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**Department of Veterans Affairs  
National Cemetery Administration**

**Report to Congress on the Establishment of Additional  
National Cemeteries**

**Annual Status Report**

As Required by the Veterans Millennium Health Care and  
Benefits Act, Public Law 106-117 and the National  
Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, Public Law 108-109

May 2007

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**Status of New Cemetery Development**  
**Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act, Public Law 106-117**

Establishment of a national cemetery includes these major processes:

<b>Major Process</b>	<b>Atlanta/ Georgia National Cemetery</b>	<b>Detroit/ Great Lakes National Cemetery</b>	<b>Miami/ South Florida National Cemetery</b>	<b>Oklahoma/ Ft. Sill National Cemetery</b>	<b>Pittsburgh/ National Cemetery of the Alleghenies</b>	<b>Sacramento/ Sacramento Valley VA National Cemetery</b>
Potential Sites Identified (within the primary 75- mile service radius)	<b>Completed Mar 2000</b>	<b>Completed Mar 2001</b>	<b>Completed Apr 2000</b>	<b>Completed Apr 1996</b>	<b>Completed Oct 2000</b>	<b>Completed Oct 2000</b>
National Environmental Policy Act Compliance	<b>Completed Dec 2000</b>	<b>Completed Jan 2002</b>	<b>Completed Feb 2002</b>	<b>Completed Sep 1996</b>	<b>Completed Sep 2001</b>	<b>Completed Sep 2002</b>
Final Site Selected	<b>Completed Dec 2000</b>	<b>Completed Apr 2002</b>	<b>Completed Apr 2002</b>	<b>Completed Feb 1997</b>	<b>Completed Mar 2002</b>	<b>Completed Oct 2002</b>
Land Acquisition	<b>Completed Apr 2001</b>	<b>Completed Sep 2002</b>	<b>Completed Aug 2002</b>	<b>Completed May 1998</b>	<b>Completed Mar 2003</b>	<b>Completed Jul 2004</b>
Master Planning & Design Development Contract Award	<b>Completed Mar 2002</b>	<b>Completed Nov 2002</b>	<b>Completed Jul 2003</b>	<b>Completed Oct 2000</b>	<b>Completed May 2002</b>	<b>Completed Oct 2004</b>
Phase 1 Construction Documents Preparation Contract Award	<b>Completed Mar 2003</b>	<b>Completed Nov 2003</b>	<b>Completed Nov 2004</b>	<b>Completed Jul 2001</b>	<b>Completed Aug 2004</b>	<b>Completed Sep 2005</b>
Phase 1 Construction Contract Award	<b>Completed Dec 2004</b>	<b>Completed Sep 2004</b>	<b>Completed Jun 2006</b>	<b>Completed Mar 2002</b>	<b>Completed Oct 2004</b>	<b>Completed Feb 2006</b>
First Interment	<b>Apr 2006</b>	<b>Oct 2005</b>	<b>Apr 2007</b>	<b>Sep 2001</b>	<b>Aug 2005</b>	<b>Oct 2006</b>
Phase 1 Construction Completion	Estimate Dec 2007	<b>Completed Dec 2006</b>	Estimate Sept 2009	<b>Completed May 2004</b>	Estimate July 2008	Estimate Sept 2009

Note: Letters in **BOLD** indicate that the major process has been completed.

**Status of New Cemetery Development  
Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act, Public Law 106-117**

**SITE: Georgia National Cemetery (Atlanta, GA)**

**PAST ACTIVITY:**

In July 2000, the Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs toured the top 4 of 12 recommended sites and met with Senator Max Cleland, Congressman Bob Barr, and State Director of Veterans Affairs Pete Wheeler. On July 12, 2000, the Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs identified a Cherokee County location as the preferred site. The late Mr. Scott Hudgens, a World War II veteran, had offered to donate approximately 775 acres. The firms of URS Corporation (architect-engineering firm), Greiner, Woodward, and Clyde conducted the environmental assessment (EA) process and the final report concluded with a "Finding of No Significant Impact" on the environment.

