

## MINUTES

### ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY (ACANC)

#### HONOR SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

January 30, 2018

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY (ANC), 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 January 2018 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 must report to the Committee any recommendations or information relevant as a result of the day's work. She stated 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 have filed a written statement with the subcommittee in accordance with the published Federal Register Notice. A copy of the notice is provided in the binder at the entrance of the meeting room. Ms. Yates also stated the proceedings were being recorded in written form and that minutes of the meeting will be prepared.

The meeting was called to order at 0900.

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, and Ms. Ryan Manion.

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

Secretary of the Veterans Administration nominee: Mr. Thomas Kelley

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3. **PRIOR MEETING MINUTES:** The DFO announced that copies of the minutes from the November 7, 2017 Honor subcommittee meeting were available for review in the strategic documents binders on the tables as well as on the Arlington National Cemetery website at a link to the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery.

She reminded the members and informed the guests that in June 2017, the Honor Subcommittee conducted an initial roundtable discussion with invited guests from numerous VSO and MSOs as well as Congressional Staff members, resulting in a plan to establish an initial national dialogue, including an initial public survey, to gauge public opinion regarding keeping ANC open well in to the future as required by law. The intent was to measure public opinion toward various options, including expanding the cemetery and changing eligibility policy for interment or inurnment at ANC. A subcommittee meeting was held in November 2017 was called to review the analysis of that initial survey.

4. **CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS:** Mr. Peake welcomed the subcommittee members and guests. He expressed the importance of the day's work and noted specifically the significance of the dialogue expected during the meeting between the subcommittee and guests from numerous Military and Veteran Service Organizations, Professional Staff Members from the SVAC and HVAC, as well as the general public attending today. He noted that the primary purpose for the meeting was to review the results of the initial public survey and engage in a discussion regarding a second public survey.

(Note: the guest list is appended at TAB A)

5. **NATIONAL DIALOGUE BRIEF:** The ANC Strategic Planner, MAJ Way refreshed the subcommittee members and informed the guests of the analysis of the first public survey. He noted the first survey was conducted from July through November 2017 and resulted in over 28,000 completed surveys. The survey was structured in four sections. The first two solicited information from participants about their knowledge of ANC and provided information. The third presented survey 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 policy should be changed and how. The fourth section queried demographics including age, military service, and veteran status. Analysis showed:

- 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 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.

During the November 7, 2017 Honor Subcommittee meeting, members discussed the

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possibility of a developing a second survey to further refine public opinion regarding options to keep ANC open and identify acceptable risks associated with various courses of action. Further dialogue with MSOs and VSOs along with appropriate Congressional Staff Members is desired to meet that need. ANC emphasized that it is important to 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.

Comments / Discussion. To frame the challenges facing ANC for the guests, it was noted that given current eligibility policy and contiguous geographic expansion opportunities (not including the Southern Expansion project), ANC currently has approximately 100,000 (60% in-ground interments (both casketed and cremated) and 40% above-ground niche inurnments) remaining new first interments and inurnments locations. Annually, ANC inurns or inters approximately 70% of remains which are cremated. Casketed burials makeup just over 30%. Statistically, as families increasingly favor cremation of their loved ones, ANC plans for utilization of space is estimated at 30% above ground niche locations. Currently, ANC conducts about 4,000 first (new grave) interments annually. Further roundtable discussion involved waiting times for families to bring loved ones to ANC and types of Honors rendered during services. It was noted that wait time for families is a distinct issue being addressed by ANC, but does not affect the strategic concern of the longevity of ANC.

**6. PUBLIC SURVEY 2:** After a short break, the subcommittee and guests reassembled for a presentation by MAJ Way regarding a prospective second public survey with the intent to refine the first survey. The following objectives were identified:

- Capitalize on lessons learned from analysis of the first survey
- Continue partnership with MSOs and VSOs to develop a survey with common utility
- Focus the survey to identify options favoring keeping ANC open well in to the future
- Provide a methodology for educating the public about ANC and strategic challenges
- Develop and share further analysis
- Simplify, shorten, and focus the survey to promote increased participation

Comments / Discussion. The Chair noted that the first survey resulted in what professional survey analysts consider significant participation. Approximately 100,000 surveys were opened with over 28,000 completed. He then asked if anyone disagreed that a second survey was needed. A senior leader from ANC remarked that there exists a collective process, including today's public dialogue, to ultimately develop recommendations for the Secretary of the Army to consider for the future of ANC. This process includes recommendations from the Executive Director as well as any parallel recommendations from the Secretary's statutory Federal Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery.

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A robust roundtable discussion followed the presentation on a possible way ahead in developing a second survey. The following concerns were discussed to assist in framing possible survey questions.

- Contiguous expansion alone, including current projects, will not meet the objective of keeping ANC open until well into the future. Every acre of new land acquired will only increase ANC lifespan by 3 months.

- Without further contiguous expansion, ANC can accommodate approximately 100,000 new internments and inurnments. ANC currently serves 1% of the active duty service member and Veteran burial needs. With approximately 2 Million Veterans eligible based on retired status, which options, if any, are acceptable in changes to ANC burial eligibility policy?

