On July 17, 1862, President Lincoln signed legislation, which states, the President of the United States shall have power, whenever in his opinion it shall be expedient, to purchase cemetery grounds, and cause them to be securely enclosed, to be used as a national cemetery for the soldiers who shall die in the service of the country. From this one sentence, the National Cemetery System was born.
TO OUR VETERANS, FAMILIES, AND VALUED PARTNERS:

I am pleased to announce the publication of the National Cemetery Administration’s (NCA) FY2016 Year in Review which captures many of the notable accomplishments achieved on behalf of Veterans and their families during the past fiscal year. The enduring dedication of our employees and other partners is clearly reflected in the many vignettes contained in the report, as well as countless others that are not mentioned.

Several of the key events and achievements discussed in the review link directly to our five-year Long Range Plan that was published in FY2016. The plan is firmly rooted in VA’s ICARE values and provides a roadmap for the future. During the past year, for example, we expanded burial access by opening two new national cemeteries in Florida and Nebraska, launched the Veterans Legacy Program, initiated a Pre-Need Eligibility Program, began implementation of GIS/GPS technology at our cemeteries and much more—all while maintaining our commitment to the highest quality of customer service.

In FY2016, NCA once again achieved the highest customer satisfaction score on the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). ACSI is the nation’s only cross-industry measure of customer satisfaction. This was the sixth consecutive time NCA received such a distinction. We surpassed every participating organization (public or private), and our index score of 96 was 32 points above the average for federal government agencies. Results like this do not happen by accident. NCA’s remarkable record of success can be attributed to the hard work and commitment of our employees and partners, many of whom are featured throughout the report.

Of course, this review represents only a snapshot of the many outstanding efforts occurring each day at our national cemeteries that make a profound difference in the lives of Veterans and their families. While much has been accomplished this past year, much more needs to be done. The items featured in this document provide a solid foundation upon which to position the organization for future improvements and enhanced service to our customers. I look forward to our continued work together.

Sincerely,

Ronald E. Walters
Interim Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs
The National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP) begins disinterment process for 94 unknown veterans from the Battle of Tarawa in World War II for possible identification by the Defense POW–MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA).

Day 002
10.02.15

FY2016
YEAR IN REVIEW

Day 008
10.08.15

VA purchases 6 acres of land in Cassian, Wisconsin to establish a rural national Veterans cemetery.

Day 016
10.16.15

Tallahassee National Cemetery marks its first burials. The 250-acre cemetery will serve 83,000 veterans over the next 100 years.

Day 030
10.30.15

Sacramento Valley National Cemetery receives a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Federal Green Challenge Award for reducing water usage by 14 million gallons annually.

Day 051
11.20.15

NCA dedicates Cape Canaveral National Cemetery in Florida. The new 316-acre cemetery will serve 163,000 veterans over the next 100 years.

Day 073
12.12.15

Thousands attend “Wreaths Across America” ceremonies at VA national cemeteries across the nation.
DAY 093
01.01.16
NCA begins observing the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) which also established the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). By end of 2016, 108 of NCA’s 135 national cemeteries are listed on the NRHP.

DAY 096
01.04.16
Memphis National Cemetery completes 1,000 Niche Columbarium, Memorial Wall, and Ossuary.

DAY 113
01.21.16
NCA holds a public meeting at the Batavia VA Medical Center to provide an update on plans for a national cemetery in western New York.

DAY 134
02.11.16
Hundreds attend a burial for a homeless Veteran and Purple Heart recipient at Ft. Leavenworth National Cemetery in Kansas.

DAY 172
03.22.16
NCA publishes Long Range Plan 2016-2021. The plan focuses on 5 main goals, 10 objectives and 27 strategies that will enhance service to Veterans and their families.

DAY 176
03.26.16
NCA announces the dedication of the 100th VA grant-funded cemetery. The $8.9 million grant at the Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Marana will serve 105,000 Arizona veterans.

DAY 180
03.30.16
NCA cemeteries across the nation hold special ceremonies as part of the 50th anniversary and commemoration of the Vietnam War.
FY2016 YEAR IN REVIEW

INCREASING BURIAL ACCESS

Expand
In FY2016, NCA continued the largest expansion of the national cemetery system since the Civil War by dedicating two new national cemeteries at Cape Canaveral, Florida and Omaha, Nebraska.

