



## Veterans Cemetery Grants Program Newsletter

Department of Veterans Affairs

### NEW SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS THE HONORABLE ROBERT A. MCDONALD



Secretary Robert A. McDonald

Robert A. McDonald was nominated by President Obama to serve as the eighth Secretary of Veterans Affairs and was confirmed by the United States Senate on July 29, 2014. In his address to VA he said, *“I am grateful to President Obama and to Congress for this opportunity to join the dedicated employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and I am honored to serve as your Secretary and lead VA. We are immensely fortunate to work in an organization with the noblest and most respected mission in Government-serving this Nation’s Veterans.”*

Prior to joining VA, Secretary McDonald was Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer of The Proctor & Gamble Company (P&G). During his 33 year tenure, P&G was widely recognized for its leader development prowess.

An Army veteran, Secretary McDonald graduated from West Point and served with the 82nd Airborne Division as an Airborne Ranger.

He is committed to value-based leadership and to improving the lives of others. *“My job as your Secretary is to lead the change in VA that results in consistent, better outcomes for Veterans as we fulfill President Lincoln’s charge to care for*

*those ‘who shall have borne the battle’ and for their families. To me, that means providing Veterans—effectively and efficiently—the high quality care and benefits they have earned.”*

**SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:**

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### MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING UNDER SECRETARY FOR MEMORIAL AFFAIRS



Ronald E. Walters  
Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs

On June 23, 2014, I was named the Acting Under Secretary for

*Memorial Affairs and will serve in that role until a new Under Secretary is nominated and confirmed. While the selection process moves forward, I’m excited to work alongside you in “Keeping the Promise, Together” for Veterans and their families. Our historic mission will not change. I am confident that our past commitment to deliver exceptional*

*customer care will not falter and will continue to be a great source of pride for each of us. In short, the mission continues as it has for the past 152 years and many will depend on us. Ours is the last in the life cycle of caring for Veterans with honor and dignity and comes at a time of great vulnerability for their families....*

*As we recommit to VA’s*

*core mission and ICARE values, know that we have a sound infrastructure in place to sustain excellence for our National Shrines. Preparing the final resting places for our Veterans who have served these United States of America is as noble a mission as exists anywhere. Thank you for being part of NCA and for your dedication and commitment to Veterans and their families....*

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER



George D. Eisenbach, Jr.  
Director, VCGP

Greetings All,

My first cycle as the Director, Veterans Cemetery Grants Program is complete and I want to take this opportunity to reflect on Fiscal Year (FY) FY14. It was a robust year for our program; we awarded 15 grants totaling \$51.9M to ten states. We opened and dedicated two new Tribal cemeteries which now total four throughout the country along with one state cemetery. Our outreach participation continued to grow as VA collaborates closely with state governments to encourage greater grant participation and for the states to submit grant applications for establishment, expansion, expansion and improvement

projects; work closely with Indian country to establish new tribal cemeteries, and to track and monitor cemetery data so there are no interruptions in service.

I have had the distinct honor and pleasure of visiting many State and Tribal cemeteries, meeting with your senior leadership, as well as the people that make it happen, you and your teams. One thing that's evident throughout my visits is the dedication you and your teams have. The caring attitude and commitment to excellence in caring for our Veterans and their families is un-

questionable, and for that I say, "Thank you."

In FY15, we are projected to fund 16 cemetery projects in 14 states. As we move forward into FY15, I anticipate another robust year, one with challenges that we will embrace to continue on our path to provide the best service to our Veterans and their family members.

I look forward to meeting many of you during my travels in the coming months.

## Who's Who in VCGP



VCGP Team Top Row Left to Right: Tom Paquelet, Project Manager/Landscape Architect; Howard Orr, Jr., Project Manager/Landscape Architect; George D. Eisenbach, Jr., Director; and Louis Wingfield, Program Specialist.

Bottom Row Left to Right: Lisa Moore, Program Specialist; Dana Hughes, Program Support Assistant; and Ann Levine, Architect. Not Pictured: LaQuisha Barnes, Program Specialist and Anthony "Tonney" Collier, Engineering Technician.

