

**Chairman Jerry Moran Opening Statement  
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction,  
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies**

**Hearing titled “Arlington National Cemetery: Current Operations  
and Future Plans to Honor the Fallen”**

**March 29, 2017**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

Good afternoon. What an honor it is to be here at Arlington National Cemetery to hold my first appropriations hearing as chairman of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee. Thank you to Ms. Karen Durham-Aguilera, Executive Director of Army National Military Cemeteries, and Ms. Katherine Kelley, Superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery, for hosting us today.

Arlington is one of our most important American treasures. This is a wonderful place to come and learn about our American history, traditions, and customs. We can never forget, however, that this is also an active cemetery; that has been its primary purpose for more than 150 years. This is a place for families and friends, for mourning and grieving and remembrance. It is sacred space.

The cemetery has come a long way over the last several years. You have spent tremendous time and energy upgrading and repairing infrastructure and IT systems; reorganizing and restructuring maintenance; improving security and pedestrian flow around the campus. You have made this place more accessible and welcoming to all who visit. You and your teams have accomplished a great deal in a short amount of time. I thank you for your hard work.

While the past is important, we also want to consider the future of the cemetery. As chairman, I welcome the great responsibility of helping preserve and protect Arlington, and ensuring – for as long as possible – this ground is open and active for the burial and inurnment of those who have served us all – our American heroes.

I know there are issues: land issues, budget issues, space issues to work through. I look forward to discussing those today, and I look forward to working with you closely to ensure the perpetual success of this hallowed ground.

I'd like to share with you a hymn about our brave men and women, such as those honored here at the cemetery, entitled, “Mansions of the Lord.” I first heard this hymn powerfully performed by the U.S. Armed Forces Chorus when I attended President Reagan’s memorial service at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

To fallen soldiers let us sing  
Where no rockets fly nor bullets wing  
Our broken brothers let us bring  
To the mansions of the Lord

No more bleeding, no more fight  
No prayers pleading through the night  
Just divine embrace, eternal light  
In the mansions of the Lord  
Where no mothers cry and no children weep  
We will stand and guard though the angels sleep  
Through the ages safely keep  
The mansions of the Lord

In honoring Arlington – this mansion of the Lord – we honor our service men and women who made great sacrifices for our country. Our work today will ensure these heroes and their families continue to receive the support and respect they well deserve.

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