

MINUTES
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY (ACANC)
HONOR SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

November 7, 2017

1. DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICER'S REMARKS: Ms. Renea Yates, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery (ACANC), opened the Honor subcommittee meeting. Ms. Yates noted that present in person were Major Shannon Way, ANC Strategic Planner and Mr. Timothy Keating, Alternate Designated Federal Officer, ACANC. Ms. Yates stated for the record that the subcommittee meeting is pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act of 2012, codified in 10 U.S.C. § 4723. The subcommittee operates under authority and provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, 5 U.S.C. Appendix 2, and 41 Code of Federal Regulation 102-3.50(d). The DFO, nominated by ANC Executive Director and appointed by the Secretary of the Army, is provided by ANC. Additionally, ANC provides administrative support to the subcommittee.

Ms. Yates reminded subcommittee members not to conduct any formal business by deliberating on any substantive matters which are before the Committee as a whole for vote. Additionally, the subcommittee will report to the Committee any recommendations or information relevant as a result of the day's work. She also noted that the meeting was open to the public and reminded the attending public that they were not allowed to present questions from the floor or speak to any issue under discussion by the subcommittee without permission of the Chair. She noted that any member of the public was eligible to file a written statement with the subcommittee in accordance with the published Federal Register notice provided in the binder at the entrance of the meeting room. Ms. Yates also noted that the proceedings were being recorded in written form, and that minutes of the meeting will be prepared.

The meeting was called to order at 1300.

2. ROLL CALL: Ms. Yates noted a quorum for the record, with the following members in attendance:

Secretary of the Army Nominees: Mr. James Peake (Chair), Mr. Gene Castagnetti, Ms. Rose Duval, Mr. Mark Farley, Mr. Robert Hess.

Secretary of the American Battle Monuments nominee: Mr. Chet Edwards

The following members were not in present:

Secretary of the Army Nominee: Ms. Ryan Manion

Secretary of the Veterans Administration nominee: Mr. Thomas Kelley

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3. **CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS:** Mr. James Peake welcomed members noting the importance of the days' work for the subcommittee.
4. **PRIOR MEETING MINUTES:** The DFO announced that the minutes from the June 7, 2017 Honor subcommittee meeting were available for review in the strategic documents binders on the tables.
5. **NATIONAL DIALOGUE / PUBLIC SURVEY:** The DFO noted that ANC, with support from the Honor subcommittee during the previous meeting in June 2017, had refined a plan to establish a national dialogue which included a public survey to gauge public opinion regarding keeping ANC open well in to the future as required by law. The crux of the survey design was to measure public sentiment toward various options, including specifically: expanding the cemetery geographically and changing the current requirements to be eligible for interment or inurnment at ANC. The ANC Strategic Planner, MAJ Way provided a briefing on the current status of the public survey and a strategic analysis of the results gathered thus far. The strategy behind the survey was to invite stakeholders to join a national dialogue intended to increase public awareness that current demand for burial space at ANC coupled with current geographic footprint of the cemetery will not meet the requirements of the law to keep ANC open well in to the future. Along with the survey, ANC efforts to establish a national dialogue include targeted outreach events with MSO and VSO gatherings to provide accurate and timely information to stakeholders and the public in general about ANC.

The survey was opened on July 20, 2017 and is programmed to end on November 15, 2017. To date, over 28,000 surveys have been completed. Analysis reveals the number of completed surveys is approximately 28 per cent of all surveys started, thus approximately 100,000 people opened / began the survey. According to survey analysts, a 28 per cent completion rate of a public survey is significant which allows reliable analysis. The survey was structured in four sections. The first two sections solicited information from participants about their knowledge about ANC and provided information. The third section addressed national dialogue questions about the future of ANC such as whether ANC should remain open or be closed when capacity is currently reached, whether ANC should be expanded and how, and whether current burial eligibility requirements should be changed and how. The fourth section queried demographics including age, military service, and veteran status.

Survey results were categorized into four groups, or "personas" to analyze survey response statistics. Categories of survey takers were identified as Veterans, Service Members, Family Members or unaffiliated with the military. Survey response analysis reveals:

- Nearly 95% of responses favored ANC remaining open for active burials until well into the future.
- Nearly 80% of responses favored expanding ANC boundaries and changing

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burial eligibility criteria to extend ANC service life.

- Nearly 70% of responses favored restricting burial eligibility if further geographic expansion was not possible.
- Nearly 66% of responses favored relocating military support functions such as Child Care, Commissary, and Medical facilities to allow ANC expansion.

The subcommittee concurred that another survey is necessary to better assess public opinion regarding options to keep ANC open and identify acceptable risks associated with various courses of action. Another dialogue with MSOs and VSOs along with appropriate Congressional Staff Members, similar to that which occurred in the June 2017 Honor subcommittee meeting, would serve to shape a second public survey to meet that need. To further the national dialogue, ANC must continue to communicate the challenges of contiguous expansion in terms of time and necessary resource allocation. Additionally important is achieving synergy with the National Cemetery Administration to inform military families and the general public of available options and military honors available at VA cemeteries throughout the nation.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING RENOVATION: ANC Engineering Chief, COL Mike Peloquin presented a status update on the renovation project for the ANC Administrative building. He noted the objective of the approximately one year project was to update the standard of the entire building to that currently reflected in the central portion. The project design includes collocating Administrative functions, placing four family gathering rooms on the main level, reducing congestion, providing ADA-compliant entry ramps and restroom facilities, and creating an executive suite appropriate for leadership and distinguished visitors all of which will enhance the iconic look and feel of ANC. He noted the Final Design was expected by mid-November 2017, Project Award by mid-2018, and project completion by late 2019.

