

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

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Introduction

Chairman McCaskill, Ranking Member Portman and distinguished Members, thank you for the opportunity to appear before this subcommittee to provide an update on the progress we have made at Arlington National Cemetery and our strategy that codifies our path forward for the Army National Cemeteries Program.

Since my last testimony a year and a half ago, my focus has been on identifying and correcting the wrongs discovered at Arlington, even as we continue honoring in burial approximately 30 veterans and their family members each day, welcoming millions of visitors from around the world, and developing our strategy for our path forward. Let me be clear: There remains no tolerance to overlook or conceal errors within our efforts. We will continue to be honest and transparent with what we find—with you, our veterans' and their families, and the American public. Our report acknowledges we have significant work ahead. However, we are well on our way to regaining the accountability that was inexcusable to ever lose. We are also leaping forward to ensure our newly implemented strategy and systems use cutting edge technology and apply best practices from across the Army and a host of external partners. This will allow us to better engage with our guests while more effectively and efficiently using the resources we are so

generously provided. Together, these efforts will ensure we restore America's faith and confidence in this Nation's most sacred grounds.

I want to thank this sub-committee for its oversight and important guidance to help the Army National Cemeteries remain America's premier military cemeteries. This oversight reinforces the Secretary of the Army's personal engagement and Directive 2010-04, which has helped focus efforts and resources across the Army to help us rapidly and accurately restore confidence and regain accountability at Arlington National Cemetery.

Cemetery Progress

Madam Chairman, I am pleased to report that we have fully complied with Public Law 111-339's requirement to provide an accounting of the gravesites at Arlington. In addition, we have also 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, gathering and consolidating 147 years of records created from log book entries, paper-based records of interment, and computerized burial records, placing them in a modern system designed for accounting. After completing the more thorough research on those 64,230 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, and then associated each photo with existing Cemetery records and confirmed the accuracy of information. Arlington's history spans much of the country's history—reflecting the wars, slavery, Depression, varying cultural standards, and evolving cemetery practices and record keeping of the time. For some records, determining the truth required significant rigor. Some of Arlington's burial records only exist in Civil-War era log books. From records, we learned that many more wives were laid to rest at Arlington than previously thought, since during the Great Depression often only the Soldier was depicted on the gravestone. Still other burial records do not exist at all, with the headstone photos being the only information documenting the interment. This includes those "Citizens" and "Civilians" who lived on the property in Freedman's Village during and after the Civil War. In some cases, these mistakes were compounded over an extended period, including as headstone marking and burial practices evolved over time.

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 we submitted the "Gravesite Accountability Study Findings" to Congress, we have continued with determination to resolve all open cases as rapidly as possible in accordance with our repeatable and auditable processes. Since December 22, we have closed 6,236 additional cases, bringing the total of closed gravesite cases to 208,672 or 80% of the 259,978 total number of cases as of 22 January 2012.

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 consultation of next of kin, resolve them as quickly as possible. Importantly, we are developing and implementing industry-best standards and measures, policies, technology, training and inspection program—such as our six-step chain of custody—to institutionalize checks and balances that will help prevent the development of similar mistakes in the future.

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 with funerals or as we correct historical discrepancies—to recognize that honoring their loved one is the most important activity we are doing at that time. I take seriously my leadership duty and responsibility to ensure the Army National Cemeteries Program takes into account the unique and specific needs and requests of every veteran and their family members with whom we deal.

Contracting

We have made significant progress in the area of contract management, transforming our contracting support to position the Army National Cemeteries Program (ANCP) for long-term success. Specifically, the Army has ensured that

the ANCP is properly resourced in our contracting support and oversight. This includes adding skilled acquisition support personnel to my staff; training the workforce involved in the acquisition process; defining roles and responsibilities for organizations supporting the ANCP; developing and implementing life cycle acquisition programs, internal management control plans, and organizational inspection programs; and leveraging information technology for increased interface with contracting database systems to ensure proper tracking and accountability of acquisition programs.