On April 3, 2001, members of Congress, members of the Hudgens family, and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs attended a ceremony to mark the Hudgens family's land donation to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). An award of a contract for Master Planning was made on March 27, 2002, to Rochester & Associates of Atlanta. The master plan concept for the layout of the cemetery was completed in March 2003. Cherokee County constructed an access road to the new cemetery site with VA contributing \$1.4 million towards road construction. On March 1, 2004, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced that the name of the Atlanta area cemetery would be Georgia National Cemetery. Construction Documents for Phase 1 have been developed and the construction contract was awarded in December 2004.

**CURRENT ACTIVITY:**

The construction contractor has performed extremely well. Phase 1A was completed in April 2006. The cemetery opened for burials on April 24, 2006.

**NEXT STEPS:**

Construction is scheduled for completion in December 2007; however, due to the contractor's performance, completion as early as July 2007 is possible.

**BUDGET:**

The FY 2000 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$125,000 for the site selection and EA processes.

The FY 2001 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$3 million for advance planning and design development of a new national cemetery.

The FY 2002 VA, HUD & independent agencies' appropriation included \$28.2 million for construction.

Advance Planning Fund obligations to date are \$1,419,000.

NCA estimates the total cost of the project will not exceed the appropriation. If it becomes apparent that additional funding will be required NCA will notify Congress as soon as possible.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:**

None

## **SITE: Great Lakes National Cemetery (Detroit, MI)**

### **PAST ACTIVITY:**

Representatives of the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) actively worked with the Michigan Veterans Affairs Directorate, area real estate agents, and the Veterans Benefits Administration's (VBA) Loan Guaranty officials at the VA Regional Office in Detroit in 2001 to identify eight potential sites suitable for a new national cemetery. Evaluation of the sites resulted in the selection of four "best sites." The preferred site was selected and the EA completed in December 2001. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs approved selection of a 554-acre site in Oakland County, Michigan, on April 23, 2002. A purchase price of \$6,156,000 was negotiated with the owners and land acquisition was completed on September 13, 2002. The Architect-Engineering firm URS Corporation of Farmington Hills, MI was awarded the contract for the Master Plan and Design Development on November 21, 2002. The Design Documents were completed and the Construction Document contract was awarded on November 17, 2003. On March 1, 2004, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced that the Detroit area cemetery would be named Great Lakes National Cemetery. The Construction Contract was awarded in September 2004.

### **CURRENT ACTIVITY:**

Burials began on October 17, 2005. Substantial construction and beneficial occupancy for this initial phase of development occurred in December 2006, with punch list items remaining until weather permits (May 2007).

### **NEXT STEPS:**

The contract for Phase 1B Design Documents and Construction Documents was completed in December 2006. Construction is projected for completion in February 2009.

### **BUDGET:**

In FY 2000, the VA made \$125,000 available for the site selection and the EA processes.

The FY 2001 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$500,000 for advance planning of a new national cemetery.

The FY 2002 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$18 million for the purchase of land for new cemeteries in the vicinity of Detroit, Michigan; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Sacramento, California.

The FY 2003 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$1.7 million for design of a new national cemetery and preparation of construction documents.

The FY 2004 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$8.7 million for construction.

Advance Planning Fund obligations to date are \$2,296,000.

NCA estimates the total cost of the project will not exceed the appropriation. If it becomes apparent that additional funding will be required NCA will notify Congress as soon as possible.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:**

None

## **SITE: South Florida VA National Cemetery (Miami, FL)**

### **PAST ACTIVITY:**

Representatives of NCA and the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs visited 11 prospective sites in south Florida and developed a recommendation of “top sites” for further consideration. The Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs and the Director, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, visited the top three sites in August 2000. The two top sites in Palm Beach County were selected. In October 2000, the firm of URS Corporation, Greiner, Woodward, and Clyde began the EA on each of the sites to assess the impact of developing the land for use as a cemetery. Subsequently, the owner of one site removed it from consideration. The EA continued with the remaining location. The EA consultant identified two factors that required further investigation. Realizing the negative potential of these findings, NCA directed the EA consultant to expand their review to the two additional sites that had been identified during the initial site evaluation visits.

The EA was completed and the period for public comment closed in mid-January 2002. Following the Secretary’s selection of the preferred site in West Palm Beach County, a purchase price of \$11,250,000 was negotiated with the owners, and acquisition of the 313-acre property was completed on August 6, 2002. The Architect-Engineering firm, Miller Legg & Associates of Pembroke Pines, FL was hired in July 2003 to perform the master plan and design work. This included preparation of a design for a Fast Track development. On March 14, 2006, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced that the Miami area cemetery would be named South Florida VA National Cemetery.

