

**RECORD VERSION**

**STATEMENT BY**

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**BEFORE THE**

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND  
RELATED AGENCIES  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

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**ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY:  
CURRENT OPERATIONS AND FUTURE PLANS TO HONOR THE FALLEN**

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COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Schatz, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on Arlington National Cemetery. Arlington National Cemetery is a unique and iconic place devoted to honoring those individuals in the armed services who made a significant commitment of service to the defense of our nation. Today, the cemetery conducts between 27 and 30 funeral services each weekday and approximately 10 services on Saturday. In fiscal year 2016, Arlington National Cemetery served more than 7,100 active duty service members, veterans and their family members. We work diligently to maintain the honor and dignity of each graveside service. Arlington National Cemetery also annually hosts approximately 4 million guests, bringing the sacrifices of those buried at Arlington National Cemetery closer to the American people. On behalf of the cemetery and the Department of the Army, I express our appreciation to our citizens and for the support provided by Congress over these many years.

### **THE STATE OF ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY**

Arlington National Cemetery's enduring mission is to provide a dignified and honorable final resting place for active duty service members, eligible veterans, and their families. Our daily mission is threefold: to lay to rest – on behalf of the American people - those who have served our nation while treating their surviving families with respect and compassion; to connect our guests to the rich tapestry of the cemetery's living history; and to maintain these hallowed grounds befitting the sacrifice of those who rest here in quiet repose. We envision a future Arlington National Cemetery that continues to honor a commitment to service well beyond the next few decades; the Army recognizes that the nation is at a critical point in the cemetery's history. As of today, the cemetery cannot achieve that future without physical expansions and/or changes to eligibility. Current

projections show Arlington National Cemetery will reach maximum capacity in the early 2040s. This means that a veteran from the 1991 Gulf War who lives to his or her normal life expectancy will not have the choice to be interred at Arlington.

## **MASTER PLANNING AND SOUTHERN EXPANSION**

The Army remains committed to maintaining Arlington National Cemetery as the nation's premier military cemetery and national shrine in perpetuity. We are also committed to actively serving and honoring our nation's veterans and their families for as long as possible. The Secretary of the Army's recent report to Congress discusses how spatial constraints limit the life of Arlington as an active cemetery and discusses the difficult topics of eligibility and expansion.

In terms of operational expansion, the Millennium Project adds nearly 28 thousand burial opportunities, bringing Arlington National Cemetery's projected capacity for first interments to 2041. The project remains within budget and though the bulk of the construction is complete, significant landscaping elements remain to ensure the look and feel are on par with the remainder of the cemetery. We expect to start using this site in the August 2017 timeframe.

The second major expansion opportunity, the Southern Expansion project, continues to move through the planning stage, which formally began in 2014. Initial planning led to the development of a Defense Access Road project to realign Columbia Pike and increase the contiguous land for the Cemetery. The Defense Access Road project was funded in 2016, with Federal Highways Administration supporting these efforts, and project planning continues to move forward in close coordination with Arlington County and the Virginia Department of Transportation. We will continue to engage the County and Commonwealth of Virginia regarding the land acquisitions needed for these projects to proceed.

The environmental assessment for the Defense Access Road project as well as the Southern Expansion project, required under the National Environmental Policy Act, has been drafted and initially reviewed by the agencies participating in these two projects. Based on the outcome of the land acquisition discussions, the environmental assessment will be finalized and released for public comment. Organizations participating in the National Environmental Protection Act process include the Federal Highway Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, Arlington County, the Virginia Department of Transportation and the National Capital Planning Commission. Based on current projects timelines, we do not anticipate this parcel of land being ready for burials before 2023. Initial planning estimates for the project indicate that with the current eligibility criteria, the Southern Expansion project would provide Arlington National Cemetery first interment capacity until the early 2050s.

In addition to expansion projects, Arlington National Cemetery continues to make progress modernizing much of its infrastructure. Significant problems with waterlines have been reduced dramatically, and the worst storm water lines have been repaired or replaced. We have rebuilt the roads that were in the worst condition. Electrical utilities have been privatized to reduce long-term cost, and significant portions of that infrastructure replaced with more dependable and resilient systems. Much of our office space has been renovated or will be in the coming years to provide a safer and more effective work environment. Our investment in operational requirements, to include needed improvements of queuing facilities for funeral processions and material storage and handling facilities supporting cemetery operations, will ensure a high level of service for all who come to Arlington. The construction of the new Tomb of Remembrance, due to be put into service this spring, provides our nation a dignified place for the final disposition of cremated remains that may be comingled or unidentified.

Though the worst of the prior infrastructure problems have been or are being solved, we continue to develop and implement an adaptable capital investment strategy to ensure previously neglected infrastructure does again not reach the prior state of

disrepair. For example, the sanitary sewer lines, which had not previously needed a major overhaul, experienced multiple breaks in the last year leading to facility closures and damages. We reprioritized these projects so we could accomplish these critical repairs. These instances illustrate Arlington National Cemetery's need for our continued monitoring and investment to assure our ability to address infrastructure deficiencies.