The ANCP established partnerships with acquisition organizations to leverage their expertise, use resources more efficiently, and minimize the potential for mismanagement by non-acquisition professionals on related contracting support requirements. For instance, the ANCP no longer has its own Information Technology (IT) contracts. Instead, we established a service level agreement with the Headquarters, Department of the Army's Information Technology Agency (ITA), leveraging their extensive knowledge, resources, and established contracts to provide our information assurance and IT products and services.

The Army National Cemeteries Program, in partnership with Army Contracting Command (ACC) and the Mission and Installation Contracting Command (MICC), established a "checks and balance" system for planning, execution and contract management procedures. Initially, the ANCP started with a single Contract Liaison position responsible for the integration and management of contracting support requirements across the Acquisition community. Since August 2011, the MICC has expanded its initial Contract Liaison Position to an on-site

ANC Contracting Support Element (ANC-CSE) responsible for coordination with designated contracted offices for contract execution. The ANC-CSE consists of five contracting and quality assurance professionals and is overseen by a senior acquisition professional. This group provides business advice and support to the ANCP staff on all matters associated with Acquisition planning, training, and Contracting Officer Representative (COR) oversight measures. This on-site support enables the ANCP to effectively generate requirements that are compliant with DoD regulations and guidelines, establish Quality assurance surveillance plans, conduct Contracting Officer Representative (COR) training, provide oversight of the ANCP's Government purchase card program, and interface with all supporting Contracting organizations. The ANC Contracting Support Team (ANC-CST), located at Fort Belvoir, performs all actions associated with contract execution. This process and separation of duties enables the ANCP to maintain integrity in the Acquisition process and to mitigate any potential for conflicts of interest.

Separately, with reach-out initiatives such as the comprehensive market research efforts with the Army Small Business office, Industry day at ANC, and extensive coordination with the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding their similar cemetery support contracts, the MICC worked to ensure we reached the widest net of support contractors and ultimately executed contract awards that were competitively awarded, with the exception of those executed through the Small Business Administration 8(a) program. These efforts resulted in cost, schedule, performance improvements; savings over Independent Government Cost Estimates (IGCE); introductions of better contractor solutions; and

improvements in contractor management.

For instance, prior to March 2011, ANC and the US Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery (SAHNC), were executing six contracts for ANC and one contract for USSAHNC separately to meet the horticultural requirements for each organization. Six (6) of the seven (7) contracts awarded required the Government to provide the materials for the use by the contractors. The re-compete efforts executed by the MICC, ANC and SAHNC horticultural requirements were consolidated to three awards (Turf & General Grounds, Tree & Shrub, and landscaping), with all materials provided by the contractor and covering both cemeteries, resulting in cost savings and greater efficiencies overall in the use of ANCP resources. The consolidation allowed ANC and the SAHNC to streamline their Contracting Officer Representatives (COR) oversight, and transfer the risk from the Government to the Contractor by having them provide the materials.

As a direct result of the on-site team's effort, the Army National Cemeteries Program has been able to improve its acquisition planning lead times and ensure personnel are properly trained to manage and oversee contracted services. Presently, all appointed CORs are trained and are capable of submitting the required monthly progress reports to the Contracting Officer as required, increasing the level of oversight on the contractors, and ensuring their performance complies to the standards specified in the contract. As well, the ANC CSE Government Purchase Card coordinator conducts monthly reviews of the ANCP small purchase program and has identified opportunities to leverage other contracting instruments, such as Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPA). The use

of BPAs increases efficiencies and accountability while mitigating the need to use the purchase card. To ensure sustainability and longevity of current contracting support efforts, the ANCP is further defining contracting roles and responsibilities to align them with the ANCP Campaign Plan, about which I will discuss more shortly.

We are taking steps to achieve greater fidelity in the contracting management and reporting efforts. Along this path, the ANCP, in partnership with Army Contracting Command, is developing and planning an incremental release of the Virtual Contracting Enterprise–Pre-Award Contracting Tool (VCE), to capture all of its contracting requirements in FY2012. The VCE pre-award tool will eventually serve as the single contract repository source for contracting actions, and it is scheduled to interface with the Federal Procurement Data System – Next Generation. The VCE will become the single database system of record for DoD contracts.

