

**MINUTES**  
**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY (ACANC)**  
**Full COMMITTEE MEETING March 2023**  
**23 March 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 0800, noting that this is a virtual meeting. Present in support were MAJ 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,

Member of the public attending virtually included: Stewart Schimler; Philip Leigh; David McAllister; Lunelle Siegel; Jack Schewel; Kirk Lyons; John Coffindafer; Garrick Sapp; Martin O'Toole; LTC (Ret) Ed Kennedy; Terry Klima; Bert Jones; Robert Hodge; Dr. John Goddard; Gene Kizer; Walter Kryptavich; Eric Lambeth; William Gantt; Rabbi Eric Wisnia; John Zebelean;

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 co-chairperson, Mr. James Peake. It was noted that 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 highlighted that Committee members were provided the public comments received as a result of the Federal Register Notice and 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.

All guests 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 0901.

**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, Mr. Chet Edwards, Mr. Gene Castagnetti, Mr. Thomas Kelley, Ms. Ann Harrell, Mr. Mark Farley

Secretary of Veterans Affairs nominee: Mrs. Rosemary Freitas Williams.

Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission nominee: Mr. Gerald Torrence

**3. COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR OPENING REMARKS.** Mr. Peake thanked the members for attending and noted that there was a very busy schedule, highlighting the forthcoming presentations from the Veterans Affairs, and time for public comments. Mr. Edwards noted that it was nice to have the Committee and Subcommittee back together doing work.

**4. COMMITTEE BRIEFS:**

A. **Remember and Explore Subcommittee report:** . Mr. Farley updated the ACANC on briefs received during the 15 March subcommittee meeting. These included an update of the Chaplains Hill monuments, and the Section 106 process for removal of the Confederate Memorial, including public comments heard at the subcommittee meeting.

Mr. Farley noted that answers to the RFIs regarding the Chaplains memorials were provided, noting that the only other location that memorialized the names of Chaplains who died on active duty was at Ft. Jackson. Additionally, Mr. Farley reported that 112 additional Chaplains were discovered, that were not on NCMAFs original request to update the monuments. Mr.; Farley noted that the request from NCMAF still remains, to replace the cement monuments with granite, and to add the complete list of names to both the Protestant and Catholic monuments. Mr. Farley relayed concerns, which questioned whether or not there would be future requests to add additional names to the monuments. Mr. Farley answered this concern with a “no”, stating that NCMAF has agreed to sign a memorandum of agreement that no names would be added if the existing request to add names was fulfilled and potential new monument was examined that honors current and future chaplains of all denominations. Mr. Fairly recommended that the ACANC support the replacement of the concrete to granite, but that the ACANC should wait to recommend approval until an additional RFI (how many of the names to be added to the monuments are buried at ANC) was answered.

Mr. Farley then provided an update on the Section 106 process that ANC is currently undergoing for the removal of the Confederate Memorial. Mr. Farley noted that this process will include public consultation to 1. Mitigate adverse effects of the removal of the Confederate Memorial, and 2. Determine the ultimate permanent location of the Confederate Memorial.

Mr. Farley relayed that the subcommittee heard from 27 members of the public that were against the removal of the Confederate Memorial. He noted that themes from these comments included: Calls for the ACANC to recommend to the Secretary of the Army to halt removal; concerns

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regarding destroying history (10 comments); desecration of graves (14 comments); concerns of removal of the architect Moses Ezekiel's grave marker (14); naming commission overstepping their remit (10 comments); attack on southerners and southern heritage (10 comments).

Mr. Farley discussed the passion the members of the public relayed, and a misconception that the Subcommittee had the authority to halt the removal of the Confederate Memorial. Subcommittee recommendations to the ACANC included having ANC maintain a strong Public Affairs posture to educate the public on the process for removal and the way ahead.

This concluded the subcommittee update to the ACANC.

**B. Honor Subcommittee Report:** Mr. Gene Castagnetti updated the ACANC on briefs received by the Honor Subcommittee on 22 March. These topics included the continuing capacity challenge at ANC, as well as the Area development plan concerning the Memorial Avenue Entry Corridor. Mr. Castagnetti noted that the potential exists to increase above ground capacity, in the form of a Columbarium court as part of the improvements briefed to the Honor Subcommittee.

Mr. Castagnetti noted the concerns regarding the view shed but was assured that the iconic view shed would remain intact and the niche walls would be low. Additionally Mr. Castagnetti discussed other recommended improvements within the Area Development plan, including upgrades to both pedestrian and vehicle screening, and improvements to the Welcome Center to enhance the Visitor Experience. Subcommittee recommendations to the ACANC included receiving a brief on how ANC assesses Visitor Experience.