### **CURRENT ACTIVITY:**

May 2006 - The contract for preparation of construction documents for Phase 1B was awarded with a projected June 2007 completion.

June 2006 - Phase 1A (Fast Track) construction award, based upon “best value”, which includes review of the contractor’s technical qualifications and experience, as well as price, was awarded (\$7,195,000) to A<sup>2</sup> Group, Inc., of Miami with a March 2007 estimated completion.

The cemetery opened for burials April 16, 2007.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

March 2007 – Projected contract award to install 3,000 pre-placed full-casket burial crypts to augment the Fast Track gravesite inventory.

September 2007 – Projected contract award for Phase 1B construction. Construction is scheduled to begin in October 2007 with a projected completion of September 2009.

**BUDGET:**

The FY 2000 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$125,000 for the site selection and EA processes.

The FY 2001 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$500,000 for advance planning of a new national cemetery and \$15 million for land acquisition.

The FY 2002 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$2 million for design of a new national cemetery.

The FY 2003 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$23.1 million for construction of a new national cemetery.

Advance Planning Fund obligations to date are \$1,056,000.

VA is currently reviewing unexpected cost escalation factors associated with this project (e.g., longer permit review timeframes, unexpected environmental mitigation costs). We anticipate construction documents for this project will be completed within the next 60 days. At that time, VA will have the most accurate and latest cost estimate prior to bidding.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:**

The first burials and cemetery opening occurred Monday, April 16, 2007. Formal dedication ceremony is planned at a later date.

**SITE: Ft. Sill National Cemetery (Oklahoma City, OK)**

**PAST ACTIVITY:**

Four hundred acres were acquired from the Department of Army. The Master Plan was completed in October 2000 and construction documents in July 2001. A "fast track" burial section for interments prior to completion of all construction activities at the new Ft. Sill National Cemetery was completed and a Dedication Ceremony was held in November 2001. The Phase 1 construction contract was awarded on March 13, 2002. The Phase 1 construction contract was completed on May 18, 2004.

**CURRENT ACTIVITY:**

NA

**NEXT STEPS:**

NA

**BUDGET:**

The FY 2001 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$12 million for construction. All Phase I development costs are fully funded. Total project cost, \$11,122,000.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:**

None

## **SITE: National Cemetery of the Alleghenies (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)**

### **PAST ACTIVITY:**

The Pennsylvania State Legislature established a Cemetery Site Selection Committee to serve as a primary evaluation mechanism for locating sites and scheduling site visits. NCA staff visited Pittsburgh during June 2000 to meet with the State's Cemetery Site Selection Committee. NCA staff toured 11 proposed sites.

In October 2000, the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs toured the three top sites. Based upon these visits, the Under Secretary identified the Morgan Farms site, 15 miles southwest of Pittsburgh, as the most desirable and feasible location. The Morgan Farms location was also the preferred site named in the Cemetery Site Selection Committee's report that was submitted to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. A contract for an EA of the Morgan Farms site was awarded in December 2000 and the final report was completed in September 2001. A contract for master planning was awarded in May 2002. Purchase of the first of two parcels was completed in December 2002 for \$2,310,000. The purchase of the second parcel was completed in March 2003 for \$1,761,700. The combined acreage of both properties is 275 acres. Marshall-Tyler-Rausch of Pittsburgh completed the cemetery master plan and design documents.

An error by Washington County resulted in a question about ownership that in 2005 has been resolved in VA's favor.

On November 29, 2004, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced that the Pittsburgh area cemetery would be named National Cemetery of the Alleghenies. Fast Track construction was completed and burials began on August 15, 2005.

### **CURRENT ACTIVITY:**

July 2006 - Phase 1B construction contract (\$13,219,000) was awarded to Burchick Construction Company of Pittsburgh, PA with a projected July 2008 completion.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

Completion of construction is projected for August 2008.

### **BUDGET:**

The FY 2000 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$125,000 for the site selection and EA processes.

The FY 2001 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$1 million for advance planning of a new national cemetery.

The FY 2002 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$18 million to be available for the purchase of land for new cemeteries in the vicinity of Detroit, Michigan; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Sacramento, California.