## FY14 GRANT AWARDS

During FY14, VA awarded 15 grants totaling \$51.9M to ten following states: Arizona, California, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin. The grant awards included one grant for appearance and improvement, six for establishment of new cemeteries, four for expansion projects, and four for expansion and improvement projects. One tribal grant was awarded to the San Carlos Tribe in Arizona to establish a new Veterans cemetery. The grant awards are as follows:

### Appearance and Improvement (O&M)

Brigadier General Williams C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Wrightstown, New Jersey

### Establishment of New Cemeteries

Northern Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Camp Navajo, Bellemont, Arizona

Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Marana, Marana, Arizona

San Carlos Apache Veterans Cemetery, Peridot, Arizona

California Central Coast Veterans Cemetery, Seaside, California

Northeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery, Rayville, Louisiana

Eastern Carolina State Veterans Cemetery, Goldsboro, North Carolina

### Expansion Projects

Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery, Little Falls, Minnesota

Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Fernley, Nevada

Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery, Killeen, Texas

Rio Grande Valley State Veterans Cemetery, Mission, Texas



### Expansion and Improvement Projects

Maine Veterans Memorial Cemetery — Civic Center Drive, Augusta, Maine

Maine Veterans Memorial Cemetery — Mount Vernon Road, Augusta Maine

Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Union Grove, Wisconsin

Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Spooner, Wisconsin

## TRIBAL GRANT ESTABLISHMENT AWARDS

VA awarded five tribal government grants for the establishment of new tribal veterans cemeteries in Arizona, California, Oklahoma, and South Dakota.

**Rosebud Sioux Tribe**, Sicangu Akicita Owicaha Tribal Veterans Cemetery, White River, SD: August 15, 2011

**Yurok Tribe**, Yurok Tribe Veterans Cemetery, Klamath, CA: September 9, 2011

**Pascua Yaqui Tribe**, Monte Calvario Veterans Cemetery, Tucson, AZ: September 9, 2011

**Oglala Sioux Tribe**, Akicita Owicaha Lakota Freedom Veterans Cemetery, Pine Ridge, SD: September 7, 2012

**Seminole Nation**, Seminole Nation Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Seminole, OK: September 23, 2013

## FY15 NCA TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

### Caretaker Training

**October 6, 2014**

This training course will discuss general field base cemetery operations performed by Caretakers and Cemetery Technicians. These operations involve equipment and vehicle maintenance, interment process, headstone marker alignments, niche covers, safety, customer service, and grounds and facilities maintenance.

### Foreman Boot Camp

**November 3, 2014**

This course is primarily designed to discuss and demonstrate general field base routine cemetery operations. To facilitate interments, headstone, markers, in-ground and above niche alignments, facilities support maintenance and equipment/vehicle maintenance. General administrative record keeping, reporting and labor management will be discussed in addition to implementing safety procedures and customer service technique and strategies.

### Cemetery Representative Training

**December 9, 2014**

This course is designed for those that have Cemetery Representative responsibilities or duties in support of achieving Cemetery National Shrine Standards and functional operations, customer service, and the committal shelter process. It will also include an overview of the headstones and markers.

### BOSS Training

**January 15, 2015**

This course is specifically for novice BOSS users and will provide a comprehensive overview of the BOSS functionality, including establishing and managing cases, ordering headstones and markers, creating/maintaining gravesites information, query reports and other BOSS functionality relevant to the role of a Cemetery Representative, Cemetery Technician, Program Assistant or other staff members who use the application as part of their day-to-day work at their cemetery.

### Foreman Boot Camp

**March 23, 2015**

See course description for November 3, 2014.

Please contact Anthony Collier at 202.632.7205 or [Anthony.Collier@va.gov](mailto:Anthony.Collier@va.gov) for further information about training courses and dates.



## Compliance Review Program

In late 2012, the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program (VCGP) launched an initiative to modify its review program for the VA grant-funded cemetery community. The primary goal of the initiative is to align the program with NCA's Organizational Assessment and Improvement Program (OAI) which is used to evaluate the performance of VA's Operational Standards and Measures and to determine National Shrine Status. Building on its success in FY13, the Veterans Cemetery Grants Compliance Review Program (OAI) successfully conducted a total of seven site pilot reviews in FY14 to test the new assessment methodology, incorporate the

lessons learned in FY13 and conduct outreach to the VA grant-funded cemetery community. In addition, the program worked to extend additional training options to the grant-funded cemeteries in order to promote a culture of partnership and accountability.

