

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

**MS. KATHRYN A. CONDON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ARMY NATIONAL CEMETERIES PROGRAM**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
AND THE
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OF THE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

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Introduction

Chairmen Wilson and Wittman and Ranking Members Davis and Cooper and distinguished Members, thank you for the opportunity to appear before these subcommittees to provide an update on the progress we have made at Arlington National Cemetery. As reported in my latest monthly update to the Chairmen and ranking members, you know firsthand that we are on our way to regaining and maintaining accountability at Arlington.

We have achieved this level of progress in large part through our concerted focus on establishing repeatable standards, measures and operating procedures that emphasize safety, proficiency, professionalism and accountability. Since assuming leadership at Arlington National Cemetery in June 2010, the cemetery superintendent, Mr. Patrick Hallinan, and I have concentrated on re-organizing, re-training and re-tooling the organization.

Over the past 20 months we have made tremendous progress across all areas of cemetery operations. We have executed in-depth reviews in gravesite accountability and fiscal stewardship. We developed a strategic plan to achieve my vision, modernize operations and infrastructure, and prioritize information technology investments for the future. We have invested in our workforce.

We are well on our way to achieving our vision for the Army National Cemeteries Program: America's premier military cemeteries, National Shrines, Living History of Freedom, and where dignity and honor rest in solemn repose.

Accountability

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to report that we have fully complied with Public Law 111-339 to provide an accounting of the gravesites at Arlington. In addition, we also have made tremendous progress to correct the deficiencies identified, rather than only creating a plan of action as the legislation stipulated. We examined each of the baseline 259,978 gravesites, niches and markers in the Cemetery; gathered and consolidated 147 years of records created from log book entries, paper-based records of interment; and computerized burial records by placing them in a modern system designed for accounting. After completing more thorough research on the 47,304 remaining cases, we will merge all burial information into a single, authoritative database maintained in accordance with Department of the Army standards.

To address the requirements of the Law, the Army assembled a team of 194 Soldiers and civilians into a Gravesite Accountability Task Force. The Accountability Task Force counted and photographed every grave marker, niche and memorial marker, associated each photo with existing Cemetery records and confirmed the accuracy of all the associated information.

Arlington's history spans much of the country's history—reflecting the wars, slavery, the Great Depression, varying cultural standards, and evolving cemetery

practices and record keeping of the time. Validating some records required significant research. Some of Arlington's burial records only exist in Civil-War era log books. From records, for instance, we learned that many more spouses were laid to rest at Arlington than previously thought, since during the Great Depression often only the veteran was depicted on the headstone. Still other burial records do not exist at all, with the headstone photos taken by the Accountability Task Force being the only information documenting the interment. This includes those slaves and freed slaves -- "Citizens" and "Civilians" -- who lived on the grounds in Freedman's Village during and after the Civil War. In some cases, burial record keeping mistakes were compounded over an extended period as headstone marking and burial practices evolved.

With tremendous support from Congress and the Army, we are well on our way to completing our plan to achieve full accountability to include resolution of all discovered discrepancies. Since our December 22nd submission of the "Gravesite Accountability Study Findings" to Congress, we have continued with determination to resolve all open cases as rapidly as possible in accordance with repeatable and auditable processes we developed as part of the effort. As of January 31, 2012, we have closed 16,926 additional cases since the submission of the report, bringing the total of closed gravesite cases to 212,674 or 82% of the 259,978 total cases.

Considering even the recent history of the Cemetery, it is important to note that we may discover interment or other discrepancies in the future that are not apparent from our completed analysis. If discovered, such errors will be

immediately reported to the Secretary of the Army, the appropriate Congressional Committees and, with close consultation of next of kin, resolved as quickly as possible. Importantly, we are implementing industry best practices and developing standards and measures, policies, technology and training to institutionalize repeatable practices with predictable results.

We have a far better understanding of the Cemetery's records and history than ever before, and we have preserved it electronically. The end result will enable us to serve the needs of families and the American public by properly honoring and preserving the legacy of the fallen heroes laid to rest at Arlington.

Every veteran's family is unique. We want all the families with whom we engage—whether the day of the funeral service or as we correct historical discrepancies—to recognize that our core mission is to Honor the Fallen.

