

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONTRACTING OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
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ON THE
MISMANAGEMENT OF CONTRACTS AT ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

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Introduction

Chairman McCaskill, Ranking Member Brown and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the Army's ongoing efforts to restore the confidence of the American people in the management and leadership at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) --our "Nation's Most Sacred Shrine".

On June 10th, the Secretary of the Army appointed me as the Executive Director of the Army National Cemeteries Program. My task is to provide direct leadership and management for Arlington National Cemetery and the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery. In addition to ensuring that our Nation's fallen warriors are provided the honors commensurate with their service and sacrifice, my team and I focus every day on creating an organizational foundation that will allow the Army to better support one of its most sacred missions.

I am working to address the 76 factual findings and 101 recommendations for improvements at ANC outlined in the Department of the Army Inspector General reports. Broadly stated, the findings acknowledged that ANC suffered from dysfunctional management; a lack of established policies and procedures; an unhealthy organizational climate; errors in the accountability of remains; as well as 211 burial maps discrepancies.

I am privileged to enter the gates of Arlington National Cemetery to work on behalf of those who have served and sacrificed. It is a duty I do not take lightly and, from my work over the last 50 days, one that I can guarantee has the full weight of the Army Staff behind it. Great strides have been made and progress will continue to be made.

Immediate Army Actions

The Army established a core team – the Provisional Oversight Group (POG) – to focus on immediate requirements and assist in developing a long-term management plan for the Army’s National Cemeteries. Additionally the Army Staff and local commands have, without hesitation, lent their expertise to solving the complex problems I am addressing. Since the Secretary of the Army’s press conference and directive on June 10th, I have focused on the following actions:

- On June 11, 2010, a call center was established at ANC to resolve any family member concerns regarding a loved one’s remains. Cumulative calls total nearly 1,000 with 800 coming in the first week. Over 85% of the calls have been resolved successfully and efforts are continuing to address the remaining concerns.
- To address the 211 discrepancies between maps and burial records noted in the DAIG report, a number of steps have been taken. None of the research thus far has resulted in findings other than erroneous administrative markings on the burial maps.
 - As of July 23, 2010, the Arlington National Cemetery management team has reconciled the records for 139 of the 211 discrepancies

between the burial maps and burial records in sections 59, 65 and 66. Before all of these 211 discrepancies are considered resolved, the records reconciliation is being validated using ground penetrating radar. This will help ensure a complete reconciliation and validation of all the discrepancies identified in the Department of the Army Inspector General's report.

- All studies outlined in the SECARMY's directive of June 10, 2010, have either been completed or are in progress. We have expanded requirements, as appropriate, to establish necessary baseline information essential to manage and improve operations. Studies include:
 - Manpower: The US Army Manpower Analysis Agency and the US Army Force Management Support Agency conducted a manpower study of the current organizational structure to determine minimum essential staffing (manpower) and equipment requirements for ANC.
 - Contracting: The Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Procurement conducted a Procurement Management Review (PMR) to analyze contracts awarded over the last five years by Army Contracting Command (ACC) and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in support of ANC.
 - Audit: The Army Audit Agency is conducting a review of ANC financial management.

- IT: The Army's CIO/G-6 is conducting a review and evaluation of the information technology systems, applications, and information assurance process.
- Other: Army Materiel Command is providing an assessment of ANC Motor Pool / Safety operations; US Army Corps of Engineers is providing an Environmental Assessment Study; and Army Budget Office and Office of General Counsel are reviewing proposed controls for authorization and approval of funds.
- Additionally, I have taken swift action to resolve issues by simply “managing by walking around.” In addition to my own actions, the Acting Superintendent, Mr. Patrick Hallinan, is actively influencing cemetery operations every day. Mr. Hallinan has been detailed to Arlington National Cemetery as the Acting Superintendent, from the Department of Veterans Affairs, where he serves as the Director, Office of Field Programs, National Cemetery Administration. Mr. Hallinan's 33 years of cemetery experience enabled him to quickly establish and implement Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), which have resulted in immediate improvements to cemetery operations.

Way Ahead

The actions outlined above represent a small sampling of our efforts at ANC. I am acutely aware that I am personally responsible and accountable for Arlington National Cemetery and the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery.

With each day and with each issue, I am seeking ways to continuously improve all aspects of our operations:

- The Army continues to work toward implementing the Secretary's directive to establish the Army National Cemeteries Advisory Commission to provide independent oversight, and a regimented review of near and long-term activities at ANC. The establishment of this key, strategically focused group will help address long-term requirements of the Cemeteries as I work with the POG on tactical and operational level issues.
- As Army Staff sections and agencies finalize the various studies outlined above, I am sure there will undoubtedly be new issues identified. However, I am confident that I have the right team on the ground, the support of our Army, and the support of our Congress that I will need to promptly and effectively address all issues encountered. Resolution of map discrepancies, establishment of IT solutions, and implementation of SOPs across all aspects of cemetery operations will help to reestablish a baseline of accountability within the cemetery.

Conclusion

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee, there is one area that has never been in question – the overwhelming commitment of the cemetery's employees to our fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen,

their families, and their legacies. In the last 50 days, we have laid to rest nearly 1,000 of our Nation's finest.

I appreciate your deep interest in resolving the complex problems recently identified and your generous support of our servicemembers, their families and our veterans.