

MINUTES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY FALL 2015 ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

October 15, 2015

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY,
ARLINGTON, VA

1. **DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICER'S REMARKS.** Ms. Renea Yates, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery (ACANC) opened the fall 2015 Organizational Meeting. Ms. Yates stated for the record that the Committee operates under authority of 5 US Code (U.S.C.) Appendix 2 and 41 Code of Federal Regulation 102-3.50(d), and is an Advisory Committee subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Ms. Yates explained that Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), on behalf of the Department of the Army, is the sponsor of the Committee established by the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) in compliance with 10 U.S.C. § 4723 and the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2012. ANC, a Direct Reporting Unit to the Headquarters, Department of the Army, is the agency that receives the benefit of the Committee's advice and recommendations, as well as provides the DFO, who is nominated by the Executive Director and appointed by the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army. Additionally, ANC provides administrative support to the Committee.

Ms. Yates noted that the meeting was open to the public. She also reminded the public attending this open meeting and briefings that the public was not allowed to present questions from the floor or speak to any issue under discussion by the Committee without permission of the chair person. She noted that any member of the public was eligible to file a written statement with the Committee in accordance with the published Federal Register notice as posted in the binder at the entrance of the meeting room. Ms. Yates also noted that the proceedings were being recorded, and a summarized transcript of the meeting will be prepared.

2. **CHAIRMAN OPENING REMARKS.** Hon Max Cleland, Chairman, ACANC, opened with welcoming remarks stating four years ago he agreed to become the chairman and has appreciated the fact that the advice from the committee has been well regarded and put into practice to improve ANC. ANC has once again become the iconic site that the nation deserves. He addressed the committee by thanking everyone for the hard work and dedication over the past four years and mentioned this is his last meeting as Chairman. He validated the importance of the committee and stated it is need to ensure the future of ANC is well advised.

3. **ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS.** Before taking roll, the DFO provided administrative announcements. The DFO reminded the Committee members and other federal officials present of their official oath of office. The SecArmy and SecDef established the “Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery” pursuant to the NDAA of 2012, codified in 10 U.S.C. § 4723, and effective 1 August 2012.

The DFO noted that the SecDef approved the three subcommittees and existing focuses:

a. “Honor” Subcommittee: provide recommendations of methods to address the long-term future of ANC, including how best to extend the active burials and on what ANC should focus once all available space has been used.

b. “Remember” Subcommittee: provide recommendations on preserving the marble components of the Tomb of the Unknowns, including the cracks in the large marble memorial, the adjacent marble slabs, and the potential replacement of the marble stone for the memorial already gifted to the Army.

c. “Explore” Subcommittee: provide recommendations on the Section 60 Mementos study and improving the quality of visitors’ experiences, now and for generations to come.

The DFO noted the binders in front of each member are available to the public, which included the agenda, information and slides for all briefings.

4. **ROLL CALL.** Ms. Yates took roll call and stated the following were present: Honorable Max Cleland, Mr. Patrick Hallinan, Mr. Thomas Kelley, Mr. Russell Davis, Mr. Chet Edwards, Mr. James Peake, Ms. Debra Fix and Mr. Ronald Fetherson. All ANC personnel and guests were asked to sign in. For the record, a quorum of the Committee was present. A list of attendees is appended to these minutes.

5. **AGENDA INTRODUCTION AND REPORT REQUIREMENTS.** The DFO stated by the Committee’s Charter that the Committee shall visit ANC at least once annually. Within 60 days after this annual visit, the Committee shall submit a written report of its actions, views and recommendations to the SecArmy. Pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 4723, as codified with the NDAA of 2012, and not later than 90 days after receiving a report or recommendations from the Committee, the SecArmy shall submit the report of recommendations to the congressional defense committees and the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives and include such comments and recommendations of the SecArmy as he considers appropriate. The DFO added that any report of a visit, other than the annual visit, shall be submitted to the SecArmy within 60 days after the Committee’s visit.

6. **ANC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE.** Mr. Hallinan presented an update on ANC’s efforts to sustain standards, outreach and collaboration. He discussed the ANC self-assessment that followed the organizational inspection program standards, the House Veteran’s Affairs Committee survey and inspection and the Army Audit Agency review of burial accountability. The outreach the cemetery leadership is focusing on through Veteran Service Organizations and funeral home directors. He discussed the collaborative partnerships the leadership has entered into with the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) as well as the other services and the Department of the Defense. Lastly, he expressed his appreciation to the Chairman for his leadership and counsel over the past four years. He presented him with a picture of the JFK Memorial.

Mr. Walter Frankland followed Mr. Hallinan with additional information on the collaboration taking place and being planned with ABMC superintendents.

