

Dover's Friends of the Fallen visit Arlington

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Six members of the Friends of the Fallen, a group of approximately 50 volunteers who assist families who visit Dover Air Force Base, Del., to witness the dignified transfer of their loved ones, visited Arlington National Cemetery March 27.

The visit included a tour of the cemetery and a briefing on Arlington's latest GIS-based technology initiatives. Kathryn Condon, executive director, Army National Cemeteries Program, and Patrick Hallinan, ANC superintendent, then hosted a working lunch and roundtable discussion among the group and the chairs of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard Arlington Ladies.



Friends of the Fallen members met with Arlington officials and the four chairs of the Arlington Ladies, sharing common stories about serving the families of our nation's fallen heroes. Photo by Gregory Jones

"We were honored to visit Arlington and see the new technology, the beautiful grounds and a few of the logistics that go on every day. Exchanging stories with the Arlington Ladies was the most unique lunch conversation! We are a young organization and look to the Arlington Ladies as our mentors with admiration for their service and tradition," said Kim Landis, the organization's president.

Friends of the Fallen volunteers are available in Dover's Center for Families of the Fallen to provide support and comfort to families. This could entail providing food, supervising small children in the center's playroom, or lending personal items that families may have forgotten to bring, like a warm jacket.

The volunteers, many of whom are family members of military personnel and members of the local Dover community, are available for families 24 hours a day.

The group is committed to providing a volunteer at each dignified transfer, no matter the time of day. The group began in early 2010 and officially became a non-profit organization in March 2010.

"Our goal is to make families as comfortable as possible during a difficult time in their life. These families have lost a loved one who has given the ultimate sacrifice – we want them to know how much we care," said Landis.