

**MINUTES**  
**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY (ACANC)**  
**FULL COMMITTEE MEETING 29 February 2024**

**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 0900, noting that this is a virtual meeting. 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, and Mr. Bob Quackenbush, ANC Deputy Chief of Staff. Members of the public attending included: Jinny Widowski, Teri Suoki, Julie Hardaway, Susan McRobie, Norma Suoki, Lunelle Siegel, Ann McLean, Laura Rogers, Jenifer Van Vleck, and Philip Andrew Hamilton.

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. 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 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 0902.

**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. Mark Farley, Ms. Ann Harrell, Mr. Gene Castagnetti

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

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

Mr. Tom Kelley was not present.

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**3. COMMITTEE CHAIR OPENING REMARKS.** Mr. Peake welcomed members and acknowledged that it would be an informative meeting, with important topics to be discussed.

The Committee Co-Chair, Mr. Edwards, thanked the staff for everything that they have completed to make the meetings possible, and acknowledged the incredible work by all.

**4. ACANC COMMITTEE BRIEFS:**

A. **Confederate Memorial Removal.** The first information brief received by the ACANC was the Confederate Memorial Removal. Ms. Caitlin Smith, the Cultural Resources Program Officer for Arlington National Cemetery, provided an in-depth information brief on activities conducted to remove the Confederate Memorial Bronze elements, as directed by law, prior to 01 January 2024. Began her brief by providing an overview of the project, stating that the description of the project was to remove the Confederate Memorial bronze elements in Arlington National Cemetery. She reminded the ACANC that the naming Commission, established by Congress, recommended the removal of the bronze elements of the monument, leaving the granite pedestal in place. Those Naming Commission recommendations became law in 2022. Ms Smith told the ACANC that there are no remains under the memorial. She also explained that the remains of those buried near or in the section were protected throughout the removal process. Ms Smith stated that ANC was mandated to comply with the law by 01 January 2024, and that the removal occurred from 17 December – 22 December 2023.

Ms Smith then displayed a series of slides, beginning with a slide titled Day 1, Sunday December 17. Ms Smith outlined actions taken on Day 1, including contractors arriving on site, equipment mobilized, to include the crane, aerial manlift, telehandler forklift, ground protection mats, and crating materials. Ms Smith explained that construction fencing was installed around Section 16, and a Hi-Vis barrier was installed around the government markers, while ANC Interment Operations temporarily removed the private markers and installed temporary markers.

Ms. Smith continued with her presentation with Day 2, Monday December 18, by stating that contracted carpenters continued to construct crates for storage and transporting the memorial, while 3 bolts were removed from the base of the top sculptural element. Ms Smith then explained that high wind gusts stopped further disassembly work on Day 2.

Ms. Smith continued onto Day 3, Tuesday December 19, revealing that as disassembly was paused due to weather and litigation delays, carpenters continued crate construction, portable mast light towers were installed, and Conservators and Architectural Historians continued to document the existing condition of the bronze sculpture.

Ms Smith explained that on Day 4, Wednesday, December 20, the bronze elements began to be rigged for removal via crane. She further explained that the removal was done carefully and guided with taglines by riggers on the ground. Additionally, Ms Smith explained that an architectural historian marked each bronze element interior with a number and attached an ID tag, documented the condition of the bronze element and completed the inventory form. Each

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bolt was collected and documented, and each bronze element was individually secured in the crates with nylon rigging straps, metal bolts and polyethylene foam. Ms Smith continued by explaining that after the bronze statue was removed from the top of the sculpture, the architectural historians were able to document the interior existing conditions, including the internal structure and connections. She noted that several of the internal supporting beams were rusted and failing. Ms Smith explained that after the bronze statue was removed, the pedestal of cinerary urns was removed and crated, and then what was described as Bronze Element ANC-04, which consisted of the wreath plinth, the biblical circle inscription, and frieze of shields, was removed and crated. Ms Smith explained that then the Figural frieze was removed and crated, as well as 3 steel I-beams. Ms Smith at this time noted that the bronze sculpture had become a self supporting, load bearing structure with the steel beams so deteriorated that they were no longer able to carry and distribute the bronze load.

Ms Smith continued that on Day 5, Thursday 21 December, documentation and crate building continued, along with the removal of the 8 bronze pieces resting directly on the granite base. She explained that all crates were then loaded onto flatbed trailers, secured and staged for delivery the next morning.

