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**VA To Establish Columbarium-Only Cemetery on Campus of  
St. Albans Community Living Center; Expand Burial Options in Urban Centers**

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it is planning to build a new columbarium-only cemetery on the campus of the VA St. Albans Community Living Center in Jamaica, NY. Although New York City is within the service area of Calverton and Long Island National Cemeteries on Long Island, the proposed columbarium-only facility in the Borough of Queens will provide a closer burial option for Veterans and eligible family members in the New York City region.

Following a 2008 study, VA’s National Cemetery Administration (NCA) developed an “Urban Initiative” that would locate columbarium facilities in some of America’s most densely populated areas where existing open national cemeteries are more than 50 miles or one hour drive time removed from the city center, hindering use by Veterans and their families.

“We continue to locate the Department’s service centers closer to where Veterans live,” said NCA Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs Glenn R. Powers. “This includes not just outpatient clinics and Vet Centers, but also cemetery facilities. We may not be able to provide every type of burial option in urban core areas, but we can improve access by making the columbarium option available to Veterans and their eligible dependents in the New York metropolitan area.”

In some of the largest urban areas that VA serves – New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Indianapolis – its national cemeteries are more than 50 miles or one hour drive time removed from the service area core. VA looked at the growth in use of the cremation burial option by all Americans, including Veterans, and the smaller acreage “footprint” required for columbarium inurnments and determined that Veterans in these cities could be better served by the placement of columbarium-only cemeteries within or near the urban core.

The new site, which will be built on a portion of VA’s St. Albans Community Living Center campus in the Borough of Queens, is convenient to Veterans and their families by public transportation and will provide a cremation burial option to more than half a million Veterans and their eligible family members who live in the metropolitan area.

The VA’s National Cemetery Administration honors Veterans and their families with final resting places in over 131 national cemeteries that it maintains as national shrines that commemorate service and

**-More-**

**St. Albans National Cemetery 2/2/2**

sacrifice to the nation. Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the Internet at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov) or by calling VA Regional Offices toll-free at 800-827-1000. To make burial arrangements at the time of need at any VA national cemetery, call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117.

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