ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY
News Release

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Arlington National Cemetery's use of geospatial technology to manage cemetery operations, a first for U.S. national cemeteries

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Executive Director of the Army National Cemeteries Program announced in a hearing today that on March 12, Arlington National Cemetery will use an Army-designed geospatial mapping system to manage cemetery operations.

Kathryn A. Condon testified before the House Veterans Affairs' Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, along with representatives from the Dept. of Veterans Affairs National Cemeteries Administration and American Battle Monuments Commission to provide an update on the progress made to date at Arlington National Cemetery.

"Arlington is no longer a paper-based operation…By producing a single electronic map of Arlington, the staff will assign, manage and track gravesites with an authoritative digital map," said Condon. "It will allow us to synchronize in real-time our burial operations at Arlington," she said.

The geospatial mapping system allows Arlington to synchronize in real-time burial operations with other daily operations, such as public ceremonies, infrastructure repair, grounds upkeep and public safety activities across the cemetery. The system is linked to Arlington's interment scheduling system, which allows schedulers to assign gravesites electronically and assigns procession routes. It also alerts Arlington staff of other activities in the area. Arlington is the first national cemetery to use this technology.

The geospatial mapping system will use the information collected and validated as part of the Army's Gravesite Accountability study.

The Gravesite Accountability effort resulted in the first-ever review, analysis and coordination of all Arlington records that included more than 147 years of varying records from different eras in the cemetery's history. The Gravesite Accountability Task Force physically examined and photographed 259,978 gravesites, niches and markers using a custom-built smart phone application and matched each photo with existing cemetery records in a database. Arlington is 84 percent complete in validating records and is on track to finish this summer.

Once complete, Arlington's accountability effort will create a single, verifiable and authoritative database of all those laid to rest at Arlington. This database will be linked with Arlington's geospatial mapping system.

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Among the national cemeteries in the United States, Arlington National Cemetery is unique. It is the only national cemetery that routinely holds graveside services and provides full military honors for eligible veterans. It is a national military shrine, hosting 4 million visitors annually, as well as ceremonial functions involving foreign heads of state and other dignitaries. As the second largest cemetery in the country, Arlington National Cemetery oversees approximately 27-30 funeral services per day, five days a week. To better serve the needs of families, Arlington recently began supporting services on Saturdays for which military honors are not required or requested.

A link to a photo of a screen shot is available at
http://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtoncemetery/6964193063/in/photostream

A link of Arlington funeral representatives using the system is available at:
http://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtoncemetery/6964266691/in/photostream