



REGIONAL NATIONAL CEMETERY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION

**30 YEARS OF HISTORY
1984 - 2014**

*Formed to preserve and expand the
Fayetteville National Cemetery at
FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS*

Dedicated to the veterans at rest in the cemetery

FOREWORD

In 1865 during President Lincoln's second inaugural address he promised to the country, "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan." Because of this promise to America, fourteen national cemeteries were established which were the beginning of today's National Cemetery Administration. And in 1867, Fayetteville National Cemetery was created because of the historic civil war battles in the area.

Fayetteville National Cemetery has a long involved history with the people of Northwest Arkansas and is truly part of the fabric that is the quilt of American history. Almost 10,000 veterans and their spouses, including the more than 800 unknown Union Soldiers have been laid to rest at historic Fayetteville National Cemetery since its' inception in 1867. There is no other organization in America that supports their national cemetery like the Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corp. (RNCIC) does. The mission and goal of the RNCIC is to make sure "heroes of America," past, present and future, know that they will never be forgotten and to especially remember the sacrifices they made so we can be the America we are today.

The Northwest Arkansas community should be proud of the commitment and dedication of the RNCIC. Through their exemplary efforts by continuing to donate land to Fayetteville National Cemetery there will always be a final resting place in Fayetteville that honors the truest of American heroes and their family members. I applaud the outstanding accomplishments of this fine organization

Thomas M. Ruck
Director, Fayetteville National Cemetery



RNCIC Board of Directors for 2014 - 2015, L-R: Aubrey Shepherd, Jake Lamkins, Ron Butler, Josh Sakon, Lorna Sterrett, Tom Ruck, Peggy McClain, Roger McClain, Merle Williams and Harold Crivello. Not shown are Gary Culp, Jim Glover and Wes Stites

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30 YEARS OF HISTORY: 1984 - 2014

Written and edited by Lorna Sterrett and Jake Lamkins

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Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation

First edition

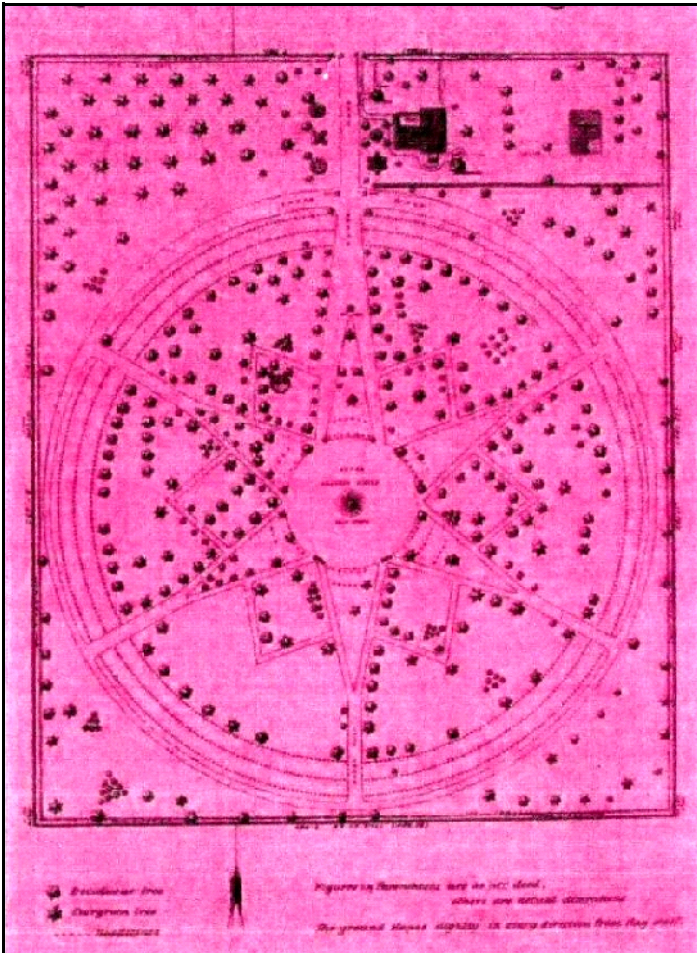
November 2015

All information has been obtained from written documents and letters, newspaper articles, etc. on file, and restated to the best of our knowledge and ability.