Advance Planning Fund obligations to date are \$1,004,000.

NCA estimates the total cost of the project will not exceed the appropriation. If it becomes apparent that additional funding will be required NCA will notify Congress as soon as possible.

The FY 2003 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$16.3 million for construction of a new national cemetery.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:**

None

## **SITE: Sacramento Valley VA National Cemetery (Sacramento, California )**

### **PAST ACTIVITY:**

NCA officials worked closely with representatives of the California Department of Veterans Affairs and local realtors to identify suitable locations for consideration as a new national cemetery. A joint VA/State site evaluation team visited nine sites in the Sacramento area during October 2000. Several potential cemetery sites were identified and the best three were chosen for evaluation in the EA. A 1,133-acre tract in Solano County, known as the Hayman site, was designated as the preferred alternative. The EA was completed and resulted in A Finding of No Significant Impact. The EA was made available to the public on August 16, 2002, and the 30-day public comment period ended on September 16, 2002. Comments received were overwhelmingly in favor of the cemetery. NCA and the Hayman site property owner obtained independent appraisals and negotiated the terms for the sale of the property. A boundary survey delineated 561 acres for purchase. Acquisition of the property was completed in July 2004. Master planning and documents for construction of the Fast Track development were completed in September 2005. The Fast Track construction contract was awarded in February 2006 (\$3,439,195) and completed September 27, 2006.

### **CURRENT ACTIVITY:**

September 2006 - The Phase 1B construction document contract was awarded with a projected March 2007 completion. Phase 1B will complete the 10-year burial capacity and construct support buildings and infrastructure.

October 16, 2006 – Cemetery opened for interments

April 22, 2007 – Cemetery dedication.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

September 2007 – Projected award of Phase 1B construction contract, with anticipated completion in September 2009.

### **BUDGET:**

The FY 2000 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$125,000 for the site selection and EA processes.

The FY 2001 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$500,000 for advance planning of a new national cemetery.

The FY 2002 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$18 million to be available for the purchase of land for new cemeteries in the vicinity of Detroit, Michigan; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Sacramento, California.

The FY 2003 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$1.7 million for design of a new national cemetery and preparation of construction documents.

The FY 2005 VA, HUD, and independent agencies' appropriation included \$21.4 million for construction of a new national cemetery.

Advance Planning Fund obligations to date are \$1,898,000.

VA is currently reviewing unexpected cost escalation factors associated with this project (e.g., unprecedented increases in the cost of petroleum based materials). We anticipate construction document for this project will be completed within the next 60 days. At that time, VA will have the most accurate and latest cost estimate prior to bidding.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:**

None

**Status of New Cemetery Development  
National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, Public Law 108-109**

Establishment of a national cemetery includes these major processes:

<b>Major Process</b>	<b>Bakersfield</b>	<b>Birmingham</b>	<b>Columbia/ Greenville</b>	<b>Jacksonville</b>	<b>Southeastern Pennsylvania</b>	<b>Sarasota</b>
Potential Sites Identified (within the primary 75-mile service radius)	<b>Completed Dec 2004</b>	<b>Completed Dec 2004</b>	<b>Completed Jan 2005</b>	<b>Completed Mar 2005</b>	<b>Completed Apr 2004</b>	<b>Completed Dec 2004</b>
National Environmental Policy Act Compliance	<b>Completed Mar 2006</b>	<b>Completed July 2006</b>	<b>Completed Mar 2006</b>	<b>Completed Apr 2006</b>	<b>Completed Nov 2005</b>	<b>Completed Dec 2005</b>
Final Site Selected	<b>Completed Feb 2007</b>	Estimated Mar 2007	<b>Completed Oct 2006</b>	<b>Completed Aug 2006</b>	<b>Completed Feb 2006</b>	<b>Completed April 2006</b>
Land Acquisition	Estimated Sep 2007	Estimated Sep 2007	Estimated Sep 2007	Estimated Sep 2007	Estimated Sep 2007	<b>Completed Apr 2007</b>
Master Planning & Design Development Contract Award	Estimated Jun 2007	Estimated Jun 2007	Estimated Jun 2007	Estimated Jun 2007	Estimated Jul 2007	Estimated Jun 2007
Phase 1 Construction Documents Preparation Contract Award	Estimated Nov 2007	Estimated Oct 2007	Estimated Oct 2007	Estimated Nov 2007	Estimated Jan 2008	Estimated Oct 2007
Phase 1 Construction Contract Award	Estimated June 2008	Estimated May 2008	Estimated May 2008	Estimated June 2008	Estimated Aug 2008	Estimated May 2008
Phase 1 Construction Completion	Estimated May 2011	Estimated April 2011	Estimated April 2011	Estimated June 2011	Estimated July 2011	Estimated May 2011

Note: Letters in **BOLD** indicate that the major process has been completed.

