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President and CEO

Congress: Support H.R. 1413, The Expanding America's National Cemetery Act to transform an existing national cemetery and sustain equivalent military honors provided at Arlington National Cemetery as it reaches capacity.

Support Expanding Arlington National Cemetery with Second Location and Full Burial Benefits

Issue: A proposal for eligibility reduction at ANC is approaching the final steps of the federal rule making process. Congressional action is required to protect the burial benefit with full military honors. The FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) required the Department of Defense (DoD) to develop a plan for ANC to continue operations "well into the future." This resulted in the DoD proposal for a reduction in eligibility to extend ANC operations 150 years. The proposed change would render countless veterans, retirees, and nearly all female veterans ineligible. The eligibility reduction criteria is focused on close combat awards and would limit interment to those with a Purple Heart or Silver Star and above. Veterans of World War II (WWII), Korea and Vietnam eras who have planned on this benefit for decades would be subject to this proposed reduction. ANC will not reach capacity with current eligibility standards for another 42 years and a long-term solution to protect the equivalent level of benefits is warranted.

WHO WOULD LOSE IN-GROUND INTERMENT ELIGIBILITY WITH FULL MILITARY HONORS?

- Most WWII, Korea, and Vietnam-era veterans and retirees (without Purple Heart or Silver Star or higher medal)
- Nearly all female veterans currently eligible
- Veterans who earned the Bronze Star for valor and Air Medal
- Navy and Air Force strategic nuclear forces with a lifetime of service and sacrifice not involved in close combat who served under dangerous conditions critical to national security
- Recent veterans and retirees from Iraq and Afghanistan, some with 4 or more deployments, and significant combat engagements
- Military medical professionals who deployed to fight COVID and Ebola

A LONG-TERM SOLUTION

The Expanding America's National Cemetery Act would authorize the transformation of an existing

VA-run national cemetery into the next location that affords full military honors as ANC reaches capacity. This is a long-term solution that would leverage DoD and VA efforts to maximize options rather than minimize solutions. There are 155 VA-run national cemeteries across the country; many of them are adjacent to military installations that could provide the military honors similar to those ANC provides. Transforming a VA cemetery is a way to honor our military families, and keep our nation's promise of taking care of those who have served a career.

MOAA's position: It is a matter of national conscience to protect the benefit of in-ground burial with full military honors. With the current eligibility standards, ANC will not run out of room for another 42 years, affording time to develop a longer-term solution. A gradual transition to the "next ANC" will allow our nation to continue to honor families for lifetimes of service and sacrifice. The proposed eligibility reduction is an erosion of benefits and would result in unthinkable repercussions for those who for decades have planned on interment with full military honors. MOAA asks that members of Congress protect this important benefit for those currently eligible and for future servicemembers.

TALKING POINTS:

- » ANC will eventually run out of room.
- » An enduring solution is required to maintain an equivalent level of benefits.
- » The VA runs 155 national cemeteries, and the DoD runs ANC.
- » While DoD's primary focus for resources is national security, partnering with VA will provide an integrative approach with resources.
- » Transforming a VA national cemetery to afford full military honors would sustain an equivalent of benefits at an existing facility.
- » Cooperation between DoD and VA can offer a solution in which VA runs operations, and the armed services provide ceremonial honors at the same level as ANC.

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Proposed Rule is Not the Solution and Upsets Veterans

If proposed changes don't take effect, ANC will still not reach capacity for in-ground burials until 2064. We have time to develop an enduring solution.

Columbarium space for ashes at ANC are estimated to reach capacity in 2040, even with the proposed eligibility reduction. Believing columbarium space is a long-term and suitable alternative to burial at ANC is false.



“I used to recommend people to the service very easily. I can't do that anymore. And I think that's a shame, because the military has always risen to the highest level of service to our country. We never stopped serving. And we never will.

Capt. Kathleen Dugan, USN (Ret), 30 years of service and her parents are buried at ANC



“It means a loss of something. It's just something that I've taken for granted, and I could lose. Seeing what that funeral ceremony is like at Arlington, it doesn't take away people's grief, but it lets them know that their relative was appreciated.

Col. William Campenni, USAF (Ret), fighter pilot

Military Retirees by State:

The proposed eligibility reduction would be one more reduction in benefits. Although all will not select ANC as their final resting place, the reduction will disenfranchise retirees, veterans and all past and present female servicemembers.

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| AL 62,506 | MT 9,977 |
| AK 11,024 | NE 14,548 |
| AZ 58,649 | NV 30,348 |
| AR 25,018 | NH 9,548 |
| CA 145,308 | NJ 18,745 |
| CO 53,780 | NM 20,453 |
| CT 9,983 | NY 39,768 |
| DE 9,375 | NC 102,477 |
| DC 2,234 | ND 5,588 |
| FL 210,073 | OH 48,411 |
| GA 101,430 | OK 36,134 |
| HI 18,119 | OR 20,500 |
| ID 15,446 | PA 51,852 |
| IL 35,952 | PR 12,520 |
| IN 27,092 | RI 5,170 |
| IA 13,650 | SC 62,905 |
| KS 22,411 | SD 8,989 |
| KY 28,842 | TN 58,890 |
| LA 26,102 | TX 222,909 |
| ME 11,965 | UT 18,089 |
| MD 55,793 | VT 3,923 |
| MA 17,902 | VA 156,698 |
| MI 31,175 | WA 74,085 |
| MN 19,759 | WV 10,992 |
| MS 27,997 | WI 22,832 |
| MO 39,336 | WY 5,888 |