

CAMP PERRY

BY CECIL RHODES,
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Welcome to Camp Perry. My silent guard towers and stately flags are there as your honor guard to greet you. My history is rich with tradition, honor and celebration. I do my duty to help guard your nation. My grassy fields, humble huts and silent berms await you.

If you are a visitor, please walk my streets and note the names from our country's proud past. Read the names of ships that sailed by canvas and the strength of iron men. Note the names of my ranges that tell the stories of those brave men that did not return. Listen to the quiet in the chapel and the whisper of the wind under the trees. Walk the streets of commerce and mingle with the crowds, The silent names upon my trophies are there for you to say aloud one more time, and so remember their achievements. I am here for your pleasure. Please cherish your memories of me and the time spent here.

If you are a shooter, you will stand upon my back and know the joy of shooting, alone or with your friends. My targets await you. Standing in line, silently, they are there for you. Twenty-five, fifty, two-hundred, three-hundred, six-hundred or one thousand yards distant, they set the boundaries of your world. They will record your efforts, silently and without judgment. You will smell the smoke, hear the roar of the cannon and see the colors rise each morning.

You can say you were here and remember your time with me when you are old and gray. You will return to your home with stories and pictures and memories of me, having left your footsteps upon my ground.

If you are a competitor, I await you most of all. My sunny sky can become blistering, my gentle winds can be gales of terror, my cooling rain can become a torrential deluge, my green field can turn into a quagmire of mud. I will be the ultimate test of your ability, training and desire. You have chosen to compete, against yourself above all others, here between the land, the water and the sky. I am here for your challenge and when you are done you will also leave with stories and pictures and memories. But unlike the others, you will take with you the knowledge that you came, you shot and you competed with all your heart and soul. You, among all that come, have the potential to walk upon my stage, put your name upon my trophies and set the goals ever higher.

My price for this is great. A part of your heart and soul will remain behind, to be held in honor with those that came before and will come after, guarded behind my gates and silent towers. And you will be forever destined to return each summer, if only in your dreams.