-The RNCIC History Committee: Lorna Sterrett, Chair, Gary Culp, Jake Lamkins, Peggy McLain, Merle Williams

HISTORY OF THE FAYETTEVILLE NATIONAL CEMETERY

The Fayetteville National Cemetery is located on the south side of Fayetteville, Arkansas, at 700 Government Avenue, about one mile southwest of the old courthouse. Although Frank Pierce, a hunter and trapper, first visited what became the Fayetteville area in 1819, the town was not officially settled until 1828. Within a year, however, residents had built a courthouse and a post office and by 1835 it was officially designated a town. Subsequently, Fayetteville was surveyed, divided into lots and sold at public auction and by 1841 had a population of around four hundred people. The cemetery land had previously been called Gallows Hill because the county's gallows had been maintained there prior to the Civil War.



The original wagon wheel layout design of the Fayetteville National Cemetery from 1897. In 1867 the first five acres for the national cemetery were purchased from local residents David Walker and Stephen K. Stone, and in 1875 an additional 1.11 acres were purchased from them. The original layout of the cemetery, according to a sketch, is nearly square in shape and consists of an outer circle surrounding a six-pointed star with diamonds between the points of the star. A flagpole in the center formed the hub of a complete wagon wheel. There were eighteen sections with an estimated capacity of 1,800 graves. Design changes made possible 3,688 more spaces, but no more land was added to the original six acres until the RNCIC began donating land in 1989.

By the beginning of the Civil War Fayetteville had become a prosperous community. One Union soldier described it as "a beautiful little hamlet nestling among the foothills of the Ozark range ... the chief education center of the state, the home of culture, refinement and that inborn hospitality so characteristic of the south." On April 18, 1863, this tranquility was interrupted by the fierce Battle of Fayetteville. Hoping to reverse the South's waning fortunes, Confederate General William Cabell led 900 cavalry north from Ozark to attack federal forces occupying Fayetteville. The initial strike surprised most of the Union soldiers, some of who were enjoying a dance at a private home several miles outside of town, and others who were asleep. The federal forces were able to quickly recover and, primarily due to superior weapons, pushed back the Confederate charge.

On July 17, 1862, Congress enacted legislation that authorized the President of the United States to purchase "cemetery grounds" to be used as national cemeteries "for soldiers who shall have died in the service of the country." Fourteen cemeteries were established that first year. The Fayetteville National Cemetery was one of the 14 federal cemeteries authorized by President Abraham Lincoln for burial of Union soldiers who died during the Civil War.

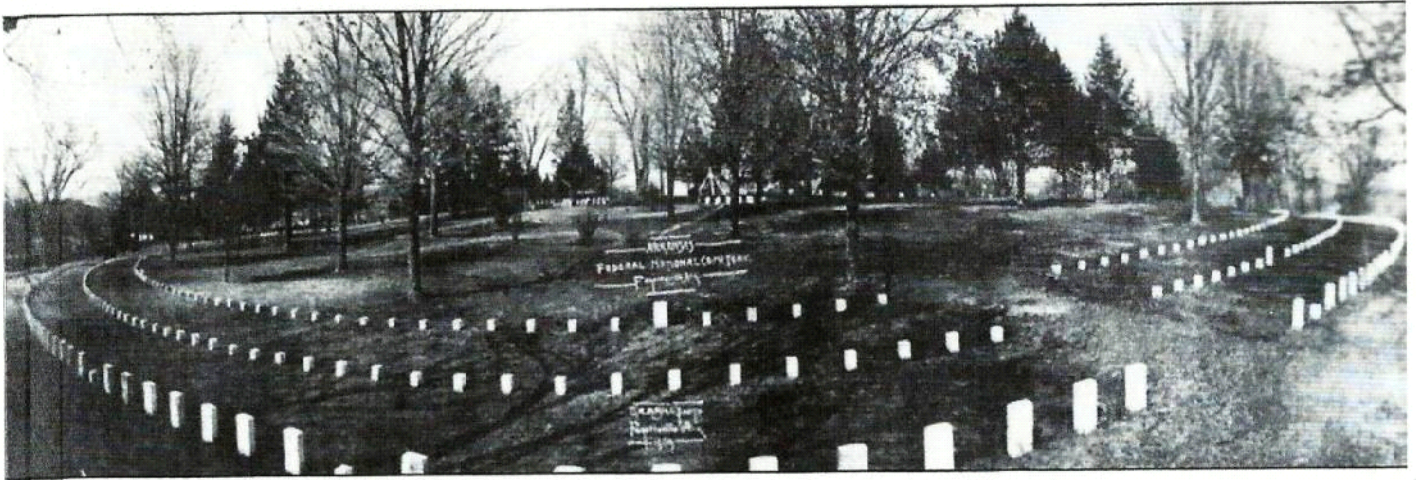
A four foot high brick masonry wall surrounded the Cemetery with bricks that were made by hand on the Cemetery grounds in 1867 and 1868. By 1981 with expansion being contemplated, this wall was considered to visually isolate the Cemetery from adjacent parcels of land. Development outside the wall would not identify with the Cemetery. However, the wall was protected by the Historic Preservation Act, and would require a permit for removal or creation of opening in the existing wall.