Support
In FY2016, NCA issued its 100th grant to open a state Veterans cemetery in Arizona. NCA assists states and tribal organizations through the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program (VCGP) to establish, improve, and maintain state and tribal cemeteries. Established in 1978, VCGP has awarded more than $714 million to states and tribal organizations. There are 105 state and tribal cemeteries in 47 states, Guam, and Saipan.

Maintain
In FY2016, NCA obligated $52.4 million for expansion projects which includes developing additional gravesites and columbaria, or acquiring additional land. In FY2016, 54% of all burials in national cemeteries are for cremated remains. By adding columbaria, NCA is responding to this trend.

By the end of FY2016, NCA provided 91.7% of the Veteran population with reasonable burial access to a national or state Veterans cemetery within 75 miles of their home.

NCA has plans to open 14 more national cemeteries by 2021. Currently, there are 135 VA national cemeteries.

INCREASED BURIAL ACCESS

Expand, Support and Maintain

20 Million Veterans currently have reasonable access to a burial option

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to Burial Option (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of Veterans Served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY01    FY04    FY07    FY12    FY16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72%     90%      92%      92%      92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY01 FY04 FY07 FY12 FY16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Veterans Served</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

135 VA NATIONAL CEMeteries
3,563,997 GRAVESITES
9,138 DEVELOPED ACRES
280,000 NUMBER OF VETERANS SERVED BY CAPE CANAVERAL AND OMAHA NATIONAL CEMETERIES WHICH OPENED IN FY2016
54 (FY2016) NATIONWIDE PERCENTAGE OF CREMATED REMAINS
14 NUMBER OF NATIONAL CEMETERIES TO OPEN BY FY2021
105 STATE AND TRIBAL CEMeteries
317,000 VETERANS SERVED BY STATE AND TRIBAL CEMETERIES
36,000 NUMBER OF INTERMENTS BY STATES AND TRIBES IN FY2016
714 MILLION DOLLARS AWARDED TO STATES AND TRIBES SINCE 1978
100th VA GRANT AWARDED IN FY 2016 TO A STATE CEMETERY
3 NUMBER OF STATE CEMETERIES TO OPEN IN FY 2017

Coverage Map of the United States

- Burial coverage provided by a National or State Veteran Cemetery
- Low Veteran Population Density
- National Cemeteries
- State Veteran Cemeteries

by 75 miles of their home.
VOLUNTEERS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY VISIT VA NATIONAL CEMETERIES DURING VOLUNTEER WEEK CLEANING HEADSTONES, PLANTING FLOWERS, AND HELPING WITH CEMETERY BEAUTIFICATION.
The Veterans Legacy Program (Legacy) was launched on Memorial Day, May 30, 2016 at Riverside National Cemetery in California. Legacy seeks to extend memorialization of Veterans interred in our national cemeteries by sharing their stories of service and sacrifice.

In 2016, Legacy launched a national effort called “Local Legacy, National Heritage.” The program concept is to partner with university professors and local schools to empower students to discover their local Veteran history, develop their research into outreach materials, and share it with a national audience. Legacy has also partnered with the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), National History Day, and George Mason University on a program of teacher professional development entitled “Understanding Sacrifice: the War in the Pacific.”

In the future, Legacy will sponsor cemetery research through residency fellowships for professional scholars; forge strategic partnerships to enhance reach and capacity; create new professional development opportunities for teachers; and promote digital memorialization.

Our hope is that the Veterans Legacy Program will broaden how the public engages with the 3.5 million Veterans interred in our national cemeteries. Each has a story.

To learn more about the Veterans Legacy Program, please visit http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/legacy/.
DAY 320
08.15.16
Commanding Officer of the Japanese Submarine (SS597) Takashio presides over a wreath-laying ceremony at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii to honor those who fought and died during World War II.

DAY 327
08.22.16
After a devastating flood in Louisiana, Louisiana National Cemetery employees still report to duty to serve Veterans and their families.

DAY 336
08.31.16
Leadership VA 2016 Fellows attend ceremony at Fort Snelling National Cemetery recognizing inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar serves as keynote speaker.

DAY 343
09.07.16
Calverton National Cemetery employee becomes one of 15 recipients of the GreenGov Presidential Awards celebrating outstanding achievement in federal sustainability goals.