On Day 6, Friday December 22, Ms Smith stated that the Confederate Memorial sculptural elements were delivered to a federally owned storage facility. She further noted that the crates were inspected by the Army Corps of Engineers and transfer documents were signed. Additionally, she explained that all equipment was removed from the project site, and the ANC staff inspected, cleaned and secured the granite base.

Finally, Ms. Smith discussed the next steps, which included the Granite Base Protection Project. She noted that in compliance with with the Programmatic Agreement (PA) between ANC, the Virginia SHPO, and the ACHP, ANC evaluated the condition of the granite base and provided recommendations for short and long-term preservation of the granite. She explained that the condition of the granite base, upon inspection, was filled in the center with a rough, uneven concrete fill, with steel I-beams embedded in the concrete surface, which were cut off near the base. Ms Smith explained that the ANC staff implemented short term preservation treatments, including documenting the as-found condition; sifting through debris for potential historic properties or unanticipated effects. She also stated that the ANC staff cleared the debris, cleaned the surface, and documented conditions. Ms Smith also stated that due to safety hazards, the ANC Staff temporarily fenced and screened the area immediately around the base, and covered the protruding i-beam bases with buckets and covered the entire surface with heavy duty polyethylene tarps. Ms Smith explained that long term efforts to preserve the base included creating a weather resistant, smooth surface at the top of the base to shed water and prevent water intrusion. Additionally, she explained that the ANC staff would clean the base, document the condition, cut the concrete below the granite surface, fill all voids, and pour a new smooth layer of concrete (slightly domed to shed water), and provide a sealant joint at the perimeter as a barrier between the concrete and granite surfaces. Finally, she explained that after the concrete was cured, the ANC staff would remove the fencing and document the final conditions.

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After Ms Smith concluded her briefing, several Committee members asked questions, including if any memorabilia boxes were found. Ms Smith replied that there was a protocol in place in case any were encountered, but none were encountered during the removal process. Ms Williams asked about the general condition of the statue, to which Ms Smith responded that the overall condition of the statue was good, but there was some deflection due to the corrosive support beams. Mr. Farley asked if any new information about the memorial was learned in the process, and Ms Smith replied that much information was gained about the initial construction and assembly of the memorial. Mr Castagnetti asked about the future of the base, and Ms Smith responded that the Programmatic agreement was in place, and consulting parties would be contacted about the future interpretation. Mr Edwards then asked if the Memorial could be reassembled, and Ms Smith replied that reassembly is possible. Mr. Castagnetti followed up this question and asked if reassembly was possible at ANC, to which Ms Smith replied that it would take Congressional action to reassemble the Memorial at ANC.

**B. ANC Digital Engagement Strategy.** Mr. Tim Lawson, Digital Media Chief from the ANC Public Affairs office then briefed the Committee on the digital media engagement at ANC. Mr. Lawson began his briefing with a video from the Arlington National Cemetery Youtube channel, which highlighted British Field Marshall John Dill, his memorial statue at ANC, and an assassination attempt on President Truman on the day of the commemoration of the statue, which resulted in the only secret service agent to be fatally wounded (Leslie Coffelt) during an assassination attempt and be buried at ANC are connected. Mr Lawson stated that he chose this video as an example of the unique storytelling that his team tries to share to the public, through the lens of Arlington National Cemetery.

Mr. Lawson continued his brief, by sharing the organization of the digital media team, which consists of the Digital Media Chief, Public Affairs Specialists, a contract Photographer, and contract videographer, and Technical Writers (contract historians). Mr Lawson then went on to explain the digital media platforms that ANC uses, which include a Facebook site with 671k followers used for long-form storytelling, and Instagram page with 105k followers used for visual storytelling and bite-sized content , an X (formerly twitter) page with 63.8k followers used for operational/real time messaging, a Linkedin site with 2k followers used for posting job vacancies and professional development, a youtube site with 7.83k subscribers used for Video Storytelling, and a Flickr site with almost 18k photos used for photo sharing for the general public.

Mr Lawson then went on to describe the content of what ANC shares. He described the content with themes such as Honor and Remember, so that our Veterans stories are not forgotten; History, which describes the various people, places and moments which are stories associated with those that are buried at ANC; ANC News and Information, which include the various activities for visitors to participate; Project Updates which inform the public of the status of major projects such as Southern Expansion; Storytelling/Human Interest Features which feature highlights and linkages to those buried at ANC, or work at ANC such as the Tomb Sentinels; and Command Information and Safety Messaging.

