

**MINUTES**  
**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY (ACANC)**  
**FULL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**07 December 2023**

**1. DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICER'S REMARKS:** Ms. Renea Yates, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery (ACANC), initiated the meeting at 1300.. Present in support were LTC Petra Papavasileiou of OAC G5, and Mr. Matthew Davis, Program Analyst and Alternate Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery, Ms Karen Durham-Aguilera, Executive Director of Army National Military Cemeteries, Mr, Ray Alexander, Superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery, Mr. Bob Quackenbush, ANC Deputy Chief of Staff and Mr. Neil McIntyre, Director of Interments at Arlington National Cemetery. Member of the public in attendance included Lindsey Rowland.

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.

The DFO 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](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil). Ms. Yates also announced that a written summary of the meeting will be prepared and made available to the public on the ANC website.

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:

Secretary of the Army nominees: Mr. James Peake (Chair), Mr. Chet Edwards (Co-Chair), Mr. Thomas Kelley, Mr. Mark Farley, Ms. Ann Harrell, and Mr. Gene Castagnetti.

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

Secretary of Veterans Affairs nominee: Mrs. Rosemary Williams.

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**3. COMMITTEE CHAIR OPENING REMARKS.** Mr. Peake thanked Ms Yates and thanked the Arlington Staff for the Administrative tour and administrative training earlier in the day. Mr. Peake acknowledged that the cemetery looks wonderful and asked the co-chair, Mr. Edwards for any remarks. Mr. Edwards thanked Mr. Peake and further acknowledged the work by the Arlington staff to ensure that the cemetery looks as good as it did. Mr. Edwards turned the meeting back over to Ms. Yates, who referenced the full agenda for the meeting, beginning with a briefing from the Executive Director, Ms. Karen Durham-Aguilera and the Superintendent, Mr. Ray Alexander on the Year in Review.

**4. ACANC COMMITTEE BRIEFS:**

A. **ANC Year in Review** Ms. Durham-Aguilera began the ANC Year in Review brief by thanking the Advisory Committee for their work and acknowledging the value that they bring to ANC. Ms. Durham-Aguilera's brief began the brief discussing how Arlington is part of the fabric of the nation, showing a quote from the President's Memorial Day address on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Ms Durham-Aguilera then discussed the Vision, Mission, and Priorities of ANC, and how they were nested with the Army priorities of People, Modernization and Readiness. The next slide that Ms Durham-Aguilera discussed were the FY 23 Objectives and the status of each at the end of the FY, noting that all but 2 were completed to at least the 75% level, with several carrying over into the current FY24. Highlights of this slide included improvement of burial accountability across all Army and DoD cemeteries, where Ms Durham-Aguilera responded to Ms Harrell that the Air Force and Navy cemeteries are adopting the Enterprise Interment Scheduling System developed initially by ANC.

Referencing the FY24 Objectives, Mr. Peake asked about the Safety culture and compliance at ANC. Mr. Alexander and Ms Durham-Aguilera noted that they always have safety of the visitors at ANC on their mind, but the objectives noted on this slide are aimed at the safety of the employees at ANC.

Ms Durham-Aguilera then transitioned to a slide titled "relationships" and discussed ANC's relationships with various stakeholders, partners, oversight committees and reporting status to the Secretary of the Army.

At this point, Mr. Alexander briefed a slide titled "FY23 ANC Year in Review", and highlighted the continuing demand, stating that ANC honors 500-600 funeral requests per month, while conducting 25-30 services per day which estimates to roughly 500-600 service per month. Mr. Alexander went on to discuss the overall percentage and different types of funeral services conducted, to include placement only, military funeral honors, dependent honors and military funeral honors with escort. Mr. Alexander noted that in FY23, ANC conducted over 6300 total services with 2896 subsequent interments, and 3392 first interments, with almost 25% casketed remains, 35% above ground cremated remains, and 40% below ground cremated remains. Mr. Alexander stated that casketed remains were down 9% this fiscal year, with this being a national trend towards cremated remains. Mr. Alexander continued to show a map that displayed the people that ANC serves, with 48% of the services coming from the neighboring states of West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Washington D.C, and North Carolina, and 60% of total services when Florida is included. Mr. Alexander discussed the public outreach statistics ANC had for FY23, including 90.4k ANC Explore App downloads, 2 million plus visitors, 838k social media

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followers and 1.2M engagements on social media. Mr. Alexander continued by discussing the budget for ANC, noting that of the \$93M budget, \$68M was for Operations and Maintenance, and \$25M for Infrastructure revitalization. Mr. Alexander commented that the total \$93M budget does not include any dollars received for construction for the southern expansion project.