The program recently completed two on-site training workshops for both the states of Maryland and New Jersey. The workshops served as successful collaborative training experiences for the cemetery staff to share the best practices and build lasting professional relationships between NCA and its state partners. As the program

continues to move forward in FY15, NCA will work with the states, tribal organizations and territories to identify opportunities for additional face-to-face trainings. Now that all pilot site reviews have been completed, NCA will fully implement the Veterans Cemetery Grants Compliance Review Program in FY15 on a permanent, ongoing basis. If a cemetery has any questions about the new program and would like to learn more, please contact Mishelle Kochel at [Mishelle.Kochel@va.gov](mailto:Mishelle.Kochel@va.gov) or 202.461.6457.

## ANNUAL GRANT PROCESS CYCLE

VA Grant Process is an annual cycle. The States, Tribal governments, and U.S. Territories must submit their grant pre-applications to VA no later than July 1 to be considered for next year's funding.

VA prioritizes pre-applications by September 30. VA submits their annual Federal Budget to Congress for review. Congress authorizes approved budget and the number of projects which are ranked by VA and included on the Priority List. VCGP sends grant opportunity and regret letters to the States, Tribal governments, and U.S. Territories notifying them of their pre-application status.



VCGP Project Managers play an integral role in working with the authorized contacts from the States, Tribal governments, and U.S. Territories. They work with them in the Design and Bid process which range from 4 to 8 months. Grantees must hire an architect and engineering firms and collab-

orate with the VCGP Project Managers, and must include land acquisition, environmental assessments, geotechnical analysis, iterative process for site development review and approval. The construction bids are obtained and submitted to VCGP for review and recommendation for lowest cost bid selected.

Grantees then submit their final grant application to VA for review and approval of the grant award by September 30. The site construction and development of the cemetery project ranges from 18 to 24 months. Reimbursements will be provided through payment requests as the project progresses.

## Important VCGP Dates

### July 1

Grant pre-applications must be in the [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) website to be considered for FY16 funding.

### August 1

Annual Cemetery Datasheets must be received no later than the above date. The cemetery data form can be downloaded from the following link: <http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-0241.pdf>. This provides VA with data regarding the number of interments conducted at cemeteries each year. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Louis Wingfield at 202.632.7206 or email him at [Louis.Wingfield@va.gov](mailto:Louis.Wingfield@va.gov).

### August 15

VCGP must receive a copy of the State Legislation or Tribal Resolution, and State or Tribal Matching Funds Architectural and Engineering (A/E) Funds supporting pre-application for the highest ranking on the FY Priority List. State or Tribal Matching Funds are 10 percent of the estimated construction costs and are reimbursable at the time of the grant award.

The Matching Funds are used to develop plans, drawings, and specifications. The VA Form 40-0895-6 can be downloaded at <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-0895-6.pdf>.

The State Legislation or Tribal Resolution must include a commitment to own, operate, and maintain a Veterans cemetery in accordance with the National Cemetery Administration's Guidelines.



## NCA Graduates the Cemetery Director Intern Class of 2013

NCA graduated its eighth class from the National Cemetery Director Intern Program Aug. 8. The ceremony was held at VA Central Office in Washington in honor of 14 members who spent the last 12 months at the NCA National Training Center (NTC) in St. Louis.

The program prepares employees to manage and operate cemeteries as national shrines for America's Veterans and their families. No other federal training facility provides training in cemetery management. In the weeks to come, the interns will begin work as directors, assistant directors or assistants to the directors at national cemeteries around the country.

*"The philosopher Lao Tzu said:*

*'a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.' Congratulations! You have taken that first critical step and are certainly now bound for success,"* said Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Ronald E. Walters. *"Of course, 'success' for civil servants isn't defined as fame or fortune, but instead as the fulfillment and recognition that comes from doing the people's business—and doing it well and faithfully,"* he continued. *"For us in VA, the people are the Nation's Veterans and their families: men and women who have served and sacrificed and protected our American dream—even when that meant they had to set their own dreams aside."*

VA Chief of Staff, Jose Riojas delivered the keynote address. Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs Glenn Powers also spoke at the ceremony.



Top row left to right: Graham Wright; Matt Metschke; Rudy Arnold; Mike Munnerlyn; Paul LaGrange; Adriene Benton; Keith Barnes; Bottom row, left to right: Craig Arsell; Sue Nan Jehlen; Ame Callahan; Jeny Walker; Mark Polen; Jasper Edwards.