**Status of New Cemetery Development  
National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, Public Law 108-109**

**BACKGROUND:**

Public Law 108-109 - Not later than four years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in accordance with chapter 24 of title 38, United States Code, shall establish six new national cemeteries. The new cemeteries shall be located in the following locations (those locations having been determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to be the most appropriate locations for new national cemeteries):

- (1) Southeastern Pennsylvania
- (2) The Birmingham, Alabama area
- (3) The Jacksonville, Florida area
- (4) The Bakersfield, California area
- (5) The Greenville/Columbia, South Carolina area
- (6) The Sarasota County, Florida area

## **SITE: BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA**

### **PAST ACTIVITY:**

NCA initiated contact with respective State, local representatives, and veterans' groups in a December 2003 letter acquainting them with this initiative and soliciting possible cemetery site locations. Only one site has been offered as a potential site for the national cemetery, a 500-acre tract just east of Bakersfield. The Tejon Ranch Company has identified 2,000 acres of their land for consideration. VA will accept the best 500 acres, out of the 2,000 offered. VA has identified the two best, 500-acre parcels for EA. The URS Group, Inc. was retained to prepare the EA, which was published in March 2006; the 30-day public comment period concluded on April 15, 2006.

### **CURRENT ACTIVITY:**

A recent water study of the sites concluded that water will be an issue in developing the sites, and irrigation of the burial sites may not be an option. Currently NCA is pursuing site acquisition (donation) of the northern 500-acre parcel.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

June 2007 – Development of a cemetery master plan and initial design is expected to begin.

September 2007 - Complete land acquisition.

Summer 2008 – Phase 1A (Fast Track) burial section is expected to begin construction with a cemetery opening in the last quarter of calendar year 2008.

### **BUDGET:**

Appropriation for FY 2005 includes approximately \$150,000 in the Major Construction, Advanced Planning Fund for site selection activities and preparation of an EA.

Appropriation for FY 2006 included \$41 million for the purchase of land for the six new cemeteries.

Appropriation for FY 2007 included \$2 million for master planning and design development.

The President's budget for FY 2008 includes \$19.5 million for construction documents and construction.

Advance Planning Fund obligations to date are \$155,000.

NCA estimates the total cost of the project will not exceed the budget request.

### **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:**

None

## **SITE: BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA**

### **PAST ACTIVITY:**

NCA initiated contact with respective State, local representatives, and veterans' groups in a December 2003 letter acquainting them with this initiative and soliciting possible cemetery site locations. Four sites, adjacent to the American Village complex in Montevallo, AL were offered for VA consideration. An NCA representative met with Congressman Spencer Bachus (R-6<sup>th</sup> – AL) and local officials at American Village in May 2004.

A contract to prepare the EA of the optimum site(s) was awarded in December 2004, completed on April 26, 2006, followed by the conclusion of the 30-day public comment period, which concluded on July 28, 2006. NCA selected a combination of four properties to make up the acquisition site; however, two of the properties were no longer available. NCA then chose a single 495-acre parcel for acquisition, appraised at \$8 million.

### **CURRENT ACTIVITY:**

Site acquisition for the 495-acre "Fowler Tract" is now in progress with a September 2007 completion. NCA is preparing for a June 2007 award of the master plan/design development contract.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

June 2007 – Development of a cemetery master plan and initial design is expected to begin.

September 2007 – Complete land acquisition.

Summer 2008 – Phase 1A (Fast Track) burial section is expected to begin construction with a cemetery opening in the last quarter of calendar year 2008.

### **BUDGET:**

Appropriation for FY 2005 includes approximately \$150,000 in the Major Construction, Advanced Planning Fund for site selection activities and preparation of an EA.

Appropriation for FY 2006 included \$41 million for the purchase of land for the six new cemeteries.