Fiscal Stewardship

Practicing sound fiscal stewardship and displaying transparency in Arlington's operations is paramount in our effort to restore the faith and trust in Arlington National Cemetery.

I continue to implement standard Army financial management controls. On October 1, 2010, Arlington transitioned to the Army's General Fund Enterprise Business System (GFEBS). This system enables Arlington and the Army to have complete visibility of the cemetery's financial transactions.

As part of the new financial management controls and oversight process, my resource managers meticulously reviewed years of financial records and recovered funds that, in past years, were sent to Department of Defense agencies that support the Cemetery. The Army Audit Agency (AAA), Department of the Army Inspector General (DAIG), and Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports provided snapshots in time of our recovery efforts. As of this testimony, we have recovered \$26,763,199.69 from prior fiscal years that was obligated but not disbursed, and we continue to examine our prior year commitments and recover unliquidated obligations. Table 1 reflects financial recoveries Arlington recouped after the reconciliation of prior year financial transactions.

Fiscal Year	Amount Recovered from Prior Fiscal Years	Amount Re-Obligated (Spent)	Remaining Amount Available for Obligation (Available to Spend)
2004	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 25,071.41	\$ 24,928.59
2005	\$ 52,760.09	\$ 25,484.76	\$ 27,275.33
2006	\$ 126,514.04	\$ 125,932.00	\$ 582.04
2007	\$ 350,455.57	\$ 328,753.46	\$ 21,702.11
2008	\$ 1,770,860.31	\$ 1,642,223.41	\$ 128,636.90
2009	\$ 12,611,519.99	\$ 12,348,758.22	\$ 262,761.77
2010	\$ 11,801,089.69	\$ 9,993,373.26	\$ 1,807,716.43
Total	\$ 26,763,199.69	\$ 24,489,596.52	\$ 2,273,603.17

Table 1

As I stated at previous Congressional hearings, we have worked diligently to modernize cemetery operations, address years of facility maintenance and repair backlogs, address Information Technology (IT) security vulnerabilities and conduct necessary IT system upgrades. Table 2 below provides a detailed breakdown of projects that are addressing these operational shortfalls and would not have been possible without the recovery of these funds.

Project	Amount
Columbarium Court 9	\$15,190,026.00
Visitor Center Roof Repair	\$89,274.00
Memorial Amphitheater Generator	\$2,600.00
Millennium Archaeological & NEPA Section 106 Study	\$85,000.00
Replace PCB Transformer in Admin Bldg	\$1,613,890.00
Design and replace HVAC in Admin Bldg and Visitor Center	\$315,300.00
Millennium Project Design Charrette	\$136,000.00
ANC Memorial Amphitheater Road Repair	\$67,000.00
Facilities Maintenance Complex Completion	\$764,700.00
Replace Flagstone sidewalk Memorial Amphitheater	\$1,012,000.00
Study to Repair/Replace Eternal Flame	\$50,000.00
Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Study & Repair	\$25,000.00
Information Technology System Upgrades and Support	\$2,033,163.49
Burial Operations Equipment	\$1,690,476.52
Urn Liners	\$170,000.00
Service Support (GFEBS, Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan)	\$500,116.51
Grounds Maintenance Bridge Contract	\$745,050.00
Total	\$24,489,596.52

Table 2

The Army National Cemeteries Program Campaign Plan

I am proud of what we have accomplished since June 2010 to bring all aspects of the Army National Cemeteries Program (ANCP) in line with the rich, proud and dignified traditions befitting our Nation’s military heroes. The ANCP Campaign Plan is the vehicle I am using to ensure we achieve the future vision of the ANCP. It incorporates the ANCP’s major missions for our veterans and the Nation, as well as the significant guidance, support and recommendations we have received from the Secretary of the Army, the AAA, DAIG, GAO, the Northern Virginia Technology Council, and distinguished members of the Congress. Based on my guidance, my staff identified and I approved their priority tasks to achieve the ANCP vision. All come with measurable metrics and milestones and are

based on prioritized resources. Through updates to myself and the Superintendent, we will ensure this is more than just a document. The Campaign Plan is how we manage strategic changes and incorporate lessons learned across the organization.