Mr. Edwards reflected that visitor number pre covid were closer to 3.5 million, and in FY23 there were only 2 million visitors. Both Mr. Alexander and Ms Durham-Aguilera stated that they can't explain the reason why the numbers are down, but that ANC is seeing an uptick in the number of visitors each month, stating that over the Memorial Day observance there were 15,000-20,000 visitors per day.

Mr. Alexander continued his brief by displaying a slide with comparative charts for Fiscal years 2019-2022, noting that total service numbers are back to pre-covid numbers. Additionally, Mr. Alexander displayed a chart reflecting wait times for FY's 2021-2023, with wait times for cremated remains with honors averaging 64 weeks for the Army, Navy and Air Force, while average wait times for placements, casketed remains, and services for the USMC and USCG are less than 5 weeks. Mr. Alexander also noted that services for active-duty members are scheduled as soon as possible.

Mr. Alexander then discussed resource requirements for military funeral honors, stating that the legal requirement is 2 Service members, one of which should be from the service of the deceased. He went on to state that Full Military Funeral Honors at ANC, for most enlisted members, Warrant Officers up to CW3, and company grade officers included a casket team, a firing party and a bugler, while full military funeral honors with escort, for those who are killed in action, were prisoners of war, Medal of Honor recipients, Senior NCOS (E9) and Field Grade Officers, included all of the previous resources plus a marching element and caisson, which could involve 69-100+ military personnel. Mr. Alexander then discussed the suspension of the use of the caisson in FY23 due to the Strangles virus in January/February of 2023, the herd health assessment in May/June of 2023 and the Department of the Army suspension from 17 June 2023 – 30 Jun 2024. Mr. Alexander relayed that the response to this suspension from the primary next of kin's was disappointment, yet understanding. Mr. Alexander noted that the Caparison Horse returned in June 2023, and the rider escort returned in November 2023, with all indications that the caisson would return to ANC no later than June 2024, but cautioned that this is based on the horses' capability.

Mr. Alexander then moved into the external mission of ANC, which is connecting visitors to ANC's history. He briefed a slide that noted the National Observances of Memorial Day and Veterans Day, the Wreaths Across America event at ANC, Congressional engagements, distinguished visitor wreath ceremonies, the education and interpretation plan, including webinars, lectures, display room tours and online educational modules available to the public, as well as the hundreds of engagements per year with media.

At this point, Ms. Durham-Aguilera discussed the public affairs team at ANC, and showed several slides that displayed a snapshot in time of various outreach efforts and coverage of events at ANC. These efforts ranged from public engagements discussing southern expansion, to staff visits from the Washington Nationals professional baseball team to Fall Horticulture tours available to the public. Some of the digital outreach programs highlighted included feature articles on defense.gov and army.mil, with other efforts including the filming of a Reel to promote the JFK 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative walking tour.

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Ms. Durham-Aguilera shifted to infrastructure revitalization at this point, highlighting the constant improvements being conducted, including road improvements, boundary wall repairs, Memorial Amphitheater renovations, utility improvements and upgrades to the Welcome Center.

Ms Durham-Aguilera then passed the brief to Mr. Alexander, who discussed the major engineering project completed in FY23, to include the Ord and Weitzel gate restoration and reconstruction, the Northeast Boundary wall repairs, the Military Women's Memorial Roof repair, the cleaning of the Columbarium court, McPherson Drive full depth reconstruction, and the Custis Walk reconstruction projects. Mr. Alexander then discussed major planned engineering projects for FY24-25, which include the Memorial Avenue Mill and Pave, the Welcome Center elevator replacement, Memorial Ave Pylons and Fountain repair, Patton Drive Mill and Pave, Southern Expansion Phase 1/Defense Access Road, Sheridan Roads full Depth Reconstruction, and Sanitary Sewer Repairs/Replacement projects.

Mr. Alexander briefly discussed the Southern Expansion project, by showing a graphic displaying the proposed and existing land parcel for southern expansion, the estimated increase of 80K+ burial spaces, budget and milestones associated with the project. Mr Alexander noted that the road realignment project is estimated to cost \$74.8M and the total appropriation for Southern Expansion is \$420M. Mr Alexander also stated that Phase 2 of Southern Expansion was the operations complex, and that the contract was awarded in April 2023, with an estimated completion of April 2026, and Phase 3 is the cemetery expansion, with an estimated completion of 2028.