DAY 357
09.21.16
Over 1,400 volunteers from Arborists United for Veteran Remembrance provide 11,200 volunteer hours of tree care at 34 VA national cemeteries.

DAY 361
09.25.16
SINCE 1936, A PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION HAS DESIGNATED THE LAST SUNDAY IN SEPTEMBER AS GOLD STAR MOTHERS DAY. IN NCA NATIONAL CEMETERIES, MONUMENTS LIKE THIS RECOGNIZE GOLD STAR MOTHERS.

DAY 364
09.28.16
Long Island National Cemetery buries 28 unclaimed Veterans in partnership with the “Missing in America Project.”

DAY 366
09.31.16
Leadership VA 2016 Fellows attend ceremony at Fort Snelling National Cemetery recognizing inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar serves as keynote speaker.

DAY 368
09.31.16
NCA receives official notice from the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) of its number 1 customer satisfaction ranking.
AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX

Every three years, NCA participates in the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) which is the only national cross-cutting industry measure of its kind. In September 2016, for the 6th consecutive time, NCA achieved the highest ranking (96) of any organization, public or private.

1,883 ......................................................... Employees
75.8% ................................. Employees who are Veterans
31.16% .................. Employees who are Disabled Veterans
87% ................................. Employees outside of D.C.

Annual Survey of Satisfaction
Every year, NCA mails out a survey to next-of-kin and funeral directors to measure customer service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cemetery Appearance</th>
<th>FY14 ACTUAL</th>
<th>FY15 ACTUAL</th>
<th>FY16 GOAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of Service</th>
<th>FY14 ACTUAL</th>
<th>FY15 ACTUAL</th>
<th>FY16 GOAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommend to Other Veterans</th>
<th>FY14 ACTUAL</th>
<th>FY15 ACTUAL</th>
<th>FY16 GOAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FY2016 at a Glance

Top 10 Most Active Cemeteries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cemetery</th>
<th>Annual Number of Interments Conducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riverside, CA</td>
<td>8,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>7,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calverton, NY</td>
<td>6,059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ft. Snelling, MN</td>
<td>5,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson Barracks, MO</td>
<td>4,913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ft. Logan, CO</td>
<td>4,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ft. Sam Houston, TX</td>
<td>4,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX</td>
<td>4,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willamette, OR</td>
<td>4,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Lakes, MI</td>
<td>3,918</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FY2016 at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>FY2016 BUDGETARY RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total BUDGETARY RESOURCES</td>
<td>$271.2 Million Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation and Pension</td>
<td>$95.0 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Cemetery Grants Program</td>
<td>$46.0 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Construction</td>
<td>$69.1 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Construction</td>
<td>$155.8 Million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key accomplishments

- Opened two new national cemeteries
- Issued 100th VA grant to a state cemetery
- Implemented Pre-Need Eligibility
- Launched the Veterans Legacy Program
- Achieved highest ranking on American Customer Satisfaction Index

* FY2016 survey results were not available at the time of this publication.
The National Cemetery Administration has typically provided a time-of-need eligibility determination for Veterans and families of Veterans desiring interment in a national cemetery. An important customer service objective in the Long Range Plan is to establish Pre-Need Eligibility that will facilitate burial planning for Veterans and their families. This objective was achieved in 2016.

Pre-Need forms are available online at http://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/pre-need/
Fax, email, or mail a copy of the form along with supporting military information (DD214)

- Fax: 1 (855) 840-8299
- Email: eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov
- Mail: National Scheduling Office, P.O. Box 510543, St. Louis, MO 63151

Accomplishments At A Glance:
- September 2015 - Pre-Need agents hired
- October 2015 - Pre-Need soft launch
- December 2016 - Pre-Need official launch
- January 2017 - 13,631 applications processed
- January 2017 - 10,853 approval letters sent

Pre-Need was officially launched on December 8, 2016. The National Cemetery Scheduling Office in St. Louis is now accepting applications.

A YEAR TO REMEMBER

NCA’s Deputy Under Secretaries Reflect Upon A Remarkable Year

On April 25, 2016, I witnessed construction of Omaha National Cemetery in Sarpy County, Nebraska, which would soon open as America’s newest national shrine in service to the Veterans of Nebraska and Western Iowa. That evening, I drove 250 miles west to Fort McPherson National Cemetery – established in 1873 at the Army frontier post near North Platte. In one day, I witnessed the span of NCA’s legacy and commitment to all Veterans past, present and future.

