



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bakersfield National Cemetery Begins Burials

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs officially opened its 130th national cemetery today with first burials at Bakersfield National Cemetery.

“This beautiful new national cemetery will be a lasting tribute to the men and women of Central California who have served our nation,” said Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Steve Muro. “We are proud to uphold VA’s commitment to America’s Veterans by providing a final resting place for these heroes.”

The new cemetery is located on a 500-acre site donated by Tejon Ranch and will serve approximately 200,000 Veterans in the region.

Interments began in a 10-acre early burial area. The next phase of design and construction (Phase IB) will develop an additional 35 acres. The cemetery staff will work from a temporary office, committal service shelter and maintenance facility until the construction project is completed.

When completed, Phase 1 will provide approximately 4,800 full-casket gravesites, 4,000 pre-placed crypts, 4,000 in-ground cremation sites and 3,000 columbarium niches. Construction plans for the cemetery include roadways, an entrance area, an administration and public information center, a maintenance complex, a maintenance yard and parking, a flag assembly area, a memorial walkway, two committal service shelters and interment areas. Other infrastructure improvements include grading, drainage, fencing, landscaping, utilities and an automated drip system.

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Veterans with a discharge under conditions other than dishonorable, their spouses and eligible dependent children can be buried in a national cemetery. Other burial benefits include a burial flag, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and a government headstone or marker – even if they are not buried in a national cemetery - or a memorial headstone or marker for eligible decedents when the remains are not available for burial.

In the midst of the largest cemetery expansion since the Civil War, VA operates 130 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. More than three million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict — from the Revolutionary War to the Global War on Terror — are buried in VA's national cemeteries on more than 16,000 acres of land.

Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the Internet at <http://www.cem.va.gov> or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 1-800-827-1000. To make burial arrangements at the time of need, call the national cemetery scheduling office at (800) 535-1117.

For information on Bakersfield National Cemetery, call the cemetery office at (866) 632-1845.

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