The administration building constructed in 1997 is located to the east of the main entrance, and the service building complex is located in the southwest corner of the cemetery. A committal service shelter is situated approximately in the center of the cemetery to the west of the administration building. Graves are marked with upright marble headstones, except for Section 23, which is marked with flat granite markers.

THE BEGINNING OF THE RNCIC

In April 1981 a staff member of Land Management Service, VA Office of Construction, visited the Fayetteville National Cemetery. It was estimated then the Cemetery would have to close to new burials by August 1984. To the west of the Cemetery, separated by University Avenue (an unimproved dirt surface), were seven parcels of land—three vacant and four occupied by single family homes. Expansion to the west of the Cemetery was deemed feasible and favorable and would provide very suitable land for Cemetery enlargement.

In 1984 when the Cemetery was in danger of being closed to new burials due to lack of space, Mr. Ken Gibson, Col. Larry L. Browne, Jr. (president), and Mr. John William (Bill) Murphy formed the Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation (RNCIC) under the Arkansas Non-Profit Corporation Act.



National Cemetery at Fayetteville, pictured in 1909, was one of 14 federal cemeteries authorized by Pres. Abraham Lincoln in 1862 for the burial of Union soldiers who died during the Civil War. The cemetery was established in 1867 south of town on a rise of land that had previously been called Gallows Hill because the county's gallows had been maintained there prior to the war. Since establishment, the National Cemetery has continued to expand to accommodate the graves of veterans of other wars. (Photograph by Burch Grabill, courtesy Charlie Alison.)

The first burials were the remains disinterred from local Civil War battlefields such as Pea Ridge, Prairie Grove and Elk Horn Tavern. Interments were originally made with the headstone and inscription facing the flagpole. An inspection report dated May 1871 states there were 1,210 interments in the cemetery, "the greater portion being unknown white soldiers." When the new sections were added in the mid-20th century, the placement of headstones was altered so that the inscriptions face the interred remains.

It allowed donors to give tax-deductible gifts in whatever form. The petition was made and approved May 7, 1984.

Although the corporation's name, Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation, may seem unusual, it is derived from the National Cemeteries Act of 1973 (PL 93-43) wherein the VA was authorized by Congress to acquire land and to construct regional national cemeteries in each of 10 Standard Federal Regions. It did not, however, authorize funds to enlarge existing national cemeteries, except through donations of land.

The Mission of the newly formed RNCIC was and is to raise money and gifts of property in order to enlarge the Fayetteville National Cemetery in order to keep it open to new burials for the foreseeable future.

Veterans living in Northwest Arkansas, as well as many living outside our region, have planned their final resting place here. This desire stems from having been born and raised in or close to Northwest Arkansas, having close family ties here, or having made their homes in the area following their military service.

Without further Cemetery expansion veterans

Pictured are Milo Cumpston and Bruce Shaffer



The main entrance is located at the north side and is protected by a double iron gate supported by granite pillars built in 1940, with a pedestrian gate on each side. The older portion of the cemetery is enclosed by ornamental metal picket fencing with brick columns. The only portion of the original brick wall that remains is at the main entrance between the main gate and the pedestrian gates on either side. The newer portion of the cemetery is enclosed by black vinyl-clad chain link fencing. To the left and right of the entrance to the newer burial sections is ornamental metal picket fencing supported by brick pillar with pre-cast concrete caps.

who request interment would be required to travel to an out-of-state national cemetery, a state maintained cemetery or a private family plot. This would cause relatives in the Northwest Arkansas area to travel a much longer distance to visit their loved one's grave site.

In October 1984 with full awareness of the dire situation at the Fayetteville National Cemetery, the RNCIC "went public" with a fund drive. Then Governor Bill Clinton was the primary speaker at an open meeting at the Fayetteville Hilton Hotel, during which information was presented on the status of the Cemetery, a proposed expansion area, and the status of preliminary negotiations for the acquisition of land.

