

This week I joined with other members of the House Armed Services Committee to visit Arlington National Cemetery, some of the most hallowed ground in our country. Late last year, I was proud to support legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives that demanded better standards of accountability to identify and code remains at Arlington. With that bill signed into law, it is just the beginning of a comprehensive process to bring about more direct responsibility for those who manage and work at the final resting place for so many honored leaders, veterans and their supporters - their spouses - laid to rest on the grounds. As Chairman of the House Armed Services Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, I was pleased to be joined by other members of the Committee in this fact-finding trip.

In the wake of continued devastating news regarding the mismanagement of remains and records, the trip provided a more in-depth look to determine the status of issues, to speak to officials face-to-face, and to better understand what is being done to hold folks accountable and ensure that none of these mistakes happen in the future. Kathryn Condon, the new Executive Director of the Army National Cemeteries Program, spoke with us about her new role and specifically about the changes at Arlington. Ms. Condon discussed a new system that will assure absolute accuracy in identification of remains at each internment site so families can be confident that their loved ones are taken care of with the utmost respect. Technology is providing a useful tool to digitize the records to better maintain and assure accuracy and safety of information and also for visitors to locate those buried within the grounds.

While we are at the beginning of a new phase in this continual process, the folks at Arlington appear to be heading on the right track. There is though much more work to complete as we move past the photos of misplaced headstones and lack of property maintenance, to see again the neat, orderly and attractive grounds that are expected for each man and woman interred at Arlington.

From the very beginning, many constituents have spoken out and said that we must not simply stand idly by as multiple families faced news of misplaced remains. I could not agree more. I will continue to monitor and follow this situation as it develops and grows. We can never thank or repay those heroes who have gone before us and given all in service and sacrifice to our nation, but we can and we must honor them to the highest degree. Their service and sacrifice has brought us our liberty, and the freedom to live in this great republic.

As always, please continue to contact me with your thoughts and questions by phone [\(202\) 225-4261](tel:202-225-4261)

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