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After describing the content, Mr. Lawson noted the various audiences that the content is tailored to, including military service members, veterans and retirees, veteran and military service organizations, family pass holders, educators and influencers, physical visitors and tourists, virtual visitors, neighborhood partners, congress, and other content creators.

Mr. Lawson continued by describing the content that drives future engagements includes content revolving around Honor and Service, Cemetery vistas, unique and compelling stories, major events and ceremonies, and hot topics. Additionally, Mr. Lawson described measuring success in digital media by measuring total engagements, followers and reach. He noted that in 2023, ANC had a total of 2.5k posts across Facebook, Instagram and X, which caused 1.4M combined engagements, increased followers by 844k, a 4.3% increase, and had a reach of 189.85M people.

Mr. Lawson finished his brief by explaining the ANC digital media planning efforts, which are targeted digital campaigns tied to the ANC Education and Outreach program, email marketing through GovDelivery, continued thematic campaigns, interactive content, and continued partnerships with the Army's Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other federal agencies.

Following Mr. Lawson's brief, Mr Edwards asked about the use of Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality. Mr. Lawson responded that both of these are in the conversation, and the ANC team is determining how it would be appropriate and stated that it is a valuable concept and is ultimately inevitable. Ms Williams then discussed the messaging for Memorial Day and Veterans Day events at ANC and commended the staff for their success. Mr. Lawson thanked the committee and reminded them that one of the most important things that his team does is determine how they message, and defining what they want to tell and what they have to tell and deciding if the most appropriate means is via long form or short form storytelling.

**C. ANC Fiscal Year 2024 Objective Status.** MAJ Andrew Clark began the final information brief to the Committee, which was ANC Strategy and Objective assessment for FY 24. MAJ Clark initiated the brief by orienting the Committee to the Office of Army Cemeteries and Army National Military Cemeteries 2023-2027 Strategy document. He stated that this was the overarching big-picture document that explained the future progress of ANC. Next, MAJ Clark displayed the FY24 Objectives, and explained how they were nested within the aforementioned strategy document, as well as with the Army Priorities of People, Modernization and Readiness.

MAJ Clark continued and discussed how the process of assessing progress in accomplishing the objectives were defined. This included gathering input from the ANC Staff, proposing metrics to measure the progress annually. MAJ Clark noted that this assessment is refined each quarter, and briefed to the ANC Executive Director and Superintendent each quarter. He cautioned that this assessment is a snapshot in time, and noted that some tasks require multiple quarters to complete, and that this was the staff's best estimate based on available data. MAJ Clark then discussed and displayed a random selection of objectives and current status as of the end of 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, FY 24. These included Objective 1.1 – Improve prescheduling communication and reduce prescheduling wait times; Objective 1.2 – Acquire talent through marketing, recruiting,

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and reducing time to hire while preserving quality of hires; Objective 2.4 – Revise and Publish AR 290-5 (Army Cemeteries) IAW HQDA Policy; Objective 3.1 – Sustain and improve burial accountability across all Army and DoD Cemeteries; Objective 3.2 – Maximize current burial capacity in conjunction with the ANC Burial Management Plan.

The Committee was very interested in the process of assessments, and was looking forward to seeing the progress in future quarters. Mr. Farley asked about compliance, and if there was an office that was tasked with assurance. MAJ Clark mentioned that the Office of Army Cemeteries conducts various quality assurance visits to all of the Army Cemeteries, including Staff Assistance Visits and Inspection Programs.

**D. Public Comments.** Upon the conclusion of the information briefs, Ms Yates informed the Committee Chairs that several members of the public were present and had asked to provide verbal comments. The Committee chairs acknowledged the request, and asked Ms Yates to call forward those who wished to address the Committee.

Ms Yates called up first Ms. Lunelle Siegl. Ms Siegel provided concerns over the removal of the Confederate Memorial, the process with which it was removed, including potential damage incurred to the surrounding gravesites, and water intrusion in the granite base which could lead to further damage. Ms Siegel also had concerns that there was antisemitism involved with the decision to remove the Confederate Memorial. Finally, Ms Siegel stated that she would like the committee to consider hybrid (virtual) meetings in the future.

