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of Veterans Affairs

News Release

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VA Purchases Land in Indianapolis for a New Columbarium-Only National Cemetery

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that it purchased 14.75 acres of land located in the Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis, to establish a columbarium-only national cemetery. VA purchased the land from Crown Hill Cemetery, Inc., an Indiana non-profit corporation, for a total of \$810,000.

“We are proud to begin this important first step to bring a new national cemetery presence to Indianapolis to serve the community’s Veterans, their spouses and families,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. “Our cemeteries are national treasures and sacred shrines that honor the brave men and women who sacrificed for our country.”

The new facility, located on the north side of Crown Hill Cemetery, will provide enhanced service to approximately 256,000 Veterans located within a 75-mile radius of Indianapolis. For the initial construction project, VA plans to construct columbarium walls providing approximately 2,500 niches, as well as necessary support facilities and roadways for cemetery operations and visitation. A columbarium is an above-ground structure in which cremated remains are inurned. The new columbarium cemetery in Indianapolis will accommodate future development of at least 25,000 niches for Veterans, their spouses and eligible family members.

VA will construct a main entrance wall and gate feature on 42nd Street which will lead into the cemetery. The cemetery will feature natural and ornamental plantings, U.S. and POW/MIA flagpoles, a funeral cortege parking area, a committal service shelter building, a public restroom building, a plaza for memorial monument donations, a memorial wall and an electronic gravesite locator.

VA will develop the new cemetery as part of its “Urban Initiative,” to improve access to burial benefits in certain densely populated areas to better serve Veterans, their spouses and families. Besides the Indianapolis facility, VA is planning four more Urban Initiative cemeteries in New York; Los Angeles; Chicago; and Alameda, California.

The Crown Hill columbarium will become the third open VA national cemetery in Indiana. Marion National Cemetery, is the closest open national cemetery to Crown Hill, serving the Veterans and families of central and northern Indiana. New Albany National Cemetery, in southern Indiana, has space for cremated remains and can accommodate casketed remains in the

same gravesite of previously interred family members. Indiana has one VA-funded state Veterans cemetery, the Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery, located in Madison.

VA operates 132 national cemeteries, including a rural national cemetery and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites in 40 states and Puerto Rico. More than 4 million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict, are buried in VA's national cemeteries. VA provides grant funding to establish, expand, improve, and maintain 95 Veterans cemeteries in 47 states and territories including tribal trust lands, Guam, and Saipan. VA also provides headstones, markers or medallions for placement in private cemeteries. In 2014, VA honored more than 356,000 Veterans and their loved ones with memorial benefits in national, state, tribal and private cemeteries.

Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from local national cemetery offices and from the Internet at www.cem.va.gov.

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