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100th VA Grant-Funded Veterans Cemetery Dedicated

Grants Partnership Improves Veteran Access to Burial Benefits

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the opening of the 100th VA grant funded Veterans cemetery. An \$8.9 million grant from the VA funded the new Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Marana, Arizona. The cemetery is the 100th Veterans cemetery funded with a VA grant awarded to a State or Tribal organization.

"This significant milestone underscores the importance of our partnerships with State and Tribal organizations to increase Veterans access to benefits," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. "This grant helps VA fulfill its goal of providing at least 95 percent of Veterans and spouses with access to an open national, state or tribal cemetery within 75 miles of their home," McDonald said.

VA's Veterans Cemetery Grants Program complements VA's 134 National Cemeteries across the country. Since 1980, the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program has awarded grants totaling more than \$665 million to establish, expand, and improve 100 Veterans cemeteries in 47 states and territories including tribal trust lands, Guam, and Saipan. These VA-funded Veterans cemeteries provided more than 35,000 burials in 2015.

The new cemetery opened on March 14, 2016 and was dedicated on March 26, 2016 with a public ceremony with remarks by George D. Eisenbach Jr., Director, Veterans Cemetery Grants program. The cemetery, on approximately 20 acres, includes 1,802 pre-placed crypts, 1,638 cremains gravesites and 1,920 columbarium niches and will help serve the needs of approximately 105,000 Arizona Veterans and their families.

Veterans with a discharge issued under conditions other than dishonorable who have completed a period of active duty service as required by law, their spouses and eligible dependent children may be buried in the Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery at Marana.

The closest VA national cemetery to the new Arizona cemetery is VA's National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona in Phoenix, approximately 91 miles away. The nearest VA grant-funded state Veterans cemetery is Southern Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Sierra Vista, which is located at a distance of about 107 miles from the new site.

For more information on VA's Veterans Cemetery Grants Program, visit: www.cem.va.gov/cem/grants. For more information on Arizona's Veterans Memorial at Marana, visit: <https://dvs.az.gov/arizona-veterans-memorial-cemetery-marana>.

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