

May 30, 2014

VA Makes Land Purchase for New National Cemetery in Western New York
Purchase expand access to burial service to Veterans and their families

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has purchased land in New York for a new national cemetery in the Buffalo — Rochester area of Western New York.

VA plans to construct the cemetery in Pembroke, N.Y., on a 132-acre property located at 1232 Indian Falls Road. The property has access off Exit #48A from the I-90 NY Thruway. The facility will serve more than 96,000 Veterans and family members within a 75-mile radius of the property. The closest national cemetery is Bath National Cemetery in Bath, N.Y., about 86 miles away.

"We are pleased to expand access to burial service to Veterans and their families in New York State," said Steve L. Muro, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs. "Acquiring the land is a key step forward in the process."

VA completed the land purchase on May 30, 2014, for \$625,000. The property consists of unimproved farmland and undeveloped vacant and wooded land.

VA anticipates awarding a contract to begin the 24-month cemetery master planning and design period later this year. A construction contract will be awarded after the design phase is completed and VA receives construction funds.

National cemetery construction projects typically require 24-30 months to complete, with early-use burial areas made available approximately 12 months after the start of construction work.

The first full phase of construction will include the development of cemetery roads, an entrance, administration and public information center, committal shelters and a maintenance facility. This infrastructure will support approximately the first 10 years of burial capacity for casket gravesites, cremation sites and columbarium niches.

This will be the sixth VA national cemetery in New York. The other five are Bath, Woodlawn, Gerald B. Solomon Saratoga, Calverton and Long Island. There are no state Veterans Cemeteries in New York.

Veterans with a qualifying discharge, their spouses and eligible dependent children may be buried in a VA national cemetery. Also eligible are military personnel who die on active duty, their spouses and eligible dependents. Burial benefits available for all eligible Veterans, regardless of whether they are buried in a national cemetery or a private cemetery, include a burial flag, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and a government headstone or marker.

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 3.8 million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict, are buried in VA's national cemeteries.

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. To make burial arrangements at any VA national cemetery at the time of need, call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117.