- Regardless of any expansion or change to eligibility policy, should dedicated space at ANC be reserved for specifically qualified individuals? (MOH and KIA for example.)

- Respondents to the first survey supported expanding where feasible and modifying eligibility policy as necessary. Given limited contiguous expansion options, do respondents favor changes in eligibility with a phased approach?

- What is the level awareness of options available to Veterans and their families at hundreds of VA and State managed military cemeteries?

After discussing a framework for prospective survey questions, further discussion items included:

- Public survey results must assist the decision-maker, not make the de facto decision. While a simplified survey is desired to encourage participation and avoid complication and unbalanced results, some level of detail is necessary to ensure refinement of the first survey results.

- A second survey, if conducted, must reflect quantified questions seeking educated, knowledgeable answers. The survey should ask for priorities, not a ranking of options or planning factors. It must convey reasonable options to the public and once public macro-level priorities are known, decision making is facilitated. The survey would be a tool to set conditions for the final strategic decisions required.

- More context should be added to the survey in the beginning, possibly including a video which lays out the problem and initial survey results. Questions and response options should be simplified and focus on the impact of various choices on longevity while ensuring the questions get to the substantive issue, how do we address the large retiree population.

- Concern was expressed about shaping a survey which would produce desired

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results. It was noted by the Designated Federal Officer that professional survey developers ensure complete transparency; no conflicts of interests influence survey development.

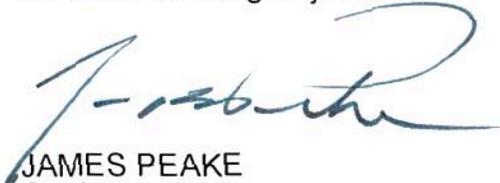
- All echoed the common goal to preserve the hallowed ground of ANC and its status as an active cemetery well into the future. Therefore it is essential the second survey not confuse the public by offering an easy way out.

- The consensus at the end of the discussion was for ANC to simplify the results of the first survey upfront; gain understanding of public's interest in making key distinctions in retiree service for eligibility; include phasing that includes changes to both above and below ground options and includes rank ordering those which the public believes should not be eligible for ANC.

As the meeting drew to a conclusion, the Chair noted that the primary issue seemed to be that nothing significant can result from a second survey without garnering public opinion about changes to eligibility policy and, more specifically, how that relates to retiree eligibility. He then asked specifically for any further comments from members and guests. Hearing none, he thanked everyone for their participation in discussing a very difficult challenge with no easy answers. He then called for a motion to adjourn.

7. **MEETING ADJOURNED:** A motion to adjourn was made by a member and seconded. All members voted in favor.

At 1220: Meeting Adjourned.



JAMES PEAKE  
Chairman

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TAB A

Guest Participants for Roundtable Discussion

Mr. Forrest ALLEN, Director, Military Officers Association of America  
Mr. Gerardo AVILA, American Legion  
Ms. Lyne BABIN, American Armed Forces Mutual Aid Association  
Mr. Melvin BROWN, American Legion  
Mr. Ashley BUNCE, Director, Wounded Warrior Project  
Mr. Brian CONDON, Assistant Director, Veteran's Programs Fleet Reserve Association  
Ms. Jennifer DAVIS, Director Gov't and Mil Relations, Air Force Sergeants Association  
Mr. James FISHER, Director, Korean War Veterans Association  
Mr. Michael LITTLE, Director Legislative Affairs, Association of the US Navy  
Mr. Miles MIGLIARA, AMVETS  
Ms. Kathleen MOAKLER, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors  
Mr. Aleks MOROSKY, Military Order of the Purple Heart  
Mr. Blake ORTNER, Paralyzed Veterans of America  
Rev. SMITH, Military Chaplains Association  
Mr. John TOWLES, Deputy Director, Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Mr. Troy WELCH, Association of the United States Army  
Ms. Dee MCWILLIAMS, President, WIMSA  
Mr. Keith ZUEGAL, Senior Director Government Relations, US Air Force Association

Mr. Chris BENNETT, Professional Staff Member, House Veterans Affairs Committee  
Mr. Thomas COLEMAN, Professional Staff Member, Senate Veterans Affairs Committee  
Mr. David SHEARMAN, Professional Staff Member, Senate Veterans Affairs Committee

Mr. John TAYLOR, Department of Defense  
Mr. Jeff HAEUPTLE, Department of Defense  
Mr. Rob GUNNING, Department of Defense  
Ms. Sonia VALDEZ, Legislative Liaison, Department of the Army

Ms. Elizabeth FRASER, Arlington National Cemetery  
Ms. Jill GASPAR, Arlington National Cemetery  
Ms. Katharine KELLEY, Arlington National Cemetery  
Ms. Barbara LEWANDROWSKY, Arlington National Cemetery  
Mr. Robert QUACKENBUSH, Arlington National Cemetery

Mr. Lance ALLEN  
Mr. Stephen CAREFORA  
Mr. John MICHAEL  
Ms. Kathleen MURPHY  
Ms. Nancy REED  
Mr. Michael SERVELLO  
Ms. Marla VIEKMAN  
Mr. W. Lee YARBOROUGH