Upon completion from Mr. Alexander, Ms Durham-Aguilera discussed the DoD Naming Commission recommendation and the status of the removal of the Confederate Memorial from Arlington National Cemetery. Ms Durham-Aguilera stated that the plan was to disassemble the memorial, transport to a storage facility, and await final disposition. She displayed a slide with a timeline of past events, including the 19 September 2022 Naming Commission recommendation, the 18 October 2022 SecDef implementation guidance, and the 05 January 2023 DoD commencement of Naming Commission recommendations. Ms Durham-Aguilera noted that the Army has been following the Section 106 Process of the National Historic Preservation Act, and is near completion, adding that the Army has been conducting this process in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, and the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation. She relayed that there have been several public meetings, and that the Army was also in compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act. She relayed that ANC had originally published a notice of intent for an Environmental Impact Statement, but after receiving comments from the scoping meetings, they were able to have enough to be able to change that to an environmental assessment, and a draft finding of no significant impact. She added that those documents were completed and published for public comment on 2 December. Ms Durham-Aguilera added that the Army has a goal, that within 6 months, the Army will develop a recommended plan for final disposition, and continued that it is necessary to have parties offer to the Army, that they would like to be the recipients of the Confederate Memorial in final disposition. She continued that this would be in compliance with the Section 106 process and any requirement therein.

At this point, Ms Durham-Aguilera began to discuss Capacity and Eligibility at Arlington National Cemetery. She displayed a slide that reflected the historical context of ANC in relation to conflicts, eligibility changes, demand, and expansion. This led to a discussion on the staffing timeline of the revised eligibility rule. Ms Durham-Aguilera relayed the history of the proposed

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rule, beginning in May of 2016 with Public Law 114-158 which directed the Secretary of the Army to provide a report to Congress on physical expansion and eligibility criteria options that will extend the life of the cemetery all of the way through the publication of the proposed rule in September of 2020, to the Draft Final rule and its status at the Secretary of Defense.

This concluded the Year in Review brief and Mr. Peake asked the Committee if they had any questions. Mr. Edwards stated that he understood that the Committee was not brought into the decision to remove the Confederate Memorial, but would like to be included, for information purposes and to have the opportunity to provide input, on the way forward and the final disposition of the Confederate Memorial. Ms Yates relayed that the Committee is able to part of the consulting party process for the final disposition. There was much discussion among the Committee members which ultimately led to them agreeing that they would like to keep informed of the status of the Confederate Memorial and plans for final disposition. Hearing no further discussion, Ms Yates announced at this time, prior to moving on to the next agenda items, Ms Karen Durham-Aquilera and Mr. Alexander were departing the advisory committee meeting.

**B. Remember and Explore Subcommittee Update.** Mr. Farley opened the discussion by referencing the subcommittee meeting on October 12, and announcing that the subcommittee is prepared to address the full committee with recommendations on 2 topics; The renaming of Jackson Circle; and the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF) request to update monuments on Chaplains Hill. Mr. Farley identified 3 subcommittee members (Ms. Ann Harrell, Ms Rosemary Williams, and Mr. Gerald Torrence) that were in attendance at the subcommittee meeting and are also members of the full committee and invited them to provide input if so desired. Mr. Farley asked Mr. Davis to display the slides used during the 12 October subcommittee meeting, and informed the full committee that these slides assisted in informing their recommendation to the full committee, as it pertained to the monuments on Chaplains Hill. Mr. Farley provided a brief description of the 4 monuments on what is referred to as Chaplains Hill, and discussed when they were each put in, and who they commemorated at the time of installation. Mr. Farley then displayed a slide and discussed the history of the NCMAF formal request, which was initially received by Arlington National Cemetery on July 28, 2020, with an initial request to replace the concrete marker with a granite marker, and add 25 names of protestant chaplains that have died on active duty since World War II.

Mr. Farley continued to explain the history of the NCMAF request and how it had evolved from the initial request to a broader request to replace the concrete marker of the Protestant Chaplains Memorial with granite; adding the names of 81 Protestant Chaplains who have died on active duty since World War II; and adding a bronze plaque to the Catholic Chaplains Memorial with the names of 31 Catholic Chaplains who have died on active duty.

Mr. Farley briefly described some of the requests for information that the subcommittee was provided answers to over the period they considered the request, including that Army Chaplains are commemorated at Fort Jackson, but no other service commemorates their Chaplains Corps. Mr. Farley relayed to the full committee that the lists of names were validated by each Service.

