

News Release

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October 22 ceremony at state veterans cemetery to mark grant award; funding will provide outer burial containers to veterans at no cost.

To celebrate award of a \$1.6M grant, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) will hold a check presentation and groundbreaking ceremony at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia on October 22, 2012 at 10 a.m.

David Schettler, Deputy Undersecretary for Management, National Cemetery Administration, will present Paul Galanti, DVS Commissioner with a ceremonial check. The grant be used to retrofit the cemetery with double depth, pre-installed outer burial containers. Outer burial containers are similar to vaults and house the casket, protecting it from the elements.

“Pre-installation of outer burial containers will bring Virginia’s state cemeteries up to the standards of national veterans cemeteries, such as Quantico and Culpeper,” explained Commissioner Galanti. “Federal cemeteries provide outer burial containers to veterans at no cost, and now Virginia will be able to offer veterans the same benefit,” Galanti added.

Currently, veterans may pay between \$400 and \$1200 for a vault or outer burial container. Virginia’s newest state-operated veterans cemetery, the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery opened in 2011 and is equipped with pre-installed outer burial containers. To make the three cemeteries as uniform as possible while waiting for a federal grant award, DVS began providing outer burial containers at the the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia and the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Cemetery in Suffolk at cost, for \$400. However, once outer burial containers are installed at the Amelia and Suffolk cemeteries, there will be no charge to veterans for them.

Construction to install the vaults is expected to begin in mid November, and DVS expects to begin using the pre-installed vaults by late spring or early summer 2013.

DVS operates three veterans cemeteries: the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Cemetery, located in Suffolk; the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia; and the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Dublin. Each cemetery features gardens for full casketed and cremation burials, columbariums, memorial gardens, and scatter garden areas.

Service members who were honorably discharged qualify for burial in one of Virginia's veterans cemeteries. A grave site, pre-installed outer burial container, opening and closing of the grave, placement of grave marker, and perpetual care of the site are provided to the veteran at no charge. Veterans' spouses and eligible dependent children may be interred for a small fee, currently \$300.

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