The interns spent the days prior to graduation visiting various sites in the Washington area including Arlington and Quantico National Cemeteries. They also delivered presentations on best practices for outreach initiatives and cemetery operations including a question and answer session with NCA senior staff.

The interns are as assigned to the following cemeteries:

Charles "Rudy" Arnold, Assistant Director, Bay Pines National Cemetery, St. Petersburg, Florida  
 Craig Arsell, Assistant Director, South Florida National Cemetery, Lake Worth, Florida  
 Brian "Keith" Barnes, Director, West Virginia National Cemetery, Grafton, West Virginia  
 Adriene Benton, Director, Fort Smith National Cemetery, Fort Smith, Arkansas  
 Amerophan "Ame" Callahan, Director, Wood National Cemetery, Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
 Jasper Edwards, Assistant to the Director, Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis, Missouri  
 Sue Nan Jehlen, Assistant Director, Fort Logan National Cemetery, Denver, Colorado  
 Paul LaGrange, Director, Camp Butler National Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois  
 Matthew Metschke, Assistant to the Director, Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis, Missouri  
 Michael Munnerlyn, Assistant Director, Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, San Diego, California  
 Mark Polen, Assistant Director, Port Hudson/Natchez National Cemetery, Zachary, Louisiana  
 Thomas Ruck, Assistant Director, Puerto Rico National Cemetery, Bayamon, Puerto Rico  
 Jeny Walker, Assistant Director, Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery, Fort Worth, Texas  
 Graham Wright, Director, Biloxi National Cemetery, Biloxi, Mississippi

## OGLALA SIOUX TRIBE DEDICATES NEW CEMETERY

The dedication and grand opening of the Akicita Owicaha Lakota Freedom Veterans Cemetery was held on July 9, 2014. The Pine Ridge Reservation is home to the Oglala Sioux Tribe (OST) and is located approximately 8 miles east of Kyle, South Dakota. The cemetery sits on the hillside in the middle of the reservation and consists of 18 acres on a 63-acre site adjacent to BIA Route #2, Big Foot Trail.

The entrance to the cemetery has two iron gates adorned with metal feathers through which visitors can view a drive-



way lined with American flags and an information and visitor's center at its end.

The cemetery has 320 burial vaults, shelter for urns, and a traditional burial ground where graves will be dug by hand. The establishment of the cemetery was made possible by a grant from the VA.

It's only the second tribal veterans cemetery in South Dakota. The first was the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Sicangu Akicita Owicaha Veterans Cemetery located on the Rosebud Reservation in White River, South Dakota.

The event was attended by Oglala tribal dignitaries, Veterans, community leaders, and the public. Many of the attendees arrived on horseback. Ruth Brown and Jim Meeks (Eagle Nest District Representatives) and Stanley Little Whiteman and Bernie Shot with Arrow (Medicine Root District Representatives) gave Welcoming Addresses. Guest speakers included Bryan Brewer and Tom

Oglala Sioux Tribe *continued on page 8*

## IN BRIEF

### [FY15 Priority List](#)

The FY 2015 Priority List of Pending States and Tribal Government Cemetery Construction Grants Pre-Applications is posted on the VA website at [http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/grants/priority\\_list.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/grants/priority_list.asp).

### [BOSS MOUs](#)

New Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) are required for all states and tribal cemeteries. One MOU is required per cemetery. Please scan and email the completed MOU to [vcgs@va.gov](mailto:vcgs@va.gov) no later than November 3, 2014.

### [VCGP Shared Mailbox](#)

Please continue to send any inquiries to VCGP's Shared Mailbox at [vcgs@va.gov](mailto:vcgs@va.gov). Your email will be referred to the appropriate staff person.

### [Quarterly Call Update](#)

The next VCGP quarterly conference call is scheduled for December 9, 2014, at 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. EST.

## DEDICATION OF YUOK TRIBE VETERANS CEMETERY

The dedication ceremony of the new Yurok Tribe Veterans Cemetery took place on August 12, 2014. The cemetery site, which is located in Humboldt County approximately 11 miles west of Weitchpec, California, sits on top of a hillside with sweeping views of the Klamath River. It sits on the east side of Bald Hills

Road surrounded by a forest of tanoak at Douglas fir.