Appropriation FY 2007 included \$2 million for master planning and design development.

The President's budget for FY 2008 includes \$18.5 million for construction documents and construction.

Advance Planning Fund obligations to date are \$163,000.

NCA estimates the total cost of the project will not exceed the budget request.

### **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:**

None

## **SITE: COLUMBIA/GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

### **PAST ACTIVITY:**

NCA initiated contact with respective State, local representatives, and veterans' groups in a December 2003 letter soliciting possible cemetery site locations. A total of four sites have been offered for consideration in Union, Newberry, and Richland Counties. An EA, conducted from January 2005 through March 2006, determined the Richland County 600-acre tract within Fort Jackson in the City of Columbia is the best site for development. This site is available for transfer from the Department of Army at no cost. The 600-acre land transfer is provided for in the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2007.

### **CURRENT ACTIVITY:**

Site acquisition for the 600-acre "Fort Jackson site" is now in progress with a September 2007 completion. NCA is preparing for a June 2007 award of the master plan/design development contract.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

June 2007 – Award contract for development of a cemetery master plan and initial design.

September 2007 – Complete land acquisition.

Summer 2008 – Phase 1A (Fast Track) burial section is expected to begin construction with a cemetery opening in the last quarter of calendar year 2008.

### **BUDGET:**

Appropriation for FY 2005 includes approximately \$150,000 in the Major Construction, Advanced Planning Fund for site selection activities and preparation of an EA.

Appropriation for FY 2006 included \$41 million for the purchase of land for the six new cemeteries.

Appropriation for FY 2007 includes \$2 million for master planning and design development.

The President's budget for FY 2008 includes \$19.2 million for construction documents and construction.

Advance Planning Fund obligations to date are \$223,000.

NCA estimates the total cost of the project will not exceed the budget request.

### **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:**

None

## **SITE: JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA**

### **PAST ACTIVITY:**

NCA initiated contact with respective State, local representatives, and veterans' groups in a December 2003 letter acquainting them with this initiative and soliciting possible cemetery site locations. On January 23, 2004, NCA representatives met with the Mayor, City Hall, and Representatives Ander Crenshaw (R-4<sup>th</sup>- FL) and Cliff Stearns (R-6<sup>th</sup>- FL) to discuss the process of establishing a national cemetery, as well as a question and answer session. On the following day, NCA representatives participated in a Veterans Forum hosted by Representative John Mica (R-7<sup>th</sup>- FL).

Site visits in July 2004 and January 2005 identified a total of 14 potential sites. Two sites in Duval County, near the airport have been determined to be the best suited for the national cemetery. Both sites were evaluated in an EA from March 2005 – December 2005, and the public comment period concluded on April 7, 2006. Based upon the results of the EA, NCA selected a 568-acre site owned by the City of Jacksonville as the preferred site for acquisition.

### **CURRENT ACTIVITY:**

Negotiations are now in progress with the City of Jacksonville to define the boundary of the acquisition site. Site acquisition is planned for a September 2007 completion. NCA is preparing for a June 2007 award of the master plan/design development contract.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

June 2007 – Award contract for the development of a cemetery master plan and initial design.

September 2007 - Complete land acquisition.

Summer 2008 – Phase 1A (Fast Track) burial section is expected to begin construction with a cemetery opening in the last quarter of calendar year 2008.

### **BUDGET:**

Appropriation for FY 2005 includes approximately \$150,000 in the Major Construction, Advanced Planning Fund for site selection activities and preparation of an EA.

Appropriation for FY 2006 included \$41 million for the purchase of land for the six new cemeteries.

Appropriation for FY 2007 includes \$2 million for master planning and design development.

The President's budget for FY 2008 includes \$22.4 million for construction documents and construction.

Advance Planning Fund obligations to date are \$183,000.

NCA estimates the total cost of the project will not exceed the budget request.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:**

None

## **SITE: SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA**

### **PAST ACTIVITY:**

On March 31, 2003, Representative Jim Gerlach (R-6<sup>th</sup> - PA) introduced H.R. 1516 directing the establishment of a national cemetery for veterans in southeastern Pennsylvania. On September 23, 2003, NCA officials hosted a "Town Hall" meeting with southeastern Pennsylvania veteran leaders and representatives at the VA Regional Office in Philadelphia to discuss the alternative sites. Through general consensus of the group, the Pennhurst and Graterford sites were endorsed for further consideration. The sites are both owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

NCA representatives have considered 12 possible alternative sites. Sites were evaluated in the vicinities of Norristown, Valley Forge, Embreeville, Pennhurst, Graterford, and Bucks County.