Mr. Castagnetti relayed the status of the Final Rule for eligibility, as it continues to stay in Step 7 of the Federal Rulemaking process.

This concluded the subcommittee update to the ACANC.

**C. National Cemetery Administration Update.** Mr. Glenn Powers (Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations) provided the ACANC an operational overview and update of the Department of Veterans Affairs' National Cemetery Administration (NCA). Mr. Powers started by stating that it is the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of the NCA.

Mr. Powers discussed the NCA mission and priorities of the NCA. Honoring Veterans and their families with final resting places in national shrines that commemorate service and sacrifice to the nation is first and foremost. Mr. Powers stated that the NCA maintains over 4 million graves in 155 National Cemeteries.

Mr. Powers then discussed some of the older history of National Cemeteries, including that 118 national cemeteries were established by 1950, and that no national cemeteries were established between 1951-1975. The National Cemeteries Act of 1973 established that the VA became the

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steward of the National Cemetery System. This act transferred 82 national cemeteries from the Army to the VA.

Mr. Powers discussed collaboration efforts with various external partners, including The Office of Army Cemeteries, the Service Branches, The National Park Service, American Battle Monuments Commission, Defense POW./MIA Accounting Agency, and the National Archives.

Mr. Powers discussed the various designs and styles of National Cemeteries throughout the enterprise. These included flat markers, upright markers and size and geographic location.

Mr. Powers relayed that Funeral Honors at NCA National Cemeteries are required by law, which includes 2 servicemembers, a US Flag and the playing of taps. Additional honors are provided by various volunteer groups throughout the nation.

Eligibility and Scheduling was discussed, to include those who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. The NCA requires 2 years of active duty service, noting the difference of 1 day of active federal service for ANC. Mr. Powers also noted that the NCA has a centralized scheduling office.

Mr. Powers discussed eligibility for various burial and memorial benefits, including upright headstones, niche covers, flat markers, burial flags, Presidential Memorial Certificates, Bronze Medallions, and "In Memory of.." markers, which includes family members.

Mr. Powers discussed the fact that in 2022, the NCA received the highest ranking of any participating public or private organization, for the 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive time.

Mr. Powers briefed that the NCA is expanding access to cemeteries for urban Veterans, and has planned Urban Cemetery expansions for Chicago, IL and Alameda, CA, and they have also expanded access for rural veterans, to include Cedar City, UT and Elko, NV.

Mr. Powers discussed the Veterans Cemetery Grants program. These include 122 state, tribal and territory Veteran cemeteries throughout the nation. Since 1978, Over \$1 Billion in construction grants have been awarded.

Mr. Powers described the NCA's Operational Standards and Measures and how it applies to all cemeteries within the NCA.

Mr. Powers discussed Access, Remembrance and Operations associated with the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

Mr. Powers discussed how 11 Army Post Cemeteries which are not co-located near an active military installation, were transferred to the VA between June 2019-September 2020.

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At this point, Mr. Powers presented Mr James LaPaglia to discuss the Veterans Legacy Memorial. This is an interactive web application launched in 2019 to honor Veterans. The site is fully interactive and allows users to submit content to honor their Veteran. Currently, the site has over 4.5 million veteran pages listed.

Mr. LaPaglia displayed tributes, mementos, biographies and historical documents that users have posted to the VLM site. Mr LaPaglia described that all content is moderated and reviewed before final posting, and is assured that Personal Identifiable Information is not included.

Mr. LaPaglia stated that in May, DoD managed cemeteries will be added, with an estimated 156k more pages. This number includes over 100k from ANC.

Mr. LaPaglia then demonstrated a live use of the VLM website ([vlm.cem.va.gov](http://vlm.cem.va.gov))

At the conclusion of this presentation, the Committee took a 10 minute break.

**D. 3<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Infantry Regiment (TOG) Memorial Affairs:** CPT Luke Boehm of the 3<sup>rd</sup> US Infantry Regiment provided an overview of Memorial Affairs operations conducted by The Old Guard. This included Task Organization, Funeral Types and Personnel Requirements, Readiness, Memorial Affairs Systems and Processes, Daily Battle Rhythm, and Memorial Affairs Risk Briefs.

CPT Boehm described how the Company is organized, to include 3 Casket Teams, 3 Firing Parties, and an Escort Platoon consisting of 126 pax available at 100% strength.

CPT Boehm described the Readiness cycle, which consists of 1 week phases as P (Primary Company), P2 (Back-up Company), C3(Ceremonies and Special Events), T (Tactical training)

CPT Boehm described the Systems and Processes used by the TOG, which includes Risk Briefs, Validation exercises, and working groups.

CPT Boehm described a detailed battle rhythm, which included daily, weekly and monthly events.

This conclude the TOG update to the ACANC.