*"It is a great privilege to provide such an important service to the many Native American Veterans who have courageously served in the armed forces,"* said Thomas O' Rourke Sr., Chairman of the Yurok Tribe. *"With great respect, we dedi-*

*cate this new cemetery to the Veterans, who volunteered to fight for our rights, our freedom and our country."*

The Yurok Tribe cemetery will serve more than 465 Native Americans and their families. The site consists of committal shelter, full



Yurok Tribe *continued on page 8*

## OGLALA SIOUX TRIBE

*Oglala Sioux Tribe continued from page 7*

Poor Bear current OST President and Vice President, respectively; past OST Presidents Theresa Two Bulls, Jim Steele, and William Brewer; and Chuck Conroy, OST Veterans Committee Chairman. Special Remarks were made by George D. Eisenbach Jr., Director, Veterans Cemetery Grants Program; Aaron Pollard, Deputy Secretary South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs; Colonel Michael Petrocco, Deputy Commander 28th Mission Support Group; Chief Master Sergeant Doreen Wheeler, 28th Mission Support Group; and Ms. Sandy Marlette, Representative/Office of

U.S. Senator John Thune.

Color Guards from Cheyenne River, Little Eagle, Standing Rock Reservation, Rosebud and Wanblee on Pine Ridge, and American Legion Posts also attended and held flags during the dedication ceremony. The flag was raised by female Veterans .

The Akicita Owicaha Lakota Freedom Veterans Cemetery is open to all Veterans and will provide the opportunity for tribal members to be buried with respective customs and traditions.



Color Guards at the dedication ceremony.



Information and Visitor Center

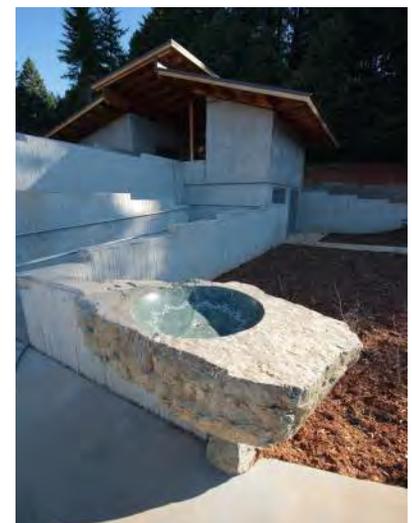
## YUROK TRIBE

*Yurok Tribe continued from page 7*

casketed gravesites, cremain gravesites, and a memorial walkway, and self-contained restrooms. The cemetery is the only one of its kind within 175 miles. The closest State Veterans' cemetery is Northern California Veterans Cemetery at Igo which is approximately 125 miles away. The Yurok Tribe is the fourth tribe to have received a grant to build a cemetery. Pascua Yaqui of Arizona, the Rosebud Sioux of South Dakota, the Oglala Sioux of South Dakota, and the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma also received grants.

The ribbon cutting ceremony included remarks by Chairman Thomas O' Rourke Sr., Vice Chairman Susan Masten. Also in attendance were Cynthia Gomez, Tribal Advisor for Governor Jerry Brown; California National Guard's Adjutant General Major General David S. Baldwin; Tom Paquelet, Project Manager/Landscape Architect for Veterans Cemetery Grants Program; and Terry Bentley, California Office of Emergency Services.

The Yurok Tribe is the largest tribe in California with more than 6,000 members.



A traditional hand-washing Station carved in granite.

## IDAHO STATE VETERANS CEMETERY

The Idaho State Veterans Cemetery (ISVC) was dedicated on October 31, 2002, and officially opened on July 31, 2004, with the first burial conducted August 30, 2004. Set against the backdrop of native grasses, green hills and the rugged Boise foothills, the 16 acres of manicured and developed cemetery is part of the total 76.5 acres of cemetery property that offers a peaceful place of solitude and beauty for friends and family members of those laid to rest here.

Entry into the cemetery greets visitors, families, and Veterans with a uniform layout of the final resting places. Over 6,300 developed casketed gravesites, 2,600 columbarium niches, and 1,400 in-ground cremation gravesites are uniformly established. Additionally, the cemetery has an upper interment area with views overlooking the valley. This site provides for casketed burials and a gracious scattering garden that provides a solemn walk along the hillside overlooking a small valley of natural beauty. Uniform granite markers identify the final resting place throughout the cemetery. Casketed burials are marked by upright granite markers. In-ground



burials, scattered garden and in-memory-of markers are recognized by flat granite markers all uniformly placed in formation. The cemetery provides a resting place for over 5,000 Veterans, spouses, and family members.

