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VA dedicates Acadia National Cemetery in Maine

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today dedicated a new national cemetery in rural Jonesboro, Maine.

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie unveiled the dedication plaque for [Acadia National Cemetery](#), the first national cemetery in the state to be open to new interments in nearly 60 years.

"This new cemetery nestled here in the balsam fir forests of 'Down East' Maine is an everlasting shrine to our Veterans," said Wilkie. "It reminds us every day of the sacrifices that generations of men and women from this hardy, practical and intensely patriotic corner of the nation have made for all of us."

Construction on the first phase of the cemetery is now complete, offering space for more than 1,400 interments including caskets, in-ground burial of cremains, columbaria space for cremains, and a memorial wall. At full capacity the cemetery will be able to accommodate just over 7,000 interments. There are three state run Veterans cemeteries in Maine, the closest of which is 149 miles from Jonesboro. The only other VA national cemetery in the state, Togus National Cemetery near Augusta, opened in 1866 and was closed to first interments in 1961, though subsequent interments in the same gravesite as another family member have taken place in the decades since.

Acadia National Cemetery is the fifth to open under the VA's Rural Initiative program, which provides burial access for Veterans not currently served by a national cemetery within the state or VA grant-funded state cemetery. Since 2014 VA has dedicated rural cemeteries in Montana, North Dakota, Idaho, Wisconsin and now Maine, with cemeteries in Wyoming, Nevada and Utah currently under construction or planned.

The 6.2-acre cemetery is expected to serve a population of more than 23,000 Veterans, their spouses and eligible family members within a 75-mile radius of nearby Machias. The first interments at the new cemetery were conducted in July 2020.

Acadia National Cemetery is supervised by Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne, MA. For more information, contact Massachusetts National Cemetery director Richard Wallace at (508) 563-7113. For information on VA burial benefits, or to apply for burial benefits in advance of need, visit VA's [National Cemetery Administration](#) or call (800) 535-1117.

Due to state restrictions on gathering sizes and concerns over the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the number of attendees at the dedication was limited to 50, with participants wearing masks and maintaining social distancing. In attendance was a small delegation of dignitaries including Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Randy Reeves, Senator Susan Collins, Air Force Maj. Gen. Douglas Farnham, the Adjutant General of Maine, state and local leaders as well as representatives from a variety of Veterans organizations. Photos and video of the dedication can be found on the [National Cemetery Administration's Facebook](#) site.

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