The Campaign Plan helps identify risk and prioritization of our resources—our people, money and time. You in Congress, the Army and the Nation have been extremely generous in helping the ANCP remain a place where our country can Honor, Remember and Explore our military veterans' sacrifices. We will not assume risk with honoring our fallen and maintaining accountability of their burials. The ANCP requires significant resources to fix decades of uncompleted basic maintenance and repair. The Campaign Plan allows me to provide written guidance on how we will prioritize resources across the organization into the future.

The Campaign Plan also helps show the interdependence of my directorates' and the workforce's efforts. We are one-ten thousandth of the Army: one weak link can cause catastrophic failure; one strong link has far-reaching effects. The Campaign Plan provides specific priorities to the directorates, and it helps the leaders and workforce understand the larger context of their efforts. It also establishes very clear and measurable standards and milestones, to which we are holding them accountable.

Operations at ANCP

The backbone of the Strategic Campaign Plan are our five strategic lines of effort that, when executed with proficiency, will ensure the cemetery appropriately honors the veterans laid to rest here on a daily basis in the near term while effectively planning for future cemetery operations. Those key efforts include: 1) Honor the Fallen through burials, 2) Maintain the Hallowed Grounds of the Cemeteries, 3) Uphold the Faith and Confidence of the American People, including through accountable record keeping and public outreach, 4) Prepare ANCP for beyond 2025 and 5) Synchronize ANCP Activities across all other lines of effort.

Among those strategic efforts, I would like to emphasize Arlington's primary mission: Honor the Fallen through all aspects of dignified burial services for veterans and their eligible dependents.

A key first step in improving this process was the implementation of the call center. When we assumed leadership, more than 75% of the calls to Arlington – from simple questions to burial requests – went unanswered. By standing up the Consolidated Call Center in December 2010 in partnership with the U.S. Army Information Technology Agency, we now answer every call. Today calls are answered by a trained call center representative. Each call is assigned a unique case number and 80% of concerns are addressed immediately. The remaining cases are passed to appropriate cemetery officials for action and tracked in our case management system with reportable metrics.

The Superintendent implemented a formal chain of custody process to

maintain positive, verifiable control of remains throughout the interment or inurnment process. As an additional quality control measure, we require funeral home representatives to formally transfer remains to the custody of a Cemetery representative. Funeral directors must include their license number and signature when transferring remains for burial services. Families which hand-carry cremated remains must provide a certificate of cremation when they arrive. Today we have an auditable chain of custody process in place.

Numbering and cataloging concrete liners also represents an important advancement in our burial operating procedures. The liners protect urns and prevent inadvertent removal of an urn from a gravesite, eliminating the potential disassociation of remains from their assigned resting place.

No matter how thorough and well-thought-out procedures are, it is difficult to expect or realize true long-term success unless personnel are trained appropriately. To that end, as detailed within our Campaign Plan, we are investing in our workforce. We are codifying standards and measures across the organization. We have formally trained one-third of our workforce to their functional industry standards across the lines of cemetery operations. Intensive training represents one way we are re-building the work force and instilling pride, *esprit-de-corps* and advanced competencies. This includes partnering with organizations such as the Department of Veterans Affairs and private industry to train our equipment operators and cemetery personnel. Supervisors are now held accountable for their actions and that of workers for whom they are responsible. Recognizing the unique needs of our Cemetery, we are providing our staff with the

skills to remain resilient and provide compassionate care for grieving families.

To ensure we are meeting our goals and objectives, we are also instituting organizational review measures to help hold ourselves accountable. This entails establishing internal inspection teams to conduct periodic self-analyses. This capability enables the ANCP to evaluate and implement self-correcting measures.

In the field we also are pursuing a “softer footprint” by using smaller and terrain-appropriate equipment that allows our operators to minimize disruption of the surrounding landscape. Having the right equipment, standards, training, supervision and inspections will ensure our workforce maintains the Cemeteries at national shrine standards while being more efficient and environmentally responsible in the process.

In order to fully realize my vision, the ANCP requires significant investment in repairing and maintaining its infrastructure. We have had near catastrophic failure in critical support systems. Our planned investments institute a lifecycle maintenance program that ensures the life, health and safety of our workforce, grieving families and visiting dignitaries and tourists.