The Army National Cemeteries Program, Moving Forward

I am proud of what we have accomplished since June 2010 to bring all aspects of the ANCP in line with the rich, proud and dignified traditions befitting our Nation's military heroes. We have set the pace for the future of these hallowed grounds, including through our recently approved ANCP Strategic Campaign Plan and our ongoing Enterprise Architecture and Technology Acquisition Roadmap.

The ANCP Campaign Plan, effective January 1, 2012, codified in one strategic document my vision and priorities for the organization. It is the vehicle as

Executive Director I will use 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 since I arrived from the Secretary of the Army, the GAO, IG, Army Audit, and distinguished members of the subcommittee like yourselves. Based on my guidance, my staff identified and I approved their priority tasks to achieve the ANCP vision, all with measurable metrics and milestones and based on prioritized resources. Through updates to the Superintendent and me, we will ensure this is more than just a document. The Campaign Plan is how we are managing change across the organization—including implementing the changes in contract management about which I just spoke.

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

Included within and complementary to the Campaign Plan, we are also in the process of creating a strategic framework for developing and deploying technology throughout the Army National Cemeteries Program. This Enterprise Architecture (EA) serves as the IT 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 are already digitizing the Army National Cemeteries to make us the most technologically advanced cemeteries in the United States. When combined with our dedicated workforce, technology has enabled us much more rapidly and accurately to make progress in regaining accountability. For instance, The Old Guard supported the Task Force by photographing every Arlington grave, niche and memorial marker using smart phone technology. The Army-designed iPhone app allowed them to e-mail immediately the GPS and gravesite data with the memorial pictures to a central repository. The data was validated the following morning for quality and accuracy, and then digitally linked with existing burial records and supporting information that the Task Force could then review. This data represents the Cemetery's history and will power a smart phone application in development by Arlington. Once complete, this smart phone application will enable the public to locate gravesites in the Cemetery, acquire directions to the gravesite, and view the grave remotely on

their personal web device or through Arlington National Cemetery's web site.

Arlington's new web site also is the platform for the new "Headstone Formatting" application. This technology will enable families to design their loved one's headstone or niche cover on-line prior to the burial service. This is one less activity the family has to endure when they arrive at Arlington for their loved ones' service. "Headstone Formatting" is in use on a test basis now.

The EA will also help us identify the best investments in technology to ensure we are maintaining the 624 acres at Arlington and 16 acres at the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery, reducing the potential for future burial errors. We are also currently testing the Army GIS mapping effort, which will produce the first comprehensive digital map of the Cemetery's gravesites. This effort will allow cemetery scheduling representatives to automate the assigning of gravesites on digitized maps. This system will also present real-time, GPS-verified information to equipment operators to allow validation of dig sites prior to their beginning work on the Cemetery grounds. By creating an end-to-end process of electronically documenting burials, we will introduce significantly more precision into the process and ensure continued accountability of Arlington's burials.

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 on December 1, 2011. In line with the Secretary of the Army's request and the Commission Charter, the Commission will provide the Department of Defense and Secretary of the Army

recommendations regarding extending the life of active burials and inurnments at Arlington National Cemetery, the long-term implications of the ANC Section 60 memento study and improving the visitor experience, and issues related to the crack in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (TUS). 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 continue to be 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 cemeteries—national shrines—living history of freedom—where dignity and honor rest in solemn repose. The Army National Cemeteries Program has made a great deal of progress to come back in line with this vision. There is still much work to be done, and our Strategic Plan maps out that effort. Now that we have in place an accountability baseline, systems for maintaining that accountability and a more robust approach to contract management, it is important that all aspects of the Army National Cemeteries Program benefit from this structured approach by its management to meet our solemn obligation to our veterans, their families and the Nation. 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 building upon the hard work of restoring accountability and

implementing strategic tools to enable our dedicated staff to meet the needs of our veterans and the American public well into the future.

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