

MINUTES
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY (ACANC)
FULL COMMITTEE MEETING November 2022
7 November 2022

1. DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICER'S REMARKS: Ms. Renea Yates, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery (ACANC), initiating the meeting at 1300, noting that this is both a physical and virtual meeting over two days, 7-8 November 2022. Attendees present included the Executive Director of Army National Military Cemeteries, Ms. Karen Durham-Aguilera; Superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery, Mr. Ray Alexander; and LTC Max Pappas of the Office of Army Cemeteries (OAC). Members of the public attending virtually included: Alexander Adams; John A. Kelley; Kirk D. Lyons; Brian Turner; NDTL; Lt Col (ret) Ed Kennedy; Rene Campos; Hope Seck; Mark Belinsky; Robert Hess; Philip Logan; Meredith; Robert Chapman; H. Edward Phillips; and Lunelle. Present in support were MAJ Petra Papavasileiou, of OAC G5, and Mr. Matthew Davis, Alternate Designated Federal Officer for the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery.

Ms. Yates stated for the record that this Committee meeting is pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2012, codified in 10 U.S.C. § 7723. The Committee operates under the 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). Arlington National Cemetery is the agency that receives the benefit of the Committee's advice and recommendations. ANC provides the Designated Federal Officer, nominated by the Executive Director and appointed by the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army. ANC also provides all administrative support to the committee.

Ms. Yates stated that the meeting was open to the public, and that attending members of the public were not allowed to present questions from the floor or speak to any issue under discussion by the Committee, without prior approval of the Committee chairperson, Mr. James Peake. Any member of the public was eligible to file a written statement or request to make a verbal presentation in accordance with the published Federal Register notice, a copy of which can be found on the ANC website at www.arlingtoncemetery.mil. Ms. Yates also announced that the proceedings were being digitally recorded, and that a written summary of the meeting will be prepared and made available to the public on the ANC website.

Members of the public were asked to ensure that their cameras were inactive, and their microphones muted. The proceedings were being digitally recorded, and a summary in written form will be available to the public on the ANC website. Any disruption or disturbance to the Committee may result in removal.

The Committee was called to order at 1302.

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

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Secretary of the Army nominees: Mr. James Peake (Chair), Mr. Chet Edwards, Mr. Thomas Kelley, Mr. Mark Farley, Ms. Ann Harrell (virtual presence). Not present were Ms. Ann Harrell and Mr. Gene Castagnetti.

Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Nominee: Mr. Gerald Torrence

Secretary of Veterans Administration nominee: Mrs. Rosemary Freitas Williams

3. COMMITTEE CHAIR OPENING REMARKS. Mr. Peake welcomed members and thanked them for attending. He noted that this was the first Advisory Committee meeting since September of 2020. He welcomed 2 new members, Mr. Gerald Torrence, nominated from the American Battle Monuments Commission, and Ms. Rosemary Freitas Williams, nominated from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Peake noted that much had changed during the Covid pandemic, and they had a lot to “catch up” with, including Southern Expansion.

The Committee Co-Chair, Mr. Edwards, acknowledged what a privilege it was to serve with each of the Committee members while working in an open and transparent forum.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS: Ms. Yates reviewed Committee member responsibilities IAW the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, Committee Charter, 38 USC 3409 and 10 USC 7723.

5. ACANC COMMITTEE BRIEFS: The first brief received by the ACANC was a “*Year in Review*” delivered by the Executive Director of Army National Military Cemeteries (ANMC), Ms. Karen Durham-Aguilera.

Ms. Durham-Aguilera provided an update on the mission to serve our Nation's Veterans, which included her role as the HQDA Principal reporting to the Secretary of the Army, and ANC's relationships with HQDA, interagency partners, and civilian stakeholders. Additionally, Ms. Durham-Aguilera relayed responsibilities of the Office of Army Cemeteries and its role in a special project being conducted since 2017 at Carlisle Barracks Pennsylvania (CBPA), involving the disinterment and returning of Native American children interred at CBPA, to the associated tribes. Completing discussion on OAC, Ms. Durham-Aguilera discussed Army Cemetery locations throughout the US.

Ms. Durham-Aguilera switched the focus to Arlington National Cemetery and reviewed ANC's continuing demand for burials, budget, workforce personnel strength, public outreach statistics and percentage of burials by type and level of military funeral honors. Ms. Durham-Aguilera expanded her discussion on military funeral honors and displayed the personnel strength required for each type of military funeral honors offered at ANC. An explanation of the Visitor experience followed, outlining over 3 million visitors each year to ANC, and the multitude of world leader engagements at ANC, Congressional engagements, wreath ceremonies and other similar events. Ms. Durham-Aguilera then discussed efforts involved in maintaining ANC, including major improvements to roads, utilities, Memorial Amphitheater, Memorial Avenue and

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other significant actions. These efforts included work from the horticulturalists, cultural resources team, and staff focused on environmental sustainment efforts. Ms. Durham- Aguilera provide a brief overview of the Southern Expansion project, noting that COL Austin would provide a deep dive into the subject later in the day.