The RNCIC began an extensive fund raising program requesting grants from neighboring counties and cities, contributions from veteran organizations, and private individuals.

Following incorporation of the RNCIC in 1984 the frequency of the meetings could not be determined for a period of time. There were minutes of an annual meeting being held on July 5, 1985, at 16 E. Spring St. in Fayetteville at the offices of Attorney John W. Murphy. Larry Browne Jr., President, was Past State Commander of the American Legion; Ken Gibson, Secretary-Treasurer, was Veterans Service Officer for Washington County; and John Murphy was the corporation attorney.

The possibility of the Fayetteville National Cemetery closing in a few months was imminent. The RNCIC was still waiting on the IRS for the RNCIC's tax exempt number. Without that number the contributions would cease and there would be a

possible loss of Veterans Administration support due to continued delays caused by the IRS. The RNCIC officers felt they had done everything in their power to satisfy the IRS and had furnished all information requested, and had been diligent in follow-up efforts with the IRS in an attempt to expedite the Tax Exempt Number. The RNCIC received its tax exempt status under section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Service code in a determination letter dated October 8, 1985.

The RNCIC was reorganized January 31, 1989. Elvie Heiney was elected to replace the late Larry Browne, Jr. as President. Others elected were: James Clark, Vice President; Ken Gibson, Secretary-Treasurer; John Murphy, Legal Advisor; Directors: Milo Cumpston, Clement B. McClelland, Gene Jordan, Curtis (Bucky) Crouch, Jr., Marshall Sayner, and Hoy Haught. Minutes of the monthly meetings followed thereafter.

In accordance with the National Cemeteries Act of 1973, responsibility for the national cemeteries was moved from the U. S. Army to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Federal Government will not purchase land for expansion of any existing national cemetery; however, they will accept donations of land providing it is contiguous to such a cemetery. It must be raw land devoid of all structures, utilities, and septic tanks. After acquiring property for use by the Cemetery the RNCIC must arrange and pay for such removals before acceptance by the Federal Government.

The land transfer process is a lengthy one including boundary and topographic surveys, bounds descriptions, deed work,

(Continued on page 8)



Pictured here are the three original founders of the RNCIC: L-R: Ken Gibson (died Feb. 1995), Col. Larry L. Browne, Jr. (for lack of a picture, his headstone at the FNC is pictured) (died Sept. 1988), and John "Bill" Murphy (died Jan. 2006).

The RNCIC applied for and received an Arkansas Certificate of Incorporation of Domestic Non-Profit Corporation on October 19, 1984. A Certificate of Amendment was filed on May 23, 1985, with amendments to Article II (object and purposes) and Article IX (in the event of dissolution). The non-profit corporation was and is made up of all persons (veterans and non-veterans) interested in the expansion of the Fayetteville National Cemetery. All officers and members work without compensation.

STATE OF ARKANSAS

SECRETARY OF STATE

Paul Riviere, Secretary of State

**CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION OF DOMESTIC
NON-PROFIT CORPORATION**

*I, Paul Riviere, Secretary of State of the
State of Arkansas, Do Hereby Certify, that*

REGIONAL NATIONAL CEMETARY IMPROVEMENT CORP.

*has filed in the office of the Secretary of State, a duly
certified copy of its Articles of Association in
compliance with the provisions of the law, with their
petition for incorporation under the name or style of*

REGIONAL NATIONAL CEMETARY IMPROVEMENT CORP.

*they are therefore hereby declared a body politic and
corporate, by the name and style aforesaid, with all the
powers, privileges and immunities granted in the law
thereunto appertaining.*

*In Testimony Whereof,
I have hereunto set my hand and
affixed my official Seal*

This 19th day of October 19 84

PAUL RIVIERE

Secretary of State
By *L. J. Smith*
Deputy



STATE OF ARKANSAS

SECRETARY OF STATE

W. J. "Bill" McCuen
Secretary of State

To All to Whom These Presents Shall Come, Greeting:

I, Bill McCuen, Secretary of State of the State of Arkansas, do hereby certify that the following and hereto attached instrument of writing is a true and perfect copy of.

CERTIFICATE OF AMENDMENT

OF

REGIONAL NATIONAL CEMETARY IMPROVEMENT CORP.

Filed in this office:
May 23, 1985



*In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto
set my hand and affixed my official Seal.
Done at office in the City of Little Rock,
this 23rd day of May 19 85*

W. J. "BILL" McCuen

Secretary of State.

by

Deputy

(Continued from page 5)

legal documentation, title verification, and compliance with environmental and historic preservation regulations.

