



Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery

Arlington National Cemetery
Arlington, VA 22211

September 7, 2018



Dear [REDACTED]:

Last year the Army submitted a report to Congress, titled *The Future of Arlington National Cemetery: Report on the Cemetery's Interment and Inurnment Capacity, 2017*, as required by Public Law 114-158. The report was the result of Congressional awareness that Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) was within a few decades of closing for new burials. The report was delivered on February 14, 2017. The most significant challenge we have today is to find a way to address the fact that there currently remains about 100,000 burial spaces in ANC for an eligible population of approximately 22 million veterans. Throughout this process your organization and your constituency have been involved. The Army has conducted a national conversation utilizing two public surveys, participating in conventions throughout the U.S., providing public service announcements, and meeting veterans face-to-face to answer their questions.

The two surveys alone garnered more than a quarter of a million responses from Veterans, Armed Forces members, families, and citizens from every state in our union and our overseas bases. These important surveys – which your leaders helped to craft – told us some very important things:

- a. Nearly unanimous, respondents of both surveys (93% and 96%, respectively) believe that ANC should remain active for burials well into the future, defined as 150 years.
- b. At a minimum, more than 90% of the quarter of a million respondents felt that it was imperative to ensure space is available for our nation's future military members Killed in Action and Medal of Honor recipients.
- c. Additionally, a significant majority of respondents (74% and 69%, respectively) felt that former POWs, active duty deaths, and recipients of the Purple Heart and valor awards should remain eligible at ANC. It is important to point out that any changes would only affect eligibility at ANC and not the other 136 National Cemeteries and 124 state veteran cemeteries across our nation.
- d. Most respondents support restricting eligibility if expansion opportunities are inadequate (>70% in both surveys).

Recently, Army leadership was charged with prescribing interment criteria that will preserve ANC as an active cemetery for at least the next 150 years (directed in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019). This decision may affect the Veterans or military members that your organization represents.


Included as an attachment to this letter are several items that may be useful to you. You will find a summarized review of the challenge that ANC is facing today, survey results, and some option examples that this advisory committee has considered that enable ANC to remain the active and iconic cemetery that it is today. We trust that you have received, previously, detailed information from ANC regarding the results of the surveys that were provided to the public over the past two years.

If you would like to comment on these issues please do so by mail or email, addressed to the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery, prior to our next meeting which will be in early November 2018. Mr. Tim Keating, Alternate Designated Federal Officer, 1 Memorial Drive, Arlington, VA 22211 or timothy.p.keating.civ@mail.mil) will provide your position to the committee. Your response will enable us to take your position into consideration as we deliberate on this matter.

Very Respectfully Yours,



James Peake
Co-chair
Advisory Committee on
Arlington National Cemetery



Chet Edwards
Co-chair
Advisory Committee on
Arlington National Cemetery