Ms Yates called up the next member of the public, Ms Laura Rogers. Ms Rogers identified herself as a daughter of a veteran buried at ANC, and was dismayed with the removal of the Confederate Memorial and the process in which it was removed. Ms Rogers commented that the removal of the memorial destroyed the viewshed of ANC. She stated that it was a very emotional event to see the memorial being “torn down” and had concerns over the potential damage caused by the crane to the grass and surrounding area. She stated that the site of the Confederate Memorial was once a site of optimism, identifying it as a reconciliation memorial, but now the site has been desecrated and that nothing good has come out of its removal.

The next member of the public to called was Ms Julie Hardaway. Ms Hardaway identified herself as the Vice President of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Ms Hardaway began her comments by stating that it was ironic that in an earlier brief, that ANC wanted to use memorials to tell stories, but the Confederate Memorial was deconstructed. She went on to explain how a visitor saw the monument, and how it spoke to that individual and helped them through a difficult period, but how shameful it is that the confederate memorial is no longer there. Ms Hardaway stated that it should be considered mistreatment of the confederates.

Ms Yates called up Jinny Widowski next. Ms Widowski identified herself as the President General of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and stated that the donor intent of the memorial was one of unity. She further stated that the message of unity is endangered. She pleaded for a voice in the process, and holds history in the monument. She does not feel like any of their voices are being heard as the donors, and claims that there is no healing, just division by

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removing the memorial. Ms Widowski was very emotional during her response and claims that the USC has ledgers and origination documents about the Memorial. Mr Edwards addressed Ms Widowski and told her that she has every right to contact Congress to have their voice heard.

The next member of the public was Philip Hamilton, who identified himself as a member of the Virginia Council and descendent of George Washington. Mr. Hamilton expressed that he is proud of his heritage, and that everyone must remember our history. He compared the current destruction of history to that of Communist China. Mr Hamilton also reminded the committee that members of the Confederacy also fought in the Spanish-American war, and hopes that a new Presidential administration would return the Confederate Memorial back to ANC.

Dr. Ann McLean was the final member of the public to speak. She identified herself as an historian, member of the Virginia Council, and artist and a sculptor. She referred to ANC as an outdoor museum, and claimed that a cultural revolution is at hand, with the removal of the Confederate Memorial a result. Dr McLean stated that reconciliation was most important, and that the memorial stood for reconciliation, and hopes that it is restored at ANC. Dr McLean stated that she hopes that the ACANC uses its leverage to restore the memorial.

All of the members of the Committee thanked the public for providing their comments.

**E. Committee Discussion.** The Committee members discussed the information briefings that were provided earlier. Several of the members commented on the Confederate Memorial removal, and how Historians plans should focus on how history isn't lost, with consideration of interpretation in light of current events.

All of the members agreed that ANC should continue to leverage digital media in their outreach efforts and applauded the job that the ANC public affairs team has done to date.

Regarding FY 24 objectives status, Mr. Peake was pleased to see the metrics approach to assessments and all were interested in seeing more assessments in future meetings.

After a discussion about future topics, the Committee would like to have information on the following:

Caisson status update; Collaborative efforts between the NCA, ABMC and ANC; Details and trends on visitors; information on visitor feedback; information on the call center experience for members of the public; road naming for southern expansion; biofilm/appearance and care of the TUS; master planning efforts of the cemetery; vision of ANC in 2040 / Southern Expansion update for gravesite availability; Revised Eligibility Criteria status

The Committee then transitioned and discussed availability for the next meeting. 20 August was decided.

**5. MEETING ADJOURNED**

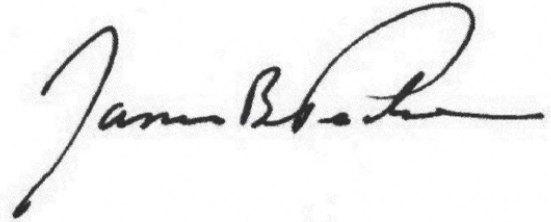
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Mr. Peake asked if any members had other business for the Committee, or any final comments. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made, seconded and passed. Mr. Peake thanked members for all of their hard work.

The meeting adjourned at 1158.



Thomas "Chet" Edwards  
Co- Chair



James Peake  
Co- Chair