After transfer all maintenance and personnel costs are paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The federal government maintains all national cemeteries at their cost.

When the General LaFayette Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution became aware of the fact that the National Cemetery in Fayetteville would soon be out of grave spaces, a committee was formed to assist the RNCIC, and had its first meeting on January 14, 1987.

The SAR made a commitment to assist the RNCIC in fund raising. Elvie Heiney, SAR member said, "I don't care if it takes years, we're not going to give up on this. We will do it." This enabled the RNCIC to purchase the first tract of land in 1989 to expand the FNC. Other RNCIC members in the SAR were: Milo Cumpston and C. B. McClelland.

THE MIDDLE YEARS OF THE RNCIC

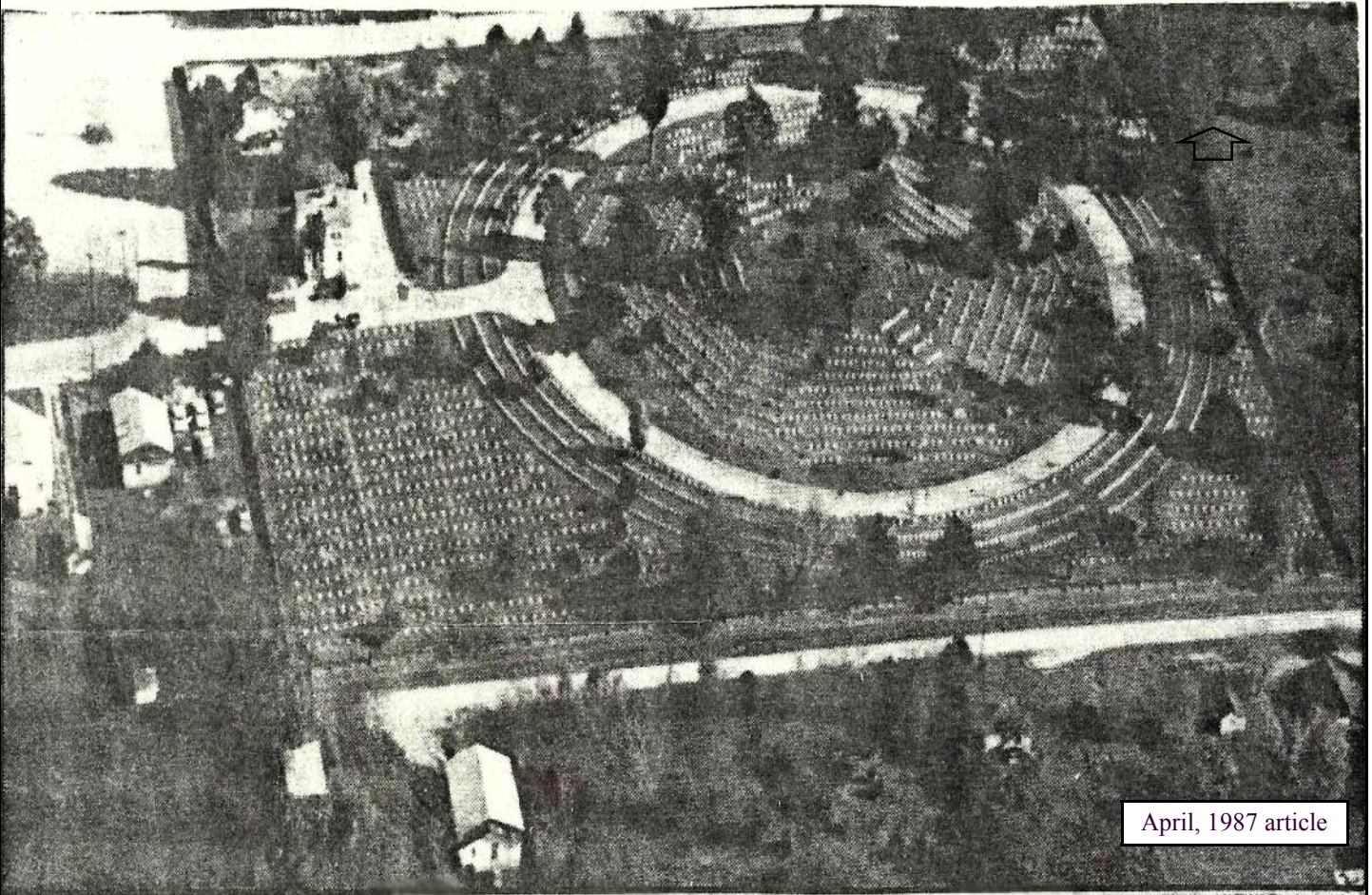
The RNCIC, a group of veterans and concerned citizens, along with officials of the City of Fayetteville, Washington County, and the State of Arkansas secured funds to purchase land adjacent to the Cemetery for its expansion. The RNCIC's purchase of the first tract of land was recorded at their February 11, 1989, meeting. It was recorded that three tracts of land had been purchased by June 1989 for expansion of the Fayetteville National Cemetery. On Saturday, June 17, 1989, a press release to the news media stated that the first step in clearing these three tracts of land would be to raze the house located at 645 Government Ave.

