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Information Technology Upgrades at Arlington National Cemetery

Washington, DC -- The US Army Information Technology Agency (ITA) recently announced the successful completion of the first phase of information technology and process improvements for Arlington National Cemetery.

ITA began providing support to Arlington in September of 2010, and concluded the first phase of the project in December 2010. During this time, ITA has provided network infrastructure improvements, delivered new desktop computers and peripheral equipment, and transitioned Arlington's large volume of incoming phone calls to ITA's Consolidated Customer Service Center (CCSC) service desk in order to better manage and monitor public inquiries.

ITA has also enhanced existing facsimile, email and data storage capabilities which aid monitoring and burial management activities at Arlington. At the end of the project, ITA will be the primary IT service provider for the cemetery satisfying their hosting, network, and service desk requirements.

For the first phase of the transition effort, the most significant accomplishment has been the transfer of the service desk support services function to ITA-CCSC. ITA gave careful attention and consideration to the hiring and training of service desk agents whose mission is to help family members of America's fallen. Deb Bouslog, director of ITA CCSC, described how employees identified with those in grief by saying "nearly everyone [here] has a personal connection to Arlington."
Fueled by the need to quickly and more adeptly respond to increased call volumes, Arlington's new service desk administration is improving the way in which public questions and concerns are met. The center currently handles in excess of 1100 calls per week.

Arlington National Cemetery Executive Director Kathryn Condon said, "what we have now that we didn't have before is data. We are now able to answer, track and document 100 percent of calls."

This capability has allowed Arlington to build a true picture of the category of inquiries it faces following last summer's findings from the Department of Army Inspector General (DAIG).

The service desk support has allowed interment representatives to better respond to those issues needing escalation, and to focus on serving the cemetery's core mission. Now, IT serves as an enabler for the organization, replacing legacy systems and processes that were holding the cemetery back in serving the American public. Ms. Bouslog describes it as better "connecting America to Arlington."

Americans who call the service desk can expect an individual hired and trained specifically for Arlington to answer their questions, and if necessary escalate the inquiry and provide a tracking number for the case. The center has also increased its hours of operations and has the ability to capture metrics, which is in line with the recommendations for improvements identified in the DAIG report.

"It does not matter to me how long an agent stays on with a caller," Condon said. "These are people at their most trying times and we need to show that Arlington cares and is here to support families through their loss."

Donald Adcock, ITA's Executive Director said, "Every customer we partner with has a critical mission in the defense of our great Nation, and yet we are particularly proud and humbled to be the IT service provider for Arlington National Cemetery."

For more information, visit http://ita.army.mil

To schedule an interview on this topic or with one of the ITA staff members mentioned in this release, please refer to the contact information to speak with an authorized representative of ITA.

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