The cemetery is located adjacent to the Dry Creek Cemetery just north of Hill Road and east of Horseshoe Bend Road in Northwest Boise. The land on which it is built includes ap-

proximately 40 acres donated in 2002 by the J.L. Terteling Company, with the remaining acreage being purchased from the Dry Creek Cemetery District. It was dedicated to the State of Idaho in 2004 by then Governor Dirk Kempthorne.

James Earp started as the Cemetery Administrator for ISVC with

ISVC continued on page 10



View of cemetery during the Fall season

## IDAHO STATE VETERANS CEMETERY

ISVC continued from page 9

the Idaho Division of Veterans Services (IDVS) in December 2013. He retired from the U.S. Army as a Sergeant Major in 2011 and was a Veterans Service Officer with IDVS, Office of Veterans Advocacy prior to managing the state veterans cemetery.

Mr. Earp says, *"A rewarding part of my job is knowing we make a difference every day and what we do truly matters."* In addition to Mr. Earp, the cemetery has six full time staff members. Tori Powers provides administrative duties related to BOSS operations, scheduling, military honors coordination, logistics, and fiscal duties. She is an eight year U.S. Army Veteran having served two tours in Iraq as Transportation Officer and achieving the rank of Captain. The cemetery grounds are meticulously maintained by five full time employees and one seasonal temporary employee led by Senior Foreman Darin Sorensen. Darin's leadership and experience span 10 years of service with the ISVC where he has performed and is proficient in every task related to the dignified and respectful interment services we provide. His team includes Rodger Cloud another ten year member of our cemetery and who is the Senior Maintenance Craftsman. Patrick



Side View of Flag Plaza

Thomas, Merlin Pursley, and Marlon Roubideaux complete the team as experienced Landscape Technicians and Interment Caretakers responsible for all interment site preparations, landscaping, facilities, equipment maintenance and perpetual care. Seasonal employee Tom Wells, MSGT, USAF, Retired has been with the cemetery for four years of service and augments the team in the Spring and Summer.

Mr. Earp also commends the volunteers who support the cemetery: *"Their dedication, compassion, and duty to serve is evident in providing the best and most professional experience for visitors and families."*

*"They provide information services for visitors, control processions, and interact with families and funeral directors for interments."* Veterans Service Organizations such as the Idaho Veterans Assistance League, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and American Legion routinely support the cemetery by providing additional military honors services, donations, and their time to assist in providing the best possible experiences for visitors to the cemetery. *"The volunteers and organizations are truly part of the cemetery team."*

ISVC has several unique architectural designs. The upper interment site for casketed remains, a scatter garden, and flag plaza that supports a capacity

ISVC continued on page 12



Front of Flag Plaza

*"When working on the design with the Team, led by Dan Baird of Beck and Baird, we looked to integrate the cemetery into the foothill's landscape. There were numerous land scars from previous excavations and we sought to use those to our advantage. The fort-like appearance provided a military feel while allowing us to repair the hillside scar and blend the feature into the landscape. It was also designed to allow the capacity of 1000 people, situated in such a way to allow the full view of the Treasure Valley and for the Flag to be seen throughout the valley."*

Mitch Jaurena  
Idaho Veterans Cemetery Coordinator, 2001-2003



## CEMETERY STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS



Administrative Staff: Tori Powers and James Earp, Cemetery Administrator.

*"We all take pride in knowing that what we do reflects the honor, traditions, and sacrifice of those who served our nation, the families that endured hardships, and to the future generations to remember and never forget."*



Front Row L to R: Caretaker Staff Merlin Pursley, Rodger Cloud, Patrick Thomas, and Thomas Wells.  
Back Row L to R: Marlon Roubideaux, Darin Sorensen, and James Earp, Cemetery Administrator.



Front Row L to R: Volunteers Terry Glassinger, Jerry Feil, Dan Geib, Mary May, JT Sayer, John Wrobel; Back Row: Joseph Nigliazzo.