At this point, Mr. Farley recommended to the full committee that the concrete marker be replaced with granite, and that NCMAF be authorized to add names to both the Protestant Chaplains Memorial, and the Catholic Chaplains Memorial, but only those names that comply

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with 38 United States Code Section 2409 (b) (2) (C) and fall outside of the 25 years outlined in that legislation. Mr. Farley stated that this recommendation was made to stay in line with legislation, and that the subcommittee was aware that the Secretary of the Army had the authority to waive this requirement. At this point, Mr. Farley asked for any input from other members of the subcommittee.

Mr. Torrence commented that he believed that the Advisory Committee had a responsibility to maintain standards and should be very reluctant to recommend lowering the standards set forth in legislation. Mr. Torrence affirmed Mr. Farley's statement that the subcommittee was aware that the Secretary of the Army had the authority to waive the 25-year rule requirement as outlined in 38 USC 2409.

Ms. Williams stated that because this discussion was focused on Arlington National Cemetery, there is a shared responsibility to uphold the guidelines set forth in legislation, and there did not seem to be a serious reason to sidestep or bypass the guidelines.

At this point Mr. Peake asked the full committee if there was any objection to replacing the concrete marker of the Protestant Chaplains Memorial with granite. All members of the committee agreed with this replacement. Mr. Peake then asked, referring to the 25-year rule sticking point, what do we do after the chaplains who died on active duty are deceased for 25 years? Mr. Peake likened the recommendation as a vote for perpetuating a living memorial, because of the nature of the armed forces, it is unfortunately highly likely that future generations of chaplains will die on active duty. Mr. Peake also recollected that the committee had visited the memorials on Chaplains Hill and noted that they were placed commemorating particular points in time.

Mr. Farley responded by informing the full committee that the subcommittee had lengthy conversations on the need to stop continuing to add names to the monument. He relayed a discussion with NCMAF about their leadership signing an agreement that with the addition of the complete list of names in the request, that NCMAF would agree to never add additional names. Mr. Farley relayed that the subcommittee at first agreed with this option, but after further consideration by the subcommittee, realized that leadership would eventually change at NCMAF, additional denominations would wish to be represented on additional memorials along with the possibility of a change in stance.

After continued deliberation amongst the committee members, Mr. Edwards asked if there were other monuments or memorials within ANC that names are added to as the years pass, and if this would be a unique exception from policy of the rest of the cemetery. Ms Yates responded that the monuments on Chaplains Hill are the only ones, since the inception of 38 USC 2409, where something is added to an existing monument or memorial. Mr. Edwards followed up by asking if there are any additional monuments within the cemetery, that honor an organization or group of individuals, that could request to add names. Ms Yates responded that there are over 200 organizational monuments and or tree memorials, such as the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots, that could potentially make a similar request, and follow the same process that NCMAF has followed, but this is these are the only commemorative monuments that have lists of names like this from a broad organization. Continued discussion amongst the committee members followed, with Mr. Farley stating that the subcommittee recommendation was based on how the current statute was written. Mr. Edwards asked to clarify what the law said, and Ms Yates referred to handouts each of the committee members had in front of them, which were 38

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USC 2409, Public Law 117-81 §584, and Public Law 117-263 §593, all of which stated that the Secretary of the Army ‘may’ waive the 25 year rule or ‘may’ permit NCMAF to carry out any action authorized by the statute, without regard to the time limitation under section 2409(b)(2)(C) of Title 38 United States Code.

Additional discussion revolved around honoring chaplains of other faiths that are not represented by the four monuments currently on Chaplains Hill. Mr. Farley stated that there was discussion amongst the subcommittee members that an additional monument may be erected in the future, somewhere other than Arlington National Cemetery, that honors chaplains of all faiths, but that the subcommittee did not want to bring that into the recommendation as it was not relevant to what was being asked currently.

Mr. Peake asked for a vote and a unanimous decision was received to recommend to the Secretary of the Army that NCMAF be authorized to replace the concrete marker of the Protestant Chaplains Memorial with granite, and to add all names that comply with title 38 USC 2409 and time requirement therein to both the Protestant Chaplains Memorial and the Catholic Chaplains Memorial. Mr. Peake then asked if language should be included in the recommendation that this should be the last time that names are added to the monuments. Many members disagreed. Mr. Peake then asked if the Committee should advise the Secretary of the Army on the use of a waiver regarding the 25-year rule. Ms Williams stated that there has not been a precedent in which the waiver has been used, and that there is no practical, historical or principled reason to break from the 25-year standard set forth in the law. Mr. Farley agreed and stated that there have been several instances where people have been recognized or honored, and a few years later something was uncovered. Members agreed with this and Mr. Peake closed the discussion regarding the monuments on Chaplains Hill.

