bottom of it. I was familiar with this already, so this wasn't new - but I bet to most readers this would be their first time hearing about such a messy and dishonest way a family was treated. Other accounts chronicle parents and family members dealing with their own straightforward, but still tragic, losses.

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