*"It is without question that the volunteers that support our cemetery are an important part of the experience and interment operations at the Idaho State Veterans Cemetery..."*

James Earp,  
Cemetery Administrator

# IDAHO STATE VETERANS CEMETERY

ISVC continued from page 10

of 1,00 people sits 200 feet and a quarter mile drive above main cemetery grounds. The flag plaza is adorned with granite monuments with the seal of the branches of service. The flag pole towers 80 feet above where a 20 by 30 foot U.S. flag flies 24 hours a day.

Additionally two islands support the flow of two-way traffic in the upper interment area each with their own unique design. To the north is the circular island adorned with a star in the center and directly south by the flag plaza is the second island in the shape of a tear drop.

The concept and direction for the cemetery was envisioned by Mitch Jaurena, Idaho State Veterans Ceme-

tery Coordinator, 2001-2003. Working with Mr. Jaurena, architect Dan Baird developed and constructed the design. The flag high upon the hill was to be the centerpiece. The fort-like stone work that integrates the cemetery's flag plaza into the foothill's landscape provides a military image of strength and security. It is visually based upon the Belgrade fortress that sits high above the Sava and Danube confluence. The cemetery also has a memorial walk that is lined with the memorial bricks from families, Veterans, and service organizations recognizing the service of loved ones and their service to our nation.

completed this summer provided increased longevity with the addition of 1,800 preplaced crypts and 2,200 columbarium niches. A second maintenance equipment storage area was also completed. The addition of an automated reader board that will scroll announcements and information for visitors and provide instructions for interments was completed in August. The professional appearance of the new automated sign will reduce the amount of traditional signage throughout and add to the future capabilities of the cemetery.

Recent cemetery construction

ISVC continued on page 13



Cemetery at sunrise



Committal Shelter and Avenue of Flags



Aerial view of cemetery Tear Drop and Flag Plaza

## IDAHO STATE VETERANS CEMETERY

ISVC continued from page 12



Memorial Day Upper Interment Site



Vintage Aircraft Flyover



USMC Rifle Detail

The cemetery hosts the largest Memorial Day ceremony in Boise area annually. The cemetery is staged with hand placed flags at every monument and donated casket flags fly from the avenue of flags that line the routes of the cemetery. This year's ceremony was attended by Idaho State Governor Butch Otter and over 2,200 visitors. The event included a vintage aircraft flyover, military reenactors, a wreath laying ceremony by 17 different service organizations, vintage cannon salute, and music by the Idaho National Guard band.

An event is held annually to mark the wreath laying for Wreath Across America's donated wreaths to be placed at every grave throughout the cemetery by large groups of volunteers. Mr. Earp says, *"Four times a year for Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, and Veterans Day we place additional flag poles that border the roads throughout the cemetery. With donated flags from our Avenue of Flags program, we raise these flags throughout our cemetery with support of volunteer organizations. We continue to participate with the Boy Scouts of America to provide an opportunity for scouts earning the highest achievable rank of Eagle Scout. Several projects have been conducted over the years and each project has uniquely added to the cemetery's appearance and functionality."*

*"The Idaho State Veterans Cemetery is a wonderful setting to provide a final resting place for America's heroes. The immaculately groomed grounds and the scenic vistas remind us of what a magnificent country we served to protect."*

Tom Ressler  
CMSGT, USAF (Ret)



**Department of Veterans Affairs**

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Please visit our website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

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**“ To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan.”**

**– The Origin of the VA Motto  
Abraham Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978. As a complement to the national cemetery system, the National Cemetery Administration administers the Veterans Cemetery Grants Service (VCGS). The Veterans Cemetery Grants Program (VCGP) is designed to complement VA's 131 national cemeteries across the country. The Veterans Cemetery Grants Program helps states, federally recognized tribal governments, or U.S. Territories establish new Veterans cemeteries, expand, or improve existing Veterans cemeteries. To date, VA program has helped establish, expand and improve 93 Veterans cemeteries in 45 states and territories including tribal trust lands, Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam, which provided more than 32,000 burials in fiscal year 2014. VA has awarded grants totaling more than \$617 million.

For further information about the Department of VA or Veterans Cemetery Grants Program, please visit our website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

Please direct all inquiries or submissions about VCGP newsletter to Dana Hughes at [Dana.Hughes@va.gov](mailto:Dana.Hughes@va.gov).

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