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# RUNNELS County

## VETERANS COUNTY SERVICE OFFICE

*SERVING THE VETERANS AND DEPENDANTS OF RUNNELS COUNTY*

**Date:** October 18, 2019

**TO: Runnels County Register**

Acting Secretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy has recently announced proposed changes to eligibility criteria for burial at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) that will include military retirees for above-ground interment. The FY2019 National Defense Authorization Act directed the Secretary of the Army to establish revised eligibility criteria to keep the cemetery functioning as an active burial ground "well into the future" - defined as 150 years. The Army will now begin the federal government's public rule making process, which includes soliciting public feedback to the proposed changes. At the outset, the Army established critical imperatives of sacrifice, service and impact to guide this effort. In addition to directing ANC to preserve 1,000 grave sites for current and future Medal of Honor recipients, the Acting Secretary proposed revised eligibility criteria for those who honorably served our nation. For below-ground interment: Killed in Action, to include repatriated remains of service members; Recipients of the Silver Star and above who also served in combat; Recipients of the Purple Heart; Combat-related service deaths while conducting uniquely military activities; Former Prisoners of War; Presidents and Vice Presidents of the United States; and Veterans with combat service who also served out of uniform as a government official and made significant contributions to the nation's security at the highest levels of public service. For above-ground interment: World War II-era veterans, to include legislated active duty designees; Retirees from the armed forces who are eligible to receive retired pay but are not otherwise eligible for interment; Veterans who have served a minimum of two years on active duty and who have served in combat; and Veterans without combat service who also served out of uniform as a government official and made significant contributions to the nation's security at the highest levels of public service. Eventual implementation of revised eligibility at ANC will not affect scheduled services. Additionally, the proposed revisions at ANC will not affect veterans' burial benefits or veteran eligibility at the Department of Veterans Affairs national cemeteries and state veterans' cemeteries. The next step to implement the proposed rule is notice and public comment rule making in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act. The ANC expects the clearance process to take a minimum of nine months to make public in the Federal Register for citizens to comment. For more information, contact Sandra at the Veterans Service Office at 602 Strong Ave on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 3pm, or call 365-3612.

Sandra G. Van Zant, Veterans County Service Officer

P.O. Box 108  
Ballinger, TX 76821

PHONE (325) 365-3612  
E-MAIL [rcvso@wtxs.net](mailto:rcvso@wtxs.net)

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