The next item discussed by Mr. Farley was the renaming of Jackson Circle. Mr. Farley displayed slides that the ANC staff briefed the Remember and Explore Subcommittee on during the October Subcommittee meeting. Mr. Farley noted that ANC staff provided guidelines from Army Regulations concerning memorialization and provided a brief explanation on who roads are named after on Arlington National Cemetery currently. Mr. Farley then gave an overview of suggested options provided by the ANC staff, and reasons that the names were provided. Mr. Farley then told the full committee that the Subcommittee recommendation for renaming Jackson Circle were, in order of precedence: 1. Jackson Circle ; 2. Liberty/Freedom Circle; 3. Red Cedar. Mr. Farley mentioned that one subcommittee member had voted for naming the road after SGM Milton Holland, a Medal of Honor Recipient, buried near Section 16. Mr. Farley stated that members of the public had provided many comments that the name of the road surrounding the Confederate Memorial in Section 16 should not be renamed and that there have not been any comments received as to why the name Jackson Circle should be removed.

Mr. Peake thanked Mr. Farley and appreciated the subcommittee perspective but cautioned that the full committee would not perform its duty of advising the Secretary of the Army by stating that the name Jackson Circle should remain, because the removing of the name was dictated by a Congressional action in the form of accepting the recommendations of the DoD Naming Commission. Mr. Peake then reflected on what Arlington stands for and stated that it is about honoring service to the nation, and talked about SGM Milton Holland and everything that he overcame to serve his nation.

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Ms Williams restated the subcommittee opinions on not providing an individual's name to replace "Jackson", but rather an idea or a thought that was unifying. She mentioned that the climate in America is not conducive to replacing one name with another name.

Mr. Peake then asked if there was a preference amongst the Committee members of either using Liberty or Freedom as the unifying recommendation. Six members of the Committee voted for recommending a unifying term, with language in the recommendation such as Liberty or Freedom. Two members abstained from voting for this recommendation (Mr. Mark Farley and Mr. Gerald Torrence).

With this vote complete, Mr. Farley recommended that in the future, it would better serve the full committee if one of the co-chairs (Mr. Peake / Mr. Edwards) were serving as a member of the Remember and Explore Subcommittee. Mr. Peake considered this and Ms Yates informed that there is a process and appointments must be made.

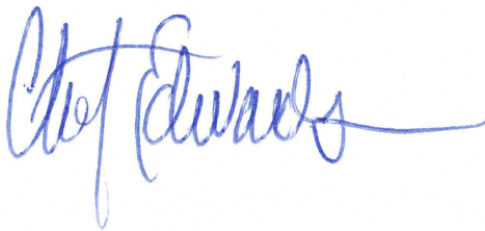
At this point, the meeting was turned over to Ms Yates for any public comments.

**C. Public Comments.** Bishop Derek Jones from the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces addressed the full committee by thanking them for hearing NCMAF's proposal but expressed extreme frustration and displeasure with the process. Bishop Jones mentioned that NCMAF has been attempting to do what is right for the Chaplains Corps, and feels that bureaucrats at Arlington National Cemetery have attempted to derail the process by "changing the rules" and that NCMAF will continue to fight for the addition of all names, and will address congress to develop legislation that is clear and will allow NCMAF to honor all of their Chaplains that have died on active duty.

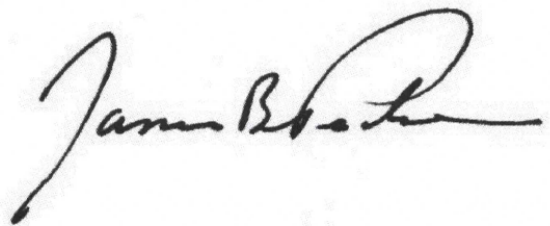
**6. MEETING ADJOURNED**

Mr. Peake thanked Bishop Jones and asked if any members had other business for the Committee, or any final comments. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to adjourn. Multiple members moved to adjourn, speaking simultaneously; multiple members also seconded the motion. Mr. Peake thanked members for all of their hard work.

The meeting adjourned at 1604.



Thomas "Chet" Edwards  
Co- Chair



James Peake  
Co- Chair