In support of improving the infrastructure, we have initiated the process of reviewing and revising our Master Plan. The last version of the Arlington National Cemetery Master Plan was completed in 2013, with some minor revisions in 2014. In addition to the traditional infrastructure and land use aspects of the Master Plan, we will focus on the infrastructure needed to support our enhanced security requirements. We must balance the obligation we have to support our veterans and visitors along with our duty to keep them safe while they are here at Arlington National Cemetery. We expect to conduct the next phase of the Master Plan and have a draft document ready in late 2017 for review and coordination with stakeholder agencies to include the National Park Service, National Capitol Planning Commission, and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts who share an interest in Arlington National Cemetery's future.

## **ENHANCING SECURITY MEASURES**

The Army and ANC take family, visitor, and employee safety very seriously. In response to a 2015 U.S. Northern Command directive, Arlington National Cemetery implemented enhanced visitor screening measures in a deliberate and phased approach to minimize inconvenience to those entering the cemetery. We work closely with our partners at Joint Base Myer - Henderson Hall, who have the responsibility for law enforcement and security on Arlington National Cemetery. We initiated a robust public information campaign ahead of implementing these security measures. As part of this campaign we held town hall style meetings with local and regional tour professionals, sent information to various family and veteran service organizations, and engaged with various media outlets to ensure the widest dissemination of the changes and the timelines for

these measures.

This phased implementation was a collaborative Army solution to meet the larger intent of U.S. Northern Command executed in keeping with the national shrine that is Arlington National Cemetery. All the security measures acting together, to include visitor screening and driver's license checks are designed to create a more secure environment versus relying solely on one means. The enhanced screening was implemented during a period of low visitation in order to ensure the policies and practices were well vetted before our season of significant visitation and funeral activity. We have monitored the implementation closely and are constantly making improvements to ensure we maintain an environment that both enhances security while minimizing the impact on the visitor experience.

## **RESOURCE AND BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS**

Arlington National Cemetery's budget consists of funding for categories of: Infrastructure Modernization; Plan and Design; and Operations and Maintenance. The Infrastructure Modernization funding appears adequate to continue our efforts to repair aging roads, utilities, buildings and develop a sustainment program. The Plan and Design funding appears adequate to continue developing plans for the proposed Southern Expansion project. Arlington National Cemetery's Operations and Maintenance budget is capped by the Bi-Partisan Budget Act and Budget Control Act at Fiscal Year 2011 levels. Arlington National Cemetery cannot continue to absorb civilian pay increases, annual contract inflation, and implement must-fund new requirements such as the new security measures. In the past, we used hire lag to cover increases in civilian pay and contract inflation, as well as emerging, minor requirements. We have increased our hiring over the past two years to achieve authorized end strength levels needed to accommodate the sustained demand for veterans' services; we no longer have flexibility to absorb these increased Operations and Maintenance costs and will need your support for the resources requested in our budget to address this capability gap.

Since Arlington National Cemetery's Operations and Maintenance budget was capped at Fiscal Year 2011 levels, Arlington National Cemetery has absorbed five civilian pay increases totaling \$1.3 million and contract inflation costs of \$2.9 million associated with our 28 annual contracts that we rely upon to maintain the Cemetery to National Shrine standards. In addition, Arlington National Cemetery has funded these newly imposed requirements associated with the U.S. Northern Command and Army mandated enhanced security with a contract costing \$3.5 million annually and will fund \$200,000 cost increases to annual contracts required when the new Millennium expansion site is put into service.

Arlington National Cemetery currently has 173 civilians on board with 27 hiring actions at the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center that are exempt from the hiring freeze; this will bring our personnel fill to essentially 100% of current authorizations. We have an additional 17 positions the Army acknowledges are required to sustain the demand for services. Most of these positions are in the Cemetery Representative workforce and in the Information Technology field. We have used Operations and Maintenance funds in the past to augment these sections with over hires, but lack available funds to sustain this practice.

## **FUTURE OF THE CEMETERY**

Arlington National Cemetery is proud to honor our country's rich history and the generations of men and women willing to sacrifice their lives in defense of our nation. During its 152 year history, nearly 400,000 people have been honorably interred or inurned at the cemetery, including heroes from every major U.S. conflict. As the steward of this national shrine, the Army is committed to maintaining Arlington National Cemetery as an active cemetery and extending its legacy for as long as possible. Unfortunately, without changes to the current footprint and/or eligibility policies, Arlington National Cemetery will not be a burial option for most service members who served in the Gulf

War – or any conflict since – regardless of their contribution, achievements, fame, or valor. Extending Arlington National Cemetery as an active cemetery well into the future requires decisions and adequate resourcing. As discussed in the Secretary of the Army's recent report to Congress, key options to consider include redefining eligibility criteria for interment and inurnment, considerations for additional expansion opportunities beyond current boundaries of the Cemetery and evaluating alternative ideas for maximizing the current space within the Cemetery's geographic footprint. The Army anticipates a robust and candid dialogue with stakeholders as we move forward, working together, to achieve a long future that continues to honor our nation's cherished defenders.

## **CONCLUSION**

Enabled by the support of Congress and through the diligent efforts by the Arlington National Cemetery staff, the Army will continue to sustain the sacred trust of the American people. We look forward to working with Congress, the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery, military service organizations, veteran service organizations, and the American public on defining the future of Arlington National Cemetery as we review eligibility criteria, expanding beyond our current borders and other solutions to ensure the cemetery remains an active burial place for our nation's heroes for generations to come. The Army's recent report to Congress identifies all factors, including detailed cost estimates that would need to be evaluated in considering extending Arlington National Cemetery beyond the "early 2050s". The Administration looks forward to working with the Congress to address these difficult issues.