COL Peloquin further provided the subcommittee with an update to the ANC Master Plan noting due diligence with respect to maintaining compliance with industry standards to meet National Capitol Planning Commission and Commission of Fine Arts requirements, to update Programmatic Environmental Assessment, and to identify potentially adverse effects to historic properties. ANC Area Development Plan locations are the Entry Corridor, the Meigs-Tanner area, the Memorial Amphitheater, and the ANC Service Area. Thematically, the Master Plan will improve operations, visitor experience, and longevity of ANC structurally. The draft Master Plan is expected by January 2018 with a final approval by mid-2018.

7. ANC FUNERAL HONORS: ANC Strategic Planner, MAJ Shannon Way presented the subcommittee with a briefing which outlined the challenges and timeline of providing military honors to those eligible for burial at ANC. He noted that the process can be categorized into three phases:

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- **Prescheduling.** This phase of the process is initialized when a family contacts ANC and requests burial of a loved one. The family is requested to provide required documents to confirm burial eligibility including a DD-214, Death Certificate, Cremation Certificate (if applicable), and other documents as necessary. Statistics maintained by ANC Interment Services (IS) reveal that response time by families varies from a matter of hours to several months. The principal difference in response times is attributable to whether the deceased is casketed (normally faster response times because of Funeral Home costs to families) or cremated. Once relevant documents are received and eligibility is confirmed, the family is contacted to schedule a service. The timeline is often extended when a family is undecided about when they wish their loved one to be laid to rest or when they do not send in required documentation.

- **Scheduling.** This phase begins when a family decides to select a service date. The available service date is variable depending on the funeral honors the family requests for which the deceased is eligible to receive. Importantly, eligibility to receive various levels of military honors is distinct and separate from eligibility to be buried at ANC. A major consideration when scheduling a service is the availability of the resources required to provide military honors. While VA Cemeteries throughout the nation provide military funeral honors, ANC provides unique 'Full Military Funeral Honors' (FMFH). Full Military Honors as defined by existing statute consists, minimally, of a casket team and a firing party. Therefore no legal basis or entitlement exists to provide the level of FMFH made available at ANC such as military service escorts, a band and a caisson team to conduct the funeral. Currently, the waiting time for a family to schedule FMFH is six months. While not a directed policy, ANC business practice is to offer a family three dates from which to select a service with FMFH. The scheduling timeline is further delayed however when a family contacts ANC to request a change to the previously accepted service date. Occasionally, a request to reschedule a service is generated by factors beyond the control of the requesting family such as a natural disaster or family crisis. However, families have requested a change to a scheduled date as a matter of convenience such as time of year or family member availability to attend a previously scheduled service. Again, as a matter of business practice, ANC accommodates the request to reschedule. The result is a perpetual increase in the wait time for other families to schedule a service with FMFH.

- **Funeral Service.** The service is the culmination of the entire process where the eligible Veteran or family member is laid to rest with dignity and honor.

MAJ Way briefed that ANC provides approximately 440 FMFH opportunities per quarter. Further, there are currently 37 families that have been offered an opportunity to schedule a service with FMFH, but are still undecided. Also, an additional 64 families have rescheduled services. These numbers represent approximately 25% of the available opportunities which, if utilized, would have resulted in reducing wait time for other families.

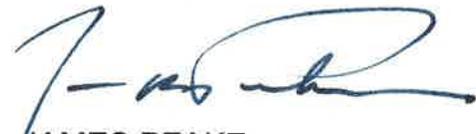
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In subcommittee member discussion, it was agreed that since ANC conducts FMFH scheduling as a matter of business practice, not law or policy, the Honor subcommittee Chair will report to the full Committee a recommendation to suggest ANC consider implementing a process improvement plan to shorten, or even at best to eliminate, the additional delay in FMFH timeline by families that opt to wait or reschedule FMFH services. In this case, those families that elect to reschedule or wait to schedule will be scheduled as Standard Military Funeral Honors (SMFH) unless extenuating circumstances exist. Once offered an opportunity, a family must either accept the proposed date or relinquish FMFH scheduling. This business practice at ANC differs from the NCA in that the NCA offers strict scheduling dates while ANC has historically been more accommodating to families electively changing dates. The effect of this elective scheduling is that many families calling at their time of need experience prolonged wait times at popular times of the year (such as the spring season). The discussion concluded with emphasis that eligibility for various military funeral honors in no way impacts eligibility for interment or inurnment at ANC.

8. **MEETING ADJOURNED.** The Chair then called for any other business. Hearing none, he called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made and seconded. All members voted in favor.

Meeting Adjourned at 1645



JAMES PEAKE
Chairman