The Navy SeaBee Battalion stationed in Fayetteville volunteered to raze all structures and do the ground leveling. Major equipment items were furnished by Washington County. Usable materials were donated to the Washington County Rural Fire Dept. for use in a planned community building at Black Oak Road and Ed Edwards Road. The first land donation to the VA

←NORTH

Cemetery for Veterans Running Out of Space, Could Be Closed

(Continued on page 12)

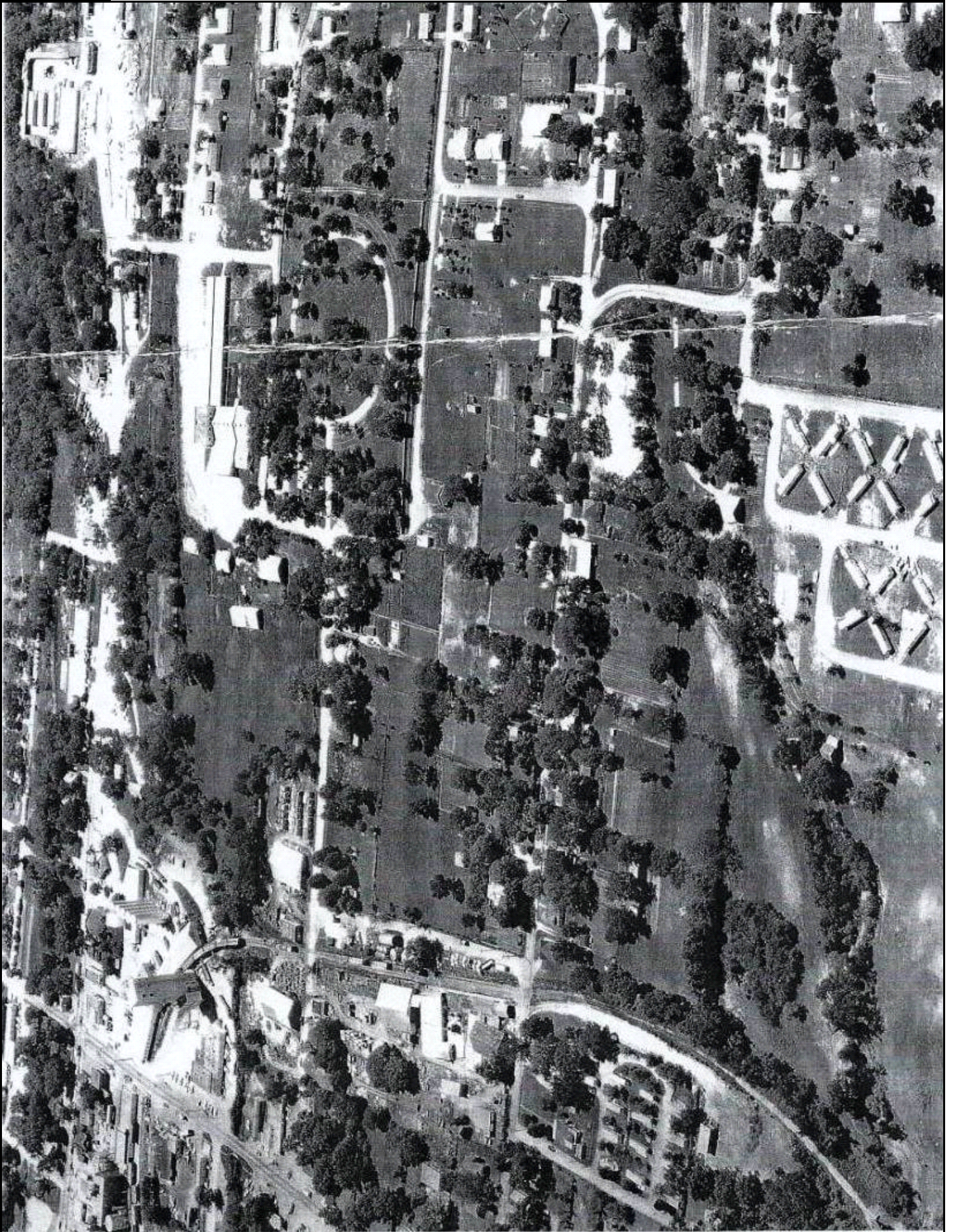


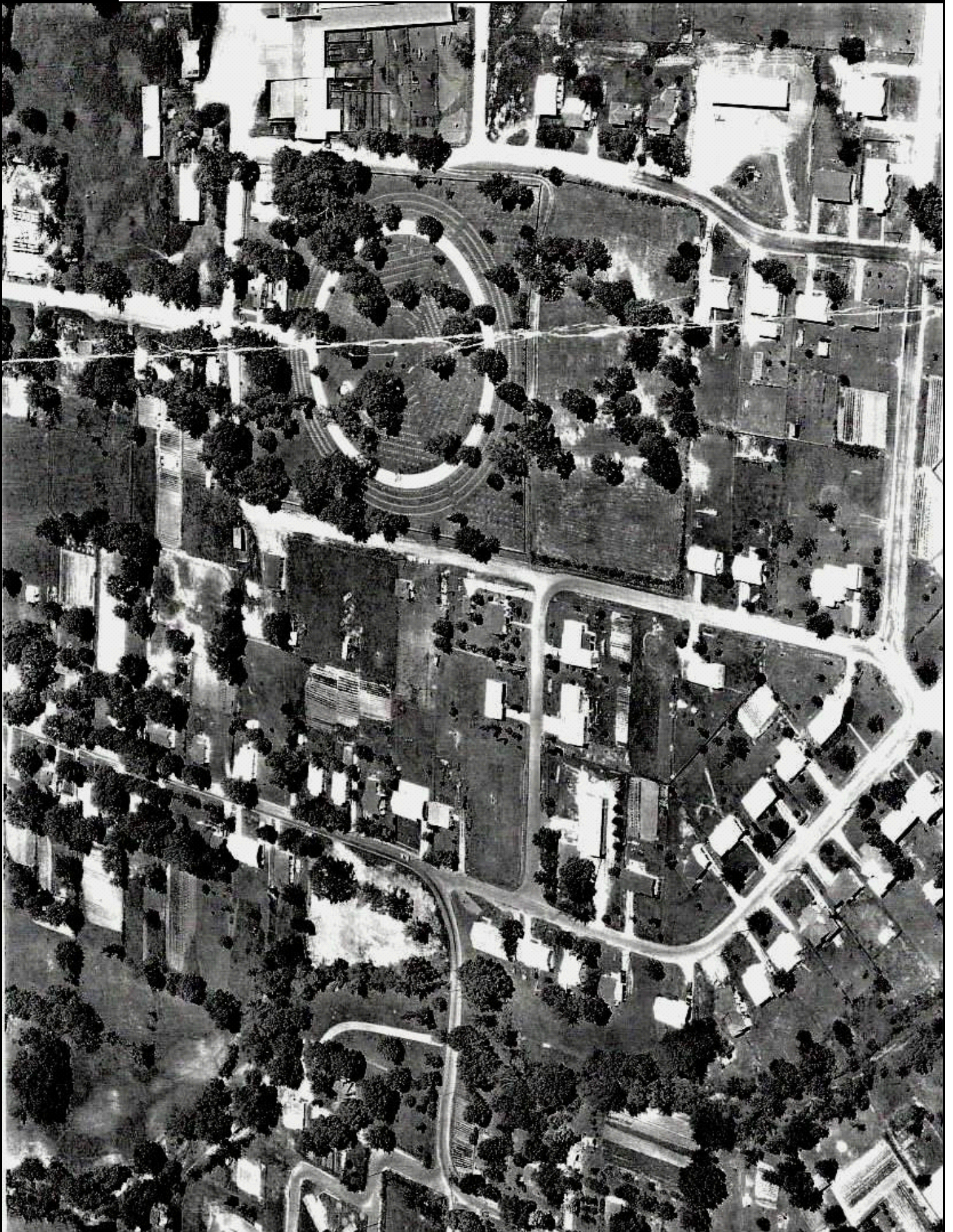
April, 1987 article

By Charles Bickford NEWS Photographer

Property at lower left and along street at bottom of photo would be acquired for cemetery

Time was running out quickly for the Fayetteville National Cemetery. The Federal Cemetery officials would not reopen a Cemetery once they had closed it. The situation had reached the critical stage.