Visits to National Shrines in Nebraska

by GLENN POWERS - Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations

4.25.2016

On April 25, 2016, I witnessed construction of Omaha National Cemetery in Sarpy County, Nebraska, which would soon open as America’s newest national shrine in service to the Veterans of Nebraska and Western Iowa. That evening, I drove 250 miles west to Fort McPherson National Cemetery – established in 1873 at the Army frontier post near North Platte. In one day, I witnessed the span of NCA’s legacy and commitment to all Veterans past, present and future.

Expansion and Improvement Projects

by ANITA R. HANSON - Deputy Under Secretary for Management

8.30.2016

“Every year, NCA commits significant resources to expansion and improvement projects that help ensure national cemeteries remain open to first interments. One example is a gravesite expansion project at South Florida National Cemetery that provided an additional 2,904 pre-placed crypts, 2,816 concrete urn crypts, 220 oversize crypts, 240 niche vaults and a 2,500 niche columbarium which extended first time interments by 10 years per gravesite expansion project.”

Pilot for Redesigned NCA Organizational Assessment and Improvement (OAI) Program Completed and Fully Implemented

by MATT SULLIVAN, Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning/COO

8.1.2016

“After nine months of piloting, the Improvement and Compliance Service fully tested the overall design and core elements of the redesigned program. After satisfactory results, NOSA approved full implementation of the redesigned program to integrate new internal control requirements, NCA central office and a comprehensive Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework.”
Long Range Plan (FY2016–2021)

In March 2016, the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) published its FY2016-2021 Long Range Plan. It was developed with input from all levels of the organization. The plan focuses on five goals, 10 objectives, and 27 strategies that will enhance service to Veterans, their families, and other stakeholders. It is firmly rooted in our ICARE values—Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence—as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs’ broader transformational efforts.

The plan builds upon the many outstanding accomplishments NCA has achieved on behalf of Veterans and their families. It sustains this momentum and provides a road map to position the organization for continued success. Embedded in the goals are transformational initiatives such as establishing pre-need eligibility, instituting the Veterans Legacy Program, implementing Geographic Information System and Global Positioning System (GIS/GPS) technology system-wide, and replacing antiquated IT support systems. Many other initiatives are contained in the plan, along with key metrics that will be tracked to ensure annual milestones are met.

NCA’s vision for the future is ambitious and will be achieved through the commitment of its employees and support of its stakeholders.

Our Goals:

1) More Veterans and their families will have access to burial and memorial benefits
2) More Veterans and family members will utilize burial benefits
3) Veterans will be memorialized through new and enhanced tributes
4) Stakeholders will place greater trust in NCA based on improved accountability
5) Stakeholders will be served more efficiently and effectively by NCA’s internal capacity

In 2004, NCA established the National Training Center (NTC) in St. Louis, Mo. Initial programming focused on training future cemetery directors, but curricula expanded to include offerings for field and administrative employees who operate VA national cemeteries. The specialized technical training we provide is key to NCA’s ability to care for Veterans and families. We also invite cemetery personnel from the U.S. Army, the National Park Service, and states and tribal organizations to the NTC.

In FY2017, NCA’s Training Center will move into the new Employee Education System (EES) training facility located in Building 56 on the Jefferson Barracks VA Medical Center campus adjacent to the national cemetery.

NTC Milestones

♦ FY2016—540 personnel including more than 50 cemeterians from the Department of the Army, states and tribal organizations completed 25 courses at NTC.

♦ March 2016—NCA leaders (including seven from state cemeteries) participated at NCA’s National Training Conference.

♦ July 2016—Thirteen new directors graduate from the in-residence Cemetery Director Intern training program at the NTC.

♦ September 2016—Fourteen new interns matriculated as the Class of 2017, including the first-ever NCA selectee from the Pathways Recent Graduate Program.

“We will have two classrooms, one that can hold 40 and another that can hold 30 attendees, one large computer classroom, four conference/ breakout rooms, work station areas, and a reference library” said Jill Angelo, Deputy Director for Training.

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