Technology at ANCP

Leveraging technology to enhance operations, increase oversight and improve our outreach remains a critical focus of the Army National Cemeteries Program. In order to optimize our business processes we are creating the strategic framework for developing and deploying technology throughout the

ANCP. This Enterprise Architecture (EA), included within and complementary to the Campaign Plan, serves as the blueprint to ensure our IT investments are effectively and efficiently meeting the needs of the organization well into the future.

In line with the EA and Campaign Plan, we have digitized the Army National Cemeteries to make us among the most technologically advanced cemeteries in the United States. When combined with our dedicated workforce, technology has enabled us to make progress towards regaining accountability much more rapidly. For instance, The Third U.S. Infantry, The Old Guard based at Joint Base Myer Henderson Hall, Virginia, supported the Gravesite Accountability Task Force (GATF) by photographing every Arlington grave, niche and memorial marker using smart phone technology. The Army-designed iPhone application allowed GATF members on the ground to e-mail immediately the memorial pictures with GPS location to a central repository. This process is now instituted by our current workforce. The data was validated the following morning for quality and accuracy and then linked digitally with existing burial records and supporting information that other members of the Task Force would then review. This data serves as the foundation of the single database from which the Cemetery will soon manage all of its operations digitally.

In addition to the call center, meaningful changes have been made through technology in order to better serve our families. Arlington's new web site is a platform for information and outreach to families. The website provides a searchable index of scheduled services by name and date. The Arlington National Cemetery's Administrative Guide to Information and Burial is also available on the

web site to assist families in understanding eligibility requirements. The new “Headstone Formatting” application enables families to review and approve an inscription design for their loved one’s headstone or niche cover on-line prior to the burial service. This is one less activity the family has to complete when they arrive at Arlington for their loved ones’ service. “Headstone Formatting” is in use on a test basis now.

In partnership with the Army, we are developing a geospatial information system (GIS), which will enhance internal operations and visitors’ experiences at the cemetery and produce the first comprehensive digital map of all gravesites. This effort will allow cemetery scheduling representatives to automate the assigning of gravesites on digitized maps. This system also will present real-time, GPS-verified information to equipment operators to allow validation of excavation sites prior to their beginning work on the Cemetery grounds. In addition to supporting internal operations, within months this effort will produce a publically available web based application, smart phone application, and kiosks located throughout the grounds. This GIS application will enable the public to locate gravesites in the Cemetery, acquire directions to the gravesite, and view the grave marker remotely.

The enterprise architecture will allow us to continue to invest in appropriate technology to create end-to-end processes supporting cemeteries’ operations and activities. As a result of introducing precision into the process, we will ensure continued accountability of Arlington’s burials and records for future generations.

Army National Cemeteries Advisory Commission

While we have implemented meaningful changes at Arlington, the Army welcomes open engagements on methods for improving its processes further. The newly-formed Federal Advisory Commission, the Army National Cemetery Advisory Commission, held its inaugural meeting December 1, 2011. In line with the Secretary of the Army's request and the Commission Charter, the Commission will provide the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Army recommendations regarding: 1) extending the life of active burials and inurnments at Arlington National Cemetery, 2) addressing the cracks in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Monument; and 3) capturing and conveying the Army National Cemeteries' history, including the long-term implications of the ANC Section 60 mementos and improving the visitor experience. The ANCP is truly honored to have the depth and breadth of experience and expertise of our distinguished commission members, each volunteering his or her time to ensure the Army National Cemeteries remain the nation's premier military cemeteries. The next planned meeting of this Commission is early March 2012.

Conclusion

Our obligation to our military heroes, their families and the Nation is to remain America's premier military cemetery where dignity and honor rest in solemn repose. There is still much work to be done, and our Strategic Campaign Plan maps out that effort. Now that we have provided an accounting of the

gravesites at Arlington and have in place systems for maintaining accountability of our gravesites and practicing sound fiscal stewardship, it is important that all aspects of the Army National Cemeteries Program benefit from this structured approach. As we maintain the pace of 27 to 30 services every week day – and six (6) to eight (8) non-honors services on Saturdays – we are optimistic about the future of Arlington. We look forward to working alongside our many partners to continue meeting the needs of our veterans and the American public well into the future.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to appear before you.