The Committee thanked CPT Boehm for the brief and were very impressed with the dedication and commitment displayed by the TOG during their training and execution of honoring Veterans.

At this time the Committee paused for lunch for 25 minutes.

**E. Burial Exceptions to Policy:** Upon the completion of lunch, Mr. Neil McIntyre (Director of Interments), presented a briefing regarding Burial Exceptions to Policy.

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Mr. McIntyre began his briefing by providing authoritative references regarding Exceptions to Burial Policy (32 CFR Part B, Section 553.22 and SECARMY Memo: Updated Procedures for Considering Exceptions to Interment and Inurnment Eligibility at Arlington National Cemetery)

Mr. McIntyre clarified that eligibility at ANC is first characterized by Honorable military service, Exceptions to Policy (ETP) are considered only at time of need, necessary documentation must be provided, and Disapprovals are reconsidered only upon receipt of new/substantive information.

Mr. McIntyre described the process of ETPs, which flows from Superintendent recommendation to the Executive Director. He stated that the Executive Director may approve/disapprove an ETP for a same grave exception. The SECARMY will act on all ETPs that involve a new grave exception.

Mr. McIntyre then provided examples of common characteristics for both Same Grave Exceptions and New Grave Exceptions.

Mr. McIntyre provided some statistics on Same Grave Exceptions for the last 4 years. During this timeframe, most of the Same Grave Exceptions were approved.

Mr. McIntyre then transitioned to statistics on New Grave Exceptions, and since 2019, out of 21 total New Grave Exceptions to policy requests, none have been approved.

At this time, Mr. Peake noted the SECARMY ability to make an exception, but asked about the President of the United States' ability to make an exception. Mr. McIntyre responded that there are 2 instances where the POTUS had approved an exception and has reserved interment space for both Dr. Henry Kissinger and Dr. Robert Gates.

Mr. Buller (General Counsel), clarified that the most recent example of a Presidential exception was for Martin Ginsburg (husband of Associate Justice Ruth Ginsburg), and former CPT in the US Army, was eligible for above ground inurnment. President Obama approved an exception for him to receive below ground interment.

This concluded Mr. McIntyres presentation.

F. **Public Comments.** Ms Yates began this section with administrative comments by opening the floor for 60 minutes, and stated that she would call on members of the public in the order that the requests were received. The following members of the public were called upon and made comments against the removal of the Confederate Memorial.

Stewart Schimler; Philip Leigh; David McAllister; Lunelle Siegel; Jack Schewel; Kirk Lyons; John Coffindafer; Garrick Sapp; Martin O'Toole; LTC (Ret) Ed Kennedy; Terry Klima; Bert Jones; Robert Hodge; Dr. John Goddard; Gene Kizer; Walter Kryptovich; Eric Lambeth; William Gantt; Rabbi Eric Wisnia; John Zebelean;

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Upon the completion of the comments from the public, Mr. Peake thanked all of those that provided public comments and requested from Ms Yates an update on the status of the Section 106 process.

Ms Yates provided an overview of the DoD Naming Commission recommendations to Congress, the 90 day waiting period in which it became law, and the subsequent SECDEF directive to remove the Confederate Memorial.

The Committee was provided the language from the DoD Naming Commission recommendation to Congress and discussion revolved around the process in which the Naming Commission finalized their recommendation.

Discussion continued on several options for ACANC to consider, including inviting members of the Naming Commission to attend the next ACANC meeting to explain their process, and for the ACANC to provide a recommendation to the Secretary of the Army.

Discussion continued on the historic nature of the Confederate Memorial and how it came to be referred to as the "Reconciliation Memorial". The National Register of Historic Places application for the ANC Historic District was displayed, and speeches during commemoration were discussed.

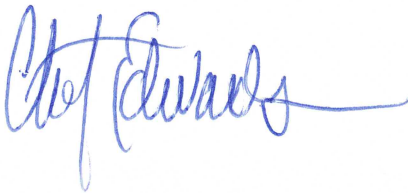
It was noted that the DoD Naming Commission did not conduct public meetings regarding the disposition of the Confederate Memorial.

At this time, discussion centered on scheduling of the next meeting.

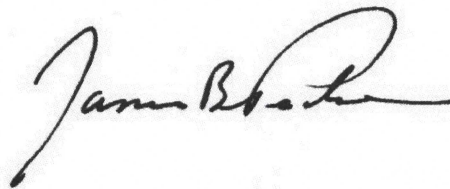
**5. MEETING ADJOURNED**

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. Multiple members moved to adjourn, multiple members also seconded the motion. Mr. Peake thanked all members for all of their hard work.

The meeting adjourned at 1545.



Thomas "Chet" Edwards  
Co- Chair



James Peake  
Co- Chair