Ms. Durham-Aguilera then provided a brief synopsis of actions conducted by ANC during the COVID pandemic and explained how ANC never stopped operating. Lessons learned by ANC during the COVID pandemic operations were shared with the ACANC, and several members of the ACANC lauded ANC leadership and staff for conduct of operations during this timeframe.

Ms. Durham-Aguilera followed the COVID Operations discussion up with another Special Topic, “Capacity Challenge”. This brief included efforts by ANC that included physical expansion (Millennium and Southern Expansion), and outreach efforts regarding revised eligibility criteria. Discussion centered around diminishing capacity at ANC, availability of capacity at VA cemeteries, and the staffing and status of the Final Rule for Revised Eligibility Criteria. The Committee Co-Chairs noted that the vast majority of the respondents to surveys and public comment participation (over 230k), had the desire to keep ANC open to interments for those with extraordinary military service. Ms Yates then briefed capacity and lifespan of the cemetery with Southern Expansion and Revised Eligibility Criteria as opposed to Current Eligibility Criteria.

Following the “*Year in Review*” brief, COL Tom Austin, Director of Engineering for ANC, provided an overview of the Southern Expansion (SE) Project. COL Austin began by providing an overview of the area where SE is occurring, noting that this is the 5th expansion of the cemetery. The SE project encompasses several areas, including South Parcel, Cemetery Expansion, Air Force Memorial and Defense Access Road Project. COL Austin relayed that SE would provide over 80,000 burial spaces, split into thirds with approx. 1/3 below ground inurnments, 1/3 traditional casketed with preset crypts, and the final 1/3 above ground cremated remains. COL Austin noted that the Air Force Memorial will be the centerpiece, but will be integrated within ANC, however previous events held at the Air Force Memorial will need to be changed to comply with ANC guidelines and hours of operation. Pedestrian access will be available in the Southern Expansion part of the cemetery; however the main access will remain the Memorial Avenue access point.

COL Austin acknowledged that a new Operations Complex for ANC would be built and the existing Operations Complex would transition to burial space. Construction on Southern Expansion began in October of 2021, with construction of the Operations Complex to begin in May or June 2023 timeframe and completed in 2025. Mr. Peake inquired if the new Operations Complex would provide increased capability to ANC, and COL Austin responded that it would have increased vehicle storage, increased supply and material storage, and a dedicated sand-sifter increasing efficiency of ANC operations. COL Austin also noted that there has been a significant increase in the cost estimate since the plan was originally developed because of supply chain shortages and increased inflation. This has resulted in a request for additional funding.

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COL Austin then showed a video with a synopsis of the Southern Expansion and the DAR Project. The video can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzAA8lP5mRA>.

Mr. Edwards asked if there were any type of sound barriers built into the Southern Expansion Project. COL Austin mentioned that because of the view shed associated with ANC, natural resources (trees/shrubs) will be the only noise reduction.

COL Austin then provided a timeline of each phase associated with Southern Expansion. Phase I is the Defense Access Road, Phase II is the South Parcel with Operations Complex, and Phase III is the Cemetery Expansion, with project completion in the Spring of 2028. COL Austin completed his briefing by providing several slides of artist rendering of the completed Southern Expansion project from various viewpoints.

Committee Discussion: Following the brief on Southern Expansion, Mr. Peake discussed the briefings for the following day. Of note, Mr. Peake mentioned the monuments on Chaplains Hill and the proposal from the National Conference on Ministry in the Armed Forces (NCMAF), the Military Women's Memorial name change, and the DoD Naming Commission recommendations. Regarding the DoD Naming Commission actions briefing, Mr. Peake stated that since this was an Information Briefing to the members of the ACANC, the committee would "not be taking outside comments" during or after the presentation. He acknowledged the written statements that were provided to each of the members prior to the meeting, and the ACANC members have all had the chance to read. Mr. Peake also acknowledged the written statements regarding the Final Eligibility Rule and noted that the committee's input has at least been considered and that a decision on the final rule is still pending.

6. MEETING ADJOURNED

Mr. Peake asked if any members had other business for the Committee, or any final comments. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made, seconded and passed.

The meeting adjourned at 1442.



James Peake
Co-Chairman



Thomas C. Edwards
Co-Chairman