

MINUTES  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ARLINGTON NATIONAL  
CEMETERY HONOR SUBCOMMITTEE  
14 October 2015  
ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, ARLINGTON, VA

**1. Summary.** The subcommittee was presented with an update on the status of interment trends and an explanation burial eligibility and wait times for each of the services during the open meeting. Following the presentation, a productive discussion allowed the subcommittee members to express their questions and discuss overall impressions and concerns. General Committee impressions were positive. Also present were Ms. Renea Yates, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery (Committee) and Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Johnson.

**2. Attendees.**

a. Honor Subcommittee. Mr. James Peake, Subcommittee Chair, Mr. Chet Edwards, Mr. Thomas Kelley, Mrs. Debra Fix, Mr. Mark Farley, Mr. Bob Hess, Mr. Ron Fetherson, Ms. Rose Duval and Mr. Russell Davis attended. A quorum was present for the meeting.

b. Arlington National Cemetery. Ms. Renea Yates and LTC Kevin Johnson attended the entire brief and discussions.

**3. Discussion.**

a. The open meeting for the Honor Subcommittee was called to order at 1100 hours.

b. The subcommittee chair, Mr. James Peake, opened the meeting reflecting on the importance to remember with respect to looking to the future to maintain the dignity and respect for those interred here and balance that with planning and efficient use of the limited space at Arlington. As Ms. Yates went through the briefing Mr. Peake asked about percentage of cremations at ANC and how that matched up with the national average. It is close to the national average which has risen in recent years due to lower associated costs, but appears to be slightly higher at ANC possibly due to the wait times. The Navy families are waiting the longest and families in general are willing to wait for full honors which includes the caisson. The families are called around the six week mark to set expectations and discuss alternatives, i.e. standard honors vs. full honors to schedule their service sooner. Ms. Yates outlined the analysis by the Center for Army Analysis (CAA) which projects a bow wave of interments in the 2028-2030 time frame, due to Vietnam Purple Heart recipients and the estimated peak in end of life for those veterans of retirement age who entered the all-volunteer force.

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c. Ms. Yates also discussed the Millennium project and how 60 percent of allocated space will be dedicated to above or in ground cremated remains, as the recent trend has been approximately 70 percent of those interred at ANC are cremated. She also discussed how ANC is planning to ensure that in ground casketed and cremated interment space should be exhausted at approximately the same time frame. Mr. Peake then brought up the idea of comparing the VA and ANC eligibility standards and eventually the committee should consider changing the eligibility standards at ANC to prolong the life of the cemetery.

d. Mr. Edwards made the remark that the most important planning consideration is to maintain the iconic nature of ANC. While maximizing capacity above and below ground is important and reconsidering eligibility is equally necessary work, we cannot lose sight of ANC iconic place in our nation's history. He also stated that considering reserving space for Medal of Honor recipients is something the committee should explore as we should manage not to run out of space for these special individuals as a way to keep ANC alive. Mr. Peake directed that this idea should be developed and discussed in detail in a future meeting.

e. Mr. Farley asked the question how many interments were being conducted during the Vietnam War. Ms. Yates answered, during the 1960's and 1970s ANC was more of a local cemetery and not the national cemetery it is today and there is not a section 60 equivalent for Vietnam era veterans, and in fact many Vietnam and WWII vets are interred in section 60.

f. Ms. Yates outlined the facts surrounding the Sec Army decision and SSG Florich's case, and the fact that he was eligible for the columbarium at ANC and there should have been no issue with his in ground eligibility had his orders been properly executed as he was training out of state and should have been on Title 10 orders.

**4. Due Outs. (you may have others)**

a. Mr. Edwards mentioned that future decisions that affect the iconic nature of ANC should be brought before the advisory committee, not really a due about but some mechanism to make this a practice?

b. Mr. Peake asked to have CAA brief at the next subcommittee meeting to layout the data for those eligible by category, and also to show their projections if the eligibility criteria is adjusted to meet VA standards? Mr. Edwards stated this deserves a lot of time to consider and a full day should be dedicated to looking at this.

c. Present the background and history of eligibility for ANC and how it has changed over time.

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**5. Conclusion.** After all questions were answered and initial Subcommittee comments were provided, the subcommittee chair thanked all in attendance and the meeting was adjourned.

Certified by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James W. ...". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Lieutenant General, USA Retired  
Chair, Honor Subcommittee  
Advisory Committee on Arlington  
National Cemetery

RENEA C.YATES  
Designated Federal Officer,  
Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery