

Advisory Committee on United States Outlying Areas and Freely Associated States Annual Meeting



December 12, 2024



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U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Business Meeting Opening

Mr. Bernard Johnson



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Observations Discussion

VA Health Care System / VA Center



NCA Initiatives and Updates

Mr. Ronald Walters



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National Cemetery Administration Overview

Advisory Committee for U.S. Outlying Areas
and Freely Associated States
December 12, 2024

Glenn Powers
Deputy Under Secretary
Field Programs and Cemetery Operations
National Cemetery Administration



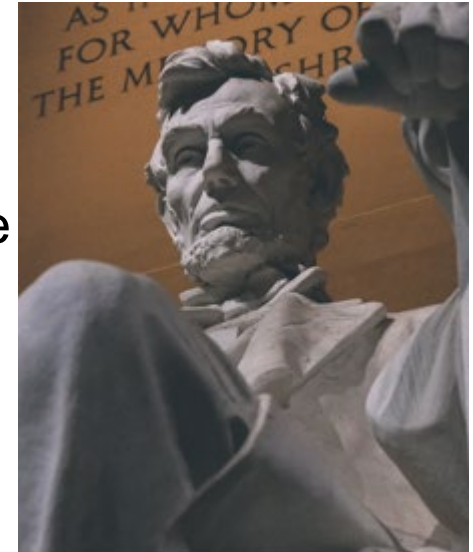
Mission and Priorities

Mission

- The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) honors Veterans and their families with final resting places in national shrines and lasting tributes that commemorate their service and sacrifice to our Nation

Priorities

- Ensure a workplace where every employee is respected and valued
- Properly memorializing our nation's heroes by maintaining our cemeteries as national shrines
- Continue working toward 95% coverage for all Veterans
- Continue cultivating relationships with state, territorial and tribal cemeteries



“To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors.”



Interments, Headstones and Markers

- NCA maintains over 4,265,000 graves
- 155 National Cemeteries
 - 86 open for all interments
 - 21 open for cremated remains
 - 48 closed to new interments
- 134,245 interments conducted in FY 2024
 - 6,849 at Riverside N.C.
 - 5,850 at Florida N.C.
 - 4,809 at Dallas-Ft. Worth N.C.
 - 4,697 at Ft. Snelling N.C.
 - 4,474 at Calverton N.C.
 - 4,397 at Great Lakes N.C.
 - 4,237 at Jefferson Barracks N.C.
 - 4,154 at Fort Sam Houston N.C.
- 298,048 headstones and markers furnished in FY24



Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery





Other Federal Veteran and Military Cemeteries

- Armed Forces Cemeteries
 - Army
 - 2 national cemeteries
 - 28 post cemeteries
 - Navy
 - Air Force
- American Battle Monuments Commission
 - 26 overseas American military cemeteries
 - Interments available at Clark Veterans Cemetery (Philippines)
- National Park Service
 - 14 national cemeteries
 - 1 open for new interments



ABMC Manila American Cemetery
and Memorial



If You've Seen One National Cemetery ...





If You've Seen One National Cemetery





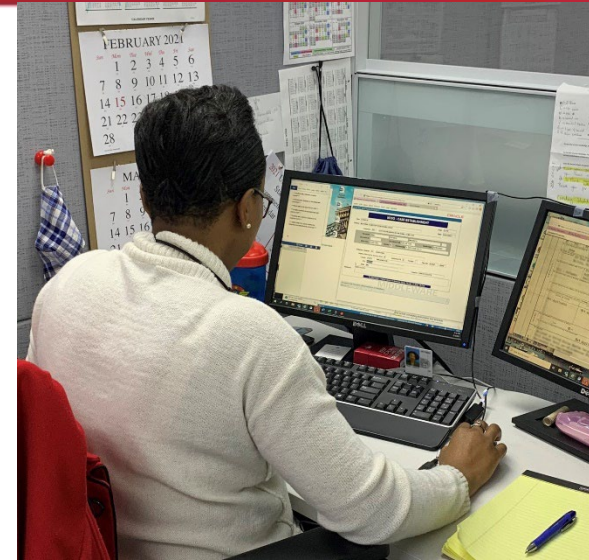
... You've Seen One National Cemetery.





Eligibility and Scheduling

- Any service member who dies on active duty or Veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable
- National Guard members and Reservists who were called to Federal active duty or are entitled to retired pay
- Spouses, dependent children and certain parents
- Pre-Need Eligibility Determinations



The National Cemetery Scheduling Office serves all VA national cemeteries

Toll Free Number



1-800-535-1117
PRESS OPTION 1

https://www.cem.va.gov/burial_benefits/need.asp



Burial and Memorial Benefits

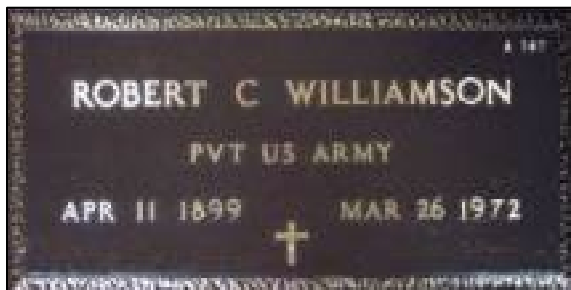


**Upright
Headstone**



Niche Covers

Flat Marker



**“In Memory
of...”**



Burial and Memorial Benefits



Burial Flag

Presidential Memorial Certificate



*The United States of America
honors the memory of
John Q Service*

*This certificate is awarded by a grateful
nation in recognition of devoted and
selfless consecration to the service
of our country in the Armed Forces
of the United States.*

J. R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States



Burial and Memorial Benefits



**Bronze
Medallion**



**Medal of Honor
Medallion**



Burial and Memorial Benefits



**Commemorative
Urn***



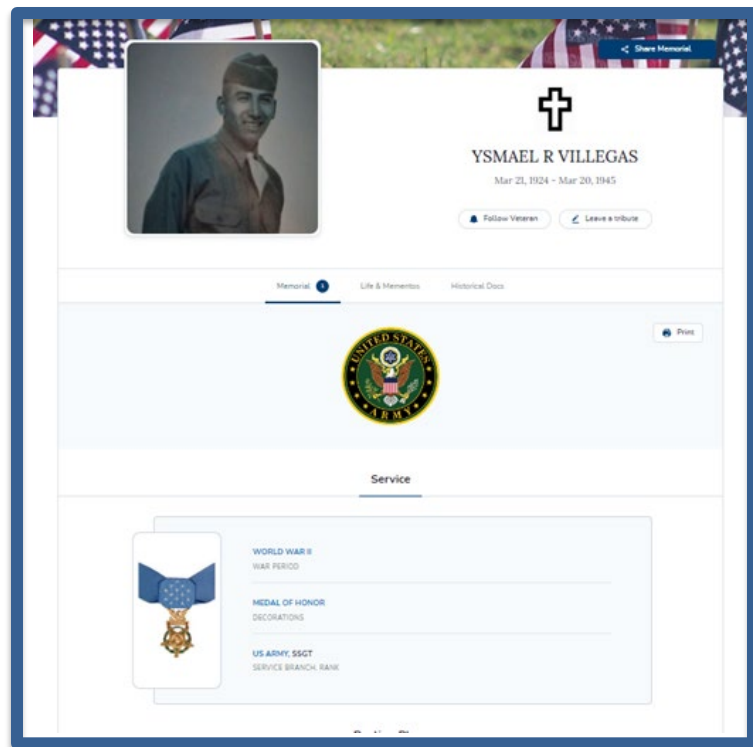
**Commemorative
Plaque***

*The urn and plaque are memorial items that commemorate a Veteran whose cremated remains have not been interred. It's important to note that if a family chooses an urn or a plaque to commemorate a Veteran, VA is prohibited by law from interring that Veteran's remains in a VA national cemetery or from providing a headstone, marker or medallion for placement in any cemetery.



Veterans Legacy Memorial

- Interactive Web Site honoring nearly 10 million Veterans in VA national cemeteries, VA-funded state/tribal/territory Veteran cemeteries, Department of Defense-managed cemeteries, National Park Service cemeteries, and private cemeteries within and outside the United States.
- Veteran pages include birth/death dates, emblem of belief, military service details, and cemetery info
- Users can contribute
 - Tributes (comments)
 - Photos
 - Biographies
 - Word Clouds
 - Career Milestones
 - Historical Documents



www.va.gov/remember



NCA Team Members

- 2,430 Team Members
 - 1,933 at Cemeteries and field offices outside of DC
 - 64.9% are Veterans (highest in federal government)





Customer Satisfaction

In 2022, for the 8th consecutive time, NCA achieved the highest ranking of any participating organization public or private!





National Cemetery Administration

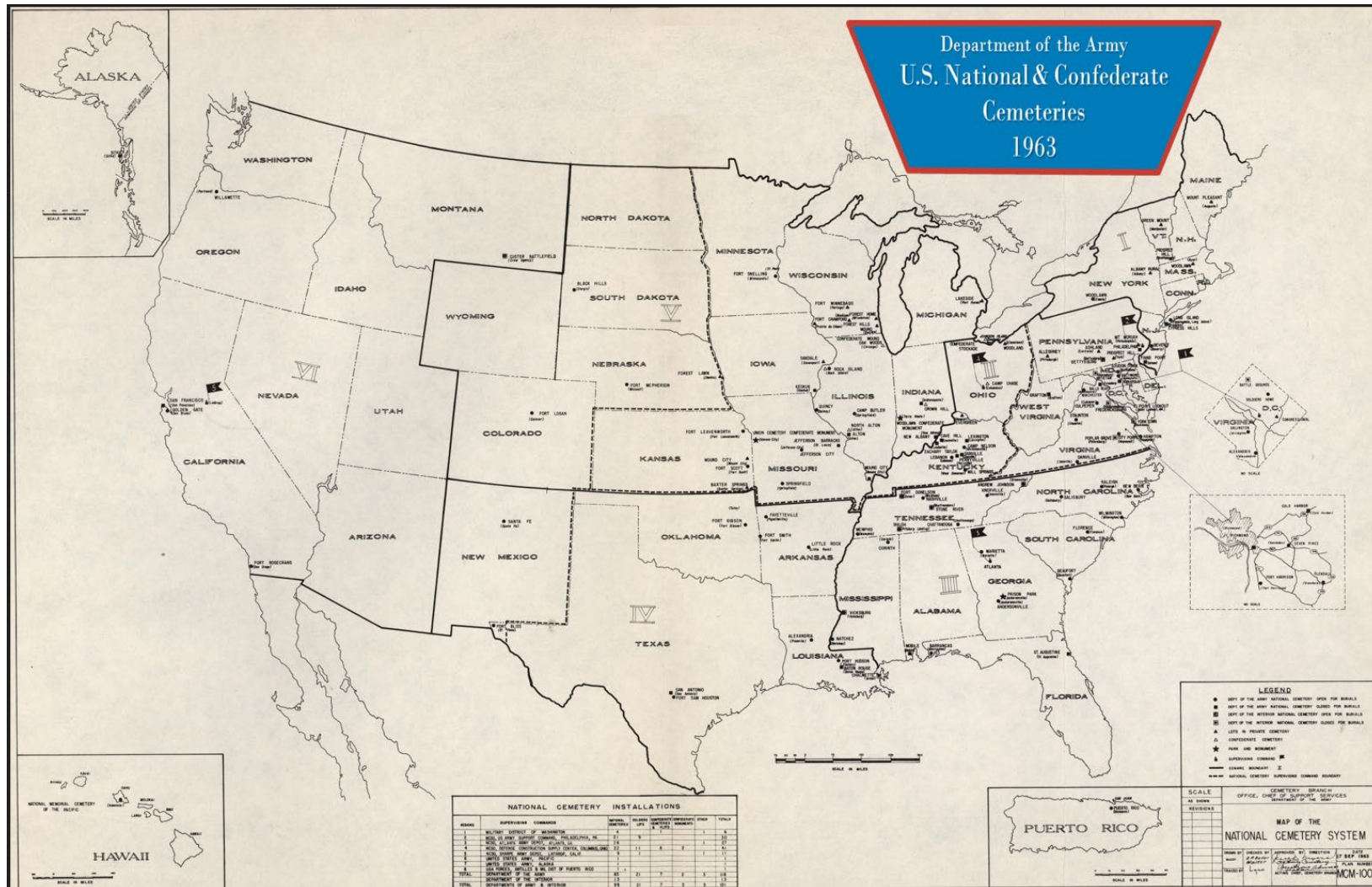
ACCESS





Access – 1951-1975

Department of the Army
U.S. National & Confederate
Cemeteries
1963

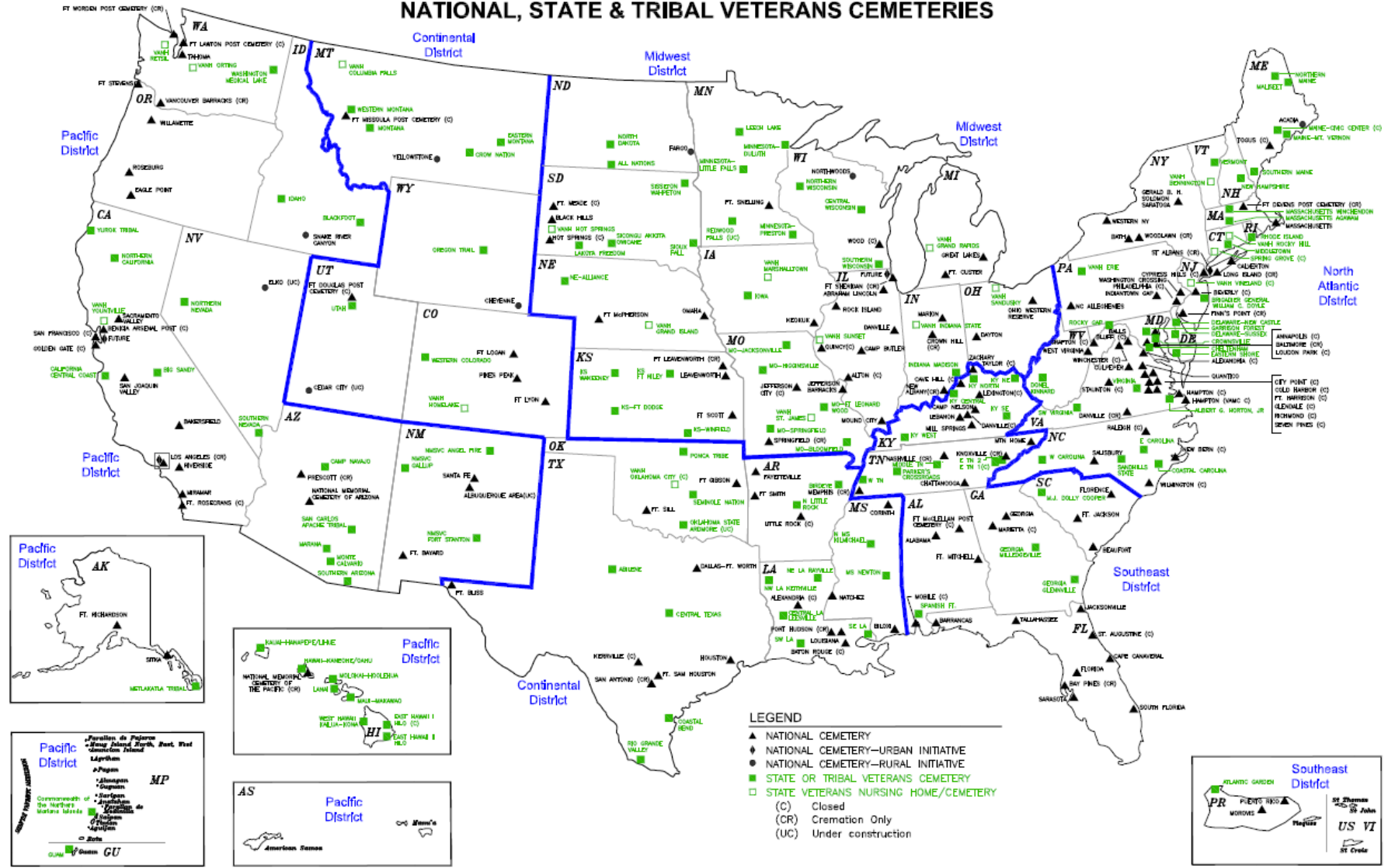


Army map of the National Cemetery System in 1963
America's World War II Burial Program (NCA 2020)



National, State and Tribal Cemeteries

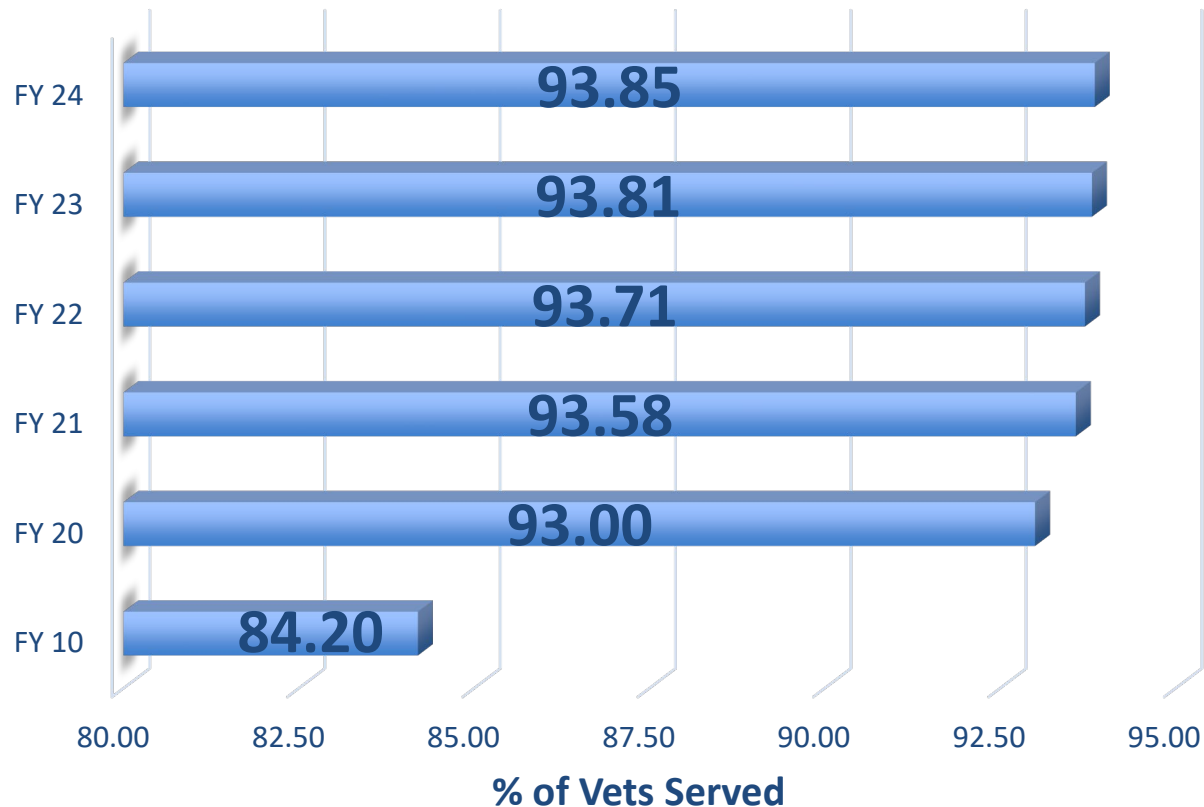
NATIONAL, STATE & TRIBAL VETERANS CEMETERIES





Increasing Access

Burial Access for Veterans (%)



- NCA's goal is to achieve 95%.
- Access is defined as providing the Veteran population with reasonable access to a burial option within 75 miles of their homes.



Veterans Cemetery Grants Program

- Since 1978 - the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program (VCGP)
- Over \$1 Billion in construction grants
- 122 state, tribal, and territory Veteran Cemeteries throughout the country
- 14 tribal Veteran cemeteries operational
- FY 2024, state, territory and tribal Veteran Cemeteries conducted over 42,720 interments



Guam Veterans Cemetery
Piti
Memorial Day 2022



Veterans Cemetery Grants Program

National and State Veterans Cemeteries all must meet NCA's Operational Standards and Measures



Alexandria National Cemetery



Western Montana Veterans Cemetery



NCA Benefits

		Interment in VA National Cemetery	Interment in VA Funded State/Tribal Veterans Cemetery	Headstone/Marker in Any Cemetery	Medallion outside of Veterans Cemetery	Presidential Memorial Certificate	Veterans Legacy Memorial Page	Has National Cemetery	Has VA Funded State/Tribal Veterans Cemetery	
	Hawaii	US State	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
	Philippines	Foreign Nation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No*	No	
COVERED AREAS	Puerto Rico	U.S. Territories	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
	Guam		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No	
	CNMI		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No	YES <small>Has 2 Conforming Preapplications</small>
	Virgin Islands of U.S.		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No	No <small>Has Conforming Preapplication</small>
	American Samoa		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No
	Micronesia	Freely Associated States	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No
	Marshall Islands		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No
	Palau		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No

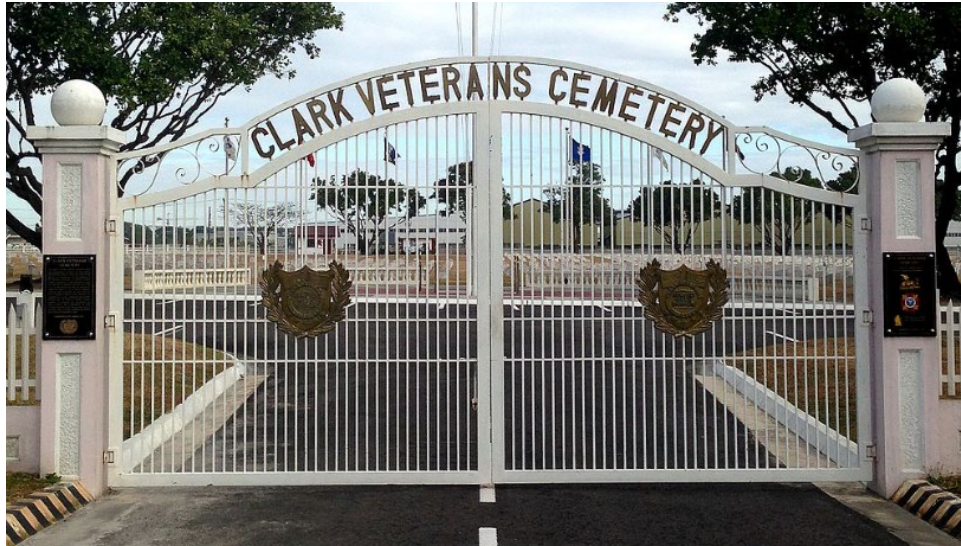
*Veterans living in the Philippines may be buried at Clark Veterans Cemetery - Administered by the American Battle Monuments Commission

The Commemorative Urn* and Commemorative Plaque* are available anywhere in the world for Veterans whose cremated remains have not been interred.

*Note: For Veterans for whom VA has provided an urn or a plaque, VA is prohibited by law from interring the Veteran's remains in a VA national cemetery or from providing a headstone, marker or medallion for placement in any cemetery.



Clark Veterans Cemetery



Clark Veterans Cemetery

Island of Luzon in the Philippines

Administered by the
American Battle Monuments
Commission

Open to U.S. Veterans
living in the Philippines and
WWII Filipino Scouts

Not open to spouse or
dependent burial

<https://www.abmc.gov/Clark>



NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION



Thank You

www.cem.va.gov

Lunch



VA Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs

Ms. Zaneta Adams



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VA/IGA Indo-Pacific Updates

December 12, 2024

Zaneta Adams

**Deputy Assistant Secretary of Intergovernmental
Affairs**



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Team IGA Leadership

- Ms. Zaneta Adams, Deputy Assistant Secretary, IGA
- Mr. Henry Huntley, Director, State, Local, International Engagements
- Mr. Conrad Washington, Director, Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships
- Ms. Stephanie Birdwell, Director, Office of Tribal Government Relations
- Mr. Clay Ward, Director, Office of Rural Engagement



VA Pacific Strategy

- In 2021, SECVA appointed a career SES to be Senior Advisor for Pacific Strategy for a period of 3 years
- Focuses on synchronization across Veterans Benefits Admin (VBA), Veterans Health Admin (VHA), National Cemetery Admin (NCA) to better serve and support the needs of Veterans in the Pacific region
 - Build stakeholder/interagency relationships
 - Seek federal, state, territorial and private partnership opportunities to increase benefits and services to eligible Veterans
 - COFA Amendment Implementation
 - Better coordinate outreach and engagement across the VA



VA Pacific Strategy (cont.)

- Area includes U.S. Territories, Freely Associated States, and other Countries
 - US territories - Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands
 - COFA (Compact of Free Association) island nations - Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau
 - Philippines*, South Korea, Five Eyes (Australia, NZ, UK, Canada), etc.
 - * *only foreign-located VA facility*
- ❖ VBA conducts regular outreach and visits to Veterans living in COFA nations (Micronesia, Palau, the Marshall Islands) to inform them about the benefits available to them that they earned through their service (every 6 months)
- ❖ VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System (PIHCS) currently provides services at 12 locations in Hawaii and Pacific territories (American Samoa, Guam, and CNMI).



Indo-Pacific

Figure I. The Indo-Pacific



Source: Map prepared by Hannah Fischer and Amber Wilhelm with CRS.



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Strategic Landscape

- U.S. has continuing strategic interest in Pacific island region
- US Indo-Pacific Strategy, published by the White House, Feb 2022
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>
- Fact Sheet: Enhancing the US-Pacific Islands Partnership – The White House, 25 Sep 2023
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/09/25/fact-sheet-enhancing-the-u-s-pacific-islands-partnership/>
- Freely Associated States (FAS) under the Compact of Free Association (COFA)
 - FAS receive U.S. economic assistance while granting the U.S. prerogatives to operate military bases on their soil and make decisions that affect mutual security
 - FAS citizens may serve in the U.S. Armed Forces
 - The U.S. will provide roughly \$5.6 billion in COFA funding to the RMI and FSM by 2023 and \$1.06 billion to Palau by 2024, under the previous negotiated Compacts. Compact agreements have been signed.



Indo-Pacific Selected Highlights

- Compact of Free Association (COFA) Amendments Act of 2023 – VA provision
- Advisory Committee on US Outlying Areas and FAS
 - Inaugural meeting, 12-14 Dec 2023, Puerto Rico
- VA Center for NH, PI, and US-Affiliated PI Health
- Improved VHA location in Guam
- Updated Pacific Islander Veterans Outreach Booklet
- Veteran Experience Action Center Events
- Office of Health Equity publications
- White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI)
 - Interagency Workgroups
 - Agency Equity Plan



Proposed COFA Amendments Act of 2023

- Sec. 8. (a) Authorization for Veterans' services
 - Amend 38 USC § 1724
 - Secretary may furnish hospital care and medical services in FAS to a Veteran who is otherwise eligible to receive hospital care and medical service
 - May include Pharmacy
 - Beneficiary travel to/from FAS may be provided
- Outreach and assessment of options



Recent Engagements / Collaborations

- Two meetings in 2024 with Guam Governors Office
- Monthly meetings held to discuss events, issues, and concerns (internally) focused on Ind-Pacific Issues
- September 2024 meeting between Interagency Partners regarding Pacific strategies
- Participated in December 2024 in the USG Group Working meeting (virtually).
- VBA provide benefit assist in Palau in September 2024
- Multiple and continuous meetings both internally and externally with VA and FAS Governments on COFA.



Link that takes you directly to page with pdf of book as well as QR that can be used to download book (PDF) directly to phone.

Link

<https://www.va.gov/pacific-islands-health-care/programs/vapihcs-pacific-islander-benefits-book/>

QR code



Comments / Questions

Thank You!

Mahalo iā 'oe
Si Yu'os Ma'āse'
Ke kmal mesaul
Kinisou chapur
Fa'afetai
Salamat
Komṃool
Gracias



Break



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Public Comments



Calendar Discussion Part II



Day Closeout / Updates / Reminders



Business Meeting Adjourned