NCA's environmental consultant completed a preliminary assessment of the Pennhurst site, a former mental hospital containing 35 buildings. They found that significant environmental clean-up, asbestos abatement, and building demolition would be required to make the site useable for a national cemetery. Pre-construction costs for this remediation were estimated at \$14 to \$24 million.

A tract in northern Bucks County at Riegelsville, owned by the Catholic Church, was offered for consideration. Toll Brothers Corporation also offered a 200-acre tract at Dolington in southern Bucks County at Upper Makefield Township for consideration. Sale of the Dolington site to VA was conditioned on the ability of Toll Brothers to obtain zoning variances to allow higher density residential construction on their other properties in the vicinity.

An EA was completed in November 2005, addressing the three sites: Pennhurst, Riegelsville, and the Toll Brothers property. The public comment period concluded in late December 2005 and VA selected the Toll Brothers site as the preferred alternative.

### **CURRENT ACTIVITY:**

NCA is awaiting final zoning and variance actions by the Upper Makefield Township on the Toll Brothers properties, which will allow the sale of the 200-acre parcel to VA to proceed.

NCA has completed the solicitation and selected the Architect Engineering firm that will develop the master plan and perform the design effort. A comprehensive scope of work for construction has been developed. Award of the master plan and design is anticipated for summer 2007.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

July 2007 - Award contract for development of a cemetery master plan and initial design.

September 2007 - Complete land acquisition.

Early 2009 – Phase 1A (Fast Track) burial section is expected to begin construction with a cemetery opening in the first quarter of calendar year 2009.

**BUDGET:**

Appropriation for FY 2005 includes approximately \$150,000 in the Major Construction, Advanced Planning Fund for site selection activities and preparation of an EA.

Appropriation for FY 2006 included \$41 million for the purchase of land for the six new cemeteries.

Appropriation for FY 2007 includes \$2 million for master planning and design development.

The President's budget for FY 2008 includes \$29.6 million for construction documents and construction.

Advance Planning Fund obligations to date are \$318,000.

NCA estimates the total cost of the project will not exceed the budget request.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:**

None

## **SITE: SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

### **PAST ACTIVITY:**

NCA initiated contact with respective State, local representatives, and veterans' groups in a December 2003 letter acquainting them with this initiative and soliciting possible cemetery site locations. On January 30, 2004, NCA representatives met with members of the SW Florida National Cemetery Advisory Committee, appointed by Representative Katherine Harris (R-13<sup>th</sup>- FL), to discuss the process of establishing a national cemetery, as well as a question and answer session. Subsequently, with the Committee's help, a total of 23 sites were identified for consideration. Three sites were selected as suitable for cemetery development.

A contract to prepare the EA of these three sites was awarded in December 2004 and completed in December 2005, with the 30-day public comment period concluding in January 2006. Based upon the EA, a portion of the Hawkins Ranch was selected as the preferred site for acquisition. NCA received a signed offer-to-sell the 295-acre property for \$15 million on January 30, 2007.

### **CURRENT ACTIVITY:**

The Department of Justice is reviewing the procurement package for land acquisition. Site acquisition was completed in April 2007. NCA is preparing for a June 2007 award of the master plan/design development contract.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

June 2007 – Award contract for development of a cemetery master plan and initial design.

Late 2008 – Phase 1A (Fast Track) burial section is expected to begin construction with a cemetery opening in the last quarter of calendar year 2008.

### **BUDGET:**

Appropriation for FY 2005 includes approximately \$150,000 in the Major Construction, Advanced Planning Fund for site selection activities and preparation of an EA.

Appropriation for FY 2006 included \$41 million for the purchase of land for the six new cemeteries.

Appropriation for FY 2007 includes \$2 million for master planning and design development.

The President's budget for FY 2008 includes \$27.8 million for construction documents and construction.

Advance Planning Fund obligations to date are \$372,000.

NCA estimates the total cost of the project will not exceed the budget request.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:**

None