



ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY NEWS RELEASE

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Arlington National Cemetery: One Year Later

ARLINGTON, Va., -- Exactly one year after an investigation directed by Secretary of the Army John McHugh reported breakdowns in accountability and record-keeping at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), the new management team today released a list of achievements put in place over the last 12 months that have strengthened the cemetery's management and oversight.

Ms. Kathryn A. Condon, executive director, Army National Cemeteries Program, and Mr. Patrick K. Hallinan, cemetery superintendent, took over the management of Arlington National Cemetery on June 10, 2010, after the previous management team was removed in the wake of the Army's investigation.

"Arlington National Cemetery leadership, with the full support of the Army, has taken numerous steps to address and correct the problems found by the Army Inspector General and to restore the nation's confidence in the operation of this most hallowed ground," Condon said.

The Army Inspector General's (TIG) report contained 74 corrective actions and recommendations – all of which have been acted upon over the past year. Cemetery management also implemented a comprehensive plan to strengthen management, oversight and accountability in the cemetery's operations, developed a strategy for sustaining the cemetery for the future, and worked to restore trust and confidence in the Army's stewardship of Arlington National Cemetery.

One of the first priorities has been reconciling more than 146 years of data related to burial records. The accountability effort includes digitally capturing the front and back of each grave marker, and using aerial photography and global positioning technology to digitally map the cemetery's 624 acres. Images from the headstones will be matched with digitized records, then evaluated for accuracy. More than 330,000 people currently are interred or inurned at ANC.

Arlington management's efforts will continue to focus on using technology to develop programs and products that will not only digitize historic records and improve record-keeping, but also create a searchable database for use by the public.

The leadership team has also employed new chain of custody procedures, rebuilt the workforce, overhauled the automated interment scheduling system, implemented a financial management system and contracting process

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as well as taken steps to improve the facilities and equipment and infrastructure on the grounds of the cemetery, none of which were in place a year ago.

"We have greatly strengthened our interment procedures with training and equipment that equal the best national cemeteries, all while conducting 27-30 military funerals a day. What makes Arlington so unique is that it is the only cemetery in the nation that performs gravesite services and renders full military honors," Hallinan said.

The senior management team was recently completed with the hiring of James Gemmell as deputy superintendent. Previously, Gemmell, an Army veteran, was the director of Fort Snelling National Cemetery, the third largest cemetery in the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) within Department of Veterans Affairs. Gemmell also was the director of the Department of Veterans Affairs NCA National Training Center. The Army has its first-ever agreement with the VA – worked out between Secretary McHugh and Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki -- that allows Arlington employees to enroll in the training at that center.

TIG's 2010 investigation criticized the cemetery's contracting procedures, noting that those in charge of executing contracts lacked training and expertise. Cemetery officials since have slashed the number of contracts by nearly 40 percent, and provided a trained, certified contracting officer representative to oversee and monitor performance for each contract.

Another change, which enables the cemetery to better serve families, was the creation of a Consolidated Customer Service Center. The customer service center handles more than 240 calls each week day, with nearly one-in-five calls requesting funeral services. In order to meet the demand for funeral services, Arlington officials began allowing burial services not requiring military honors to be scheduled on Saturday. Previously, funerals were held only Monday through Friday.

For more information, please go to www.arlingtoncemetery.mil for additional information regarding progress at Arlington National Cemetery.

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