7. **ANC / VA ELIGIBILITY COMPARISON.** Mr. Buller, Office of General Counsel, addressed the committee to compare and contrast the similarities and differences of the eligibility criteria between ANC and the NCA. He presented a history of ANC's eligibility and how it has changed little over the decades since President John F. Kennedy was interred at ANC. Current eligibility has been in place per the current Code of Federal Regulations since 1976. Mr. Edwards questioned whether congress has to approve changes to eligibility, and the answer is no, it is the SecArmy with approval by the SecDef to change eligibility criteria, and informs the public through the federal rule making process. He also discussed the differences in above ground and in ground criteria and the fact that the NCA makes no distinction between the two. ANC military honors and the resources that go into services at ANC were also outlined.

Mr. Steve Fezler from the NCA followed Mr. Buller and provided an overview of the NCA as an organization, their mission, various services provided and how they conduct cemetery operations for the 132 National Cemeteries.

8. **PAO Brief.** Ms. Jennifer Lynch presented an update on how Arlington National Cemetery is messaging the public through social media such as Twitter, Facebook, U-tube and Google. They explained that the goal is to capture photos and stories from Arlington to enable the public to learn more about the cemetery and the place it holds in history. Mr. Davis asked if the WWI exhibit would be available through the website to help inform the public of this important anniversary of WWI. Ms. Lynch stated the exhibit is still in concept phase and there would be a web page dedicated to the exhibit.

9. **PRIVATE MARKERS AND COMMEMORATIVE MONUMENTS.** Mr. Moore presented a briefing on privately owned markers and monuments throughout ANC. The ANC staff is researching and working through the inventory of all monuments and markers to determine ownership and who is responsible for the maintenance of all assets. The challenges of maintaining the privately purchased commemorative works and markers were discussed. Of the options available, the one that elicited discussion is the idea of a nonprofit organization, e.g., "Friends of Arlington" and the legal aspects that surround government solicitation and the forming of such an entity.

10. **QUEUING AREA AND EXPANSION BRIEFING.** COL Guttormsen provided an update on the current construction projects and their progress as well as the projects being planned during FY 16. The Millennium project is taking shape and within budget. Mr. Edwards asked if this project was going to look and feel like part of ANC and contribute to the iconic nature of the cemetery. COL Guttormsen assured him it would and the contractors are being held to a high standard. The southern expansion was also discussed and it is moving through the process, albeit not at a rapid pace due to the large number of stakeholders. Mr. Edwards also asked that the Army stand as firm as possible on how the county can use the land they gain from the swap so that it does not detract from the iconic atmosphere at ANC. Ms. Fix asked to know the projected and contracted amounts for the various projects being planned or executed to better know the magnitude of funding.

11. **MONUMENT REQUEST.** The 8th Armored Division Association requested, and the Chairman granted, permission to address the committee as a whole from the floor in accordance with the 30 Sep 2015 published Federal Register Notice notifying the public of the open Federal Advisory Committee meeting. Andy Waskie presented the history of the 8th Armored Division and stated that the intent of the commemorative tree monument was to generate interest for the public to know about the sacrifice of those who served.

12. **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

a. Honor Sub Committee: Mr. Peake, Chair, mentioned the demographics of the future eligible population and posed a question as to whether ANC should to plan to always have the ability to inter certain groups, i.e. Medal of Honor recipients, combat veterans, etc. Thinking about the disparity between ANC and the NCA there is a need to model the eligibility for the future and take a full day to really deep dive into this important aspect of keeping ANC alive. He requested this be the focus of the next Honor subcommittee meeting.

b. Explore Sub Committee: Mr. Edwards commended the ANC staff and the committee members for the role in improving the visitor experience. He discussed the Section 60 memorial collection and the steps being taken for cataloging and preserving this for future exhibits. He also mentioned the communications with the families is at a high level and the policy for placing items at grave sites is being followed.

c. Remember Sub Committee: Mr. Davis discussed that a report is forthcoming to determine the process for and approval of future restoration and repairs to the TUS. He also stated there are six requests for memorial plaques and monuments and this ensued discussion on how to handle these requests and philosophically whether ANC is the proper place for such memorials. It has to be balanced with the real purpose of ANC and these grounds should not become a collection of memorials. A monument does not tell the unit's story and there are other ways to more effectively tell an organization's history educate the public.

13. **COMMITTEE REQUESTED INFORMATION AND BRIEFINGS.**

- a. Capital Investment Strategy report.
- b. Center for Army Analysis modeling of eligibility criteria.

14. **FORMAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS.** No formal recommendations were rendered.

15. **NEXT MEETING.** Proposed timeline for the next meeting is mid-January. The DFO will coordinate upcoming subcommittee and full committee meetings. The meeting was adjourned at 1530.


MAX CLELAND
Chairman