



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 17, 2010

VA Awards \$19 Million Contract for Puerto Rico Cemetery Improvements

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has awarded a nearly \$19 million construction contract for gravesite expansion and cemetery improvements at Puerto Rico National Cemetery in Bayamón.

“VA is committed to providing the best possible service to all Veterans, their families and survivors,” said Secretary Shinseki. “By constructing additional burial areas and improving facilities at Puerto Rico National Cemetery, we will continue to provide lasting tributes to the service and sacrifice of the Commonwealth’s Veterans.”

The \$18,972,199 contract was awarded to West Construction, Inc., a woman-owned business from Lake Worth, Fla. The company is expected to develop approximately 7.5 acres by fall 2012, making burial options available through 2019.

Practically speaking, the project will include nearly 7,000 preplaced, double-depth, concrete crypts, 370 in-ground burial spaces for cremated remains, 2,910 columbarium niches and a memorial wall. The contract also calls for renovation of the cemetery’s administration building and flag assembly area, as well as construction of a new public information center, public restrooms, a new maintenance complex and committal service shelters.

New supporting infrastructure will include a memorial walkway, roads, parking, grading, drainage, fencing, landscaping, irrigation and utility distribution systems.

Administered by VA, the 108-acre national cemetery serves approximately 112,000 Veterans who live on the island.

- More -

Puerto Rico National Cemetery Construction 2/2/2

Veterans with a discharge issued under conditions other than dishonorable and military personnel who die on active duty, their spouses and eligible dependent children can be buried in VA national cemeteries. Other burial benefits available at no charge to all eligible Veterans, regardless of whether buried in a national or a private cemetery, include a burial flag, a Presidential Memorial Certificate service medallion and a government headstone or marker. Families may also order a memorial headstone or marker when remains are not available for interment.

In the midst of the largest expansion since the Civil War, VA operates 131 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. More than three and a half million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict, are buried in VA's national cemeteries on more than 19,000 acres of land across the nation.

Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the Internet at www.cem.va.gov or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 800-827-1000.

For information on Puerto National Cemetery, call the cemetery office at 787-798-8400. To make burial arrangements at the time of death, call the national cemetery scheduling office at 800-535-1117.

#