Northwest Arkansas Times, Sun., March 24, 1991
FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS

F'ville donates to cemetery improvement



Fayetteville mayor Fred Vorsanger, center, hands \$12,500 check to RNCIC president Elvie

Heiney as RNCIC officers James Clark, Ken Gibson and Milo Cumpston look on.



Gadding about

Hogeve
Vaunda Johnson,
Hogeve,
846-2497

HOGVE — The city of Fayetteville recently contributed \$12,500 to the Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation (RNCIC) bringing its total to \$25,000 for purchase of additional land to expand the National Cemetery in Fayetteville.

In 1989 the city also assisted in clearing and leveling 98 percent of an acre of land which the RNCIC donated to the Veterans Administration. Since then there have been 35 interments of veterans in this tract.

As of March 1990 there were about 30,000 veterans in the six-county Northwest Arkansas area eligible for burial in a National Cemetery. Also, due to their recent service on active duty, the 142nd Field Artillery Brigade and other Reserve and National Guard Units who served in Operation Desert Storm, will become eligible for burial in the National Cemetery.

Elvie Heiney, president of RNCIC, stated that though the VA will soon assist RNCIC in the purchase of certain tracts of land adjacent to the cemetery, \$50,000 will be needed to complete the project. Contributions are still needed and are tax deductible within the limits allowed by law. Please make checks payable to

RNCIC, P.O. Box 4221, Fayetteville, Ark. 72702. Call Elvie Heiney at 442-2389 with any questions, or write to him at 5688 E. Huntsville Rd., Fayetteville, Ark., 72701.

The recent contribution fulfills the request made to the Washington County area for a total of \$65,000.

However, none of the following counties and larger cities in each of them have answered requests made by the RNCIC: Benton County, nor Rogers,

Early in 1991 the City of Fayetteville contributed \$12,500 to the RNCIC for the Cemetery expansion. Left to right in the picture: RNCIC Officer, Milo Cumpston; RNCIC President, Elvie Heiney; Fayetteville Mayor, Fred Vorsanger; RNCIC Vice President, James Clark; and RNCIC Secretary-Treasurer, Ken Gibson.

(Continued from page 8)

and the dedication ceremony was held August 1, 1989, with approximately 1 acre of land (3 tracts containing approximately 41,000 sq. ft.).

Officers of the RNCIC encountered many challenges and battles in the early years. At the May 1992 meeting President Elvie Heiney read parts of a letter from Roger Rapp, Director of Field Operations, Dept. of Veterans, National Cemetery System, Washington, D.C. dated April 24, 1992. In essence this letter stated that the VA was not going to pay the RNCIC the additional \$12,500 which was requested for the purchase of Tract 2. Heiney said, "They have misinterpreted what we paid for it." Secondly, and the most important issue, this letter stated, "The various lots purchased for this expansion provide burial space for veterans for the next 35 years. Since no additional land is required for the foreseeable future, we request that all efforts by the RNCIC associated with securing additional land be terminated."

President Heiney stated it was his plan to write a letter to the VA in Washington with copies to the President of the United States, Secretary of the DVA Derwinsky, and all Congressmen and Senators in Arkansas. This letter would protest their letter of April 24, 1992, point out what has been accomplished and the fact that more land is needed and we do not intend to terminate our efforts.

The American Legion Post 27 paid the initial expense of establishing the corporation and had been paying most of the administrative expenses for several years. At the Sept. 1991 RNCIC meeting, Bill Murphy made the motion that the American Legion Post 27 be relieved of the obligation of paying the RNCIC's administrative expense and that the RNCIC absorb these costs. The motion was seconded by Jim Clark and the motion carried.

In July 1994 it was announced that the American Legion building at 28 South College had been sold. By November of that year Sheriff McKee offered the use of the basement in the jail for the RNCIC meetings.

The meetings moved to the maintenance building at the Fayetteville National Cemetery in the spring of 1997. However, due to lack of meeting room, the meetings were moved to the American Legion Post 27, 1195 So. Curtis Avenue in Fayetteville, beginning in January 1998, and members continue to meet there today.

In March 1998 the RNCIC passed a motion to take 10,000 of the bricks from the original Cemetery wall, when it is removed for the 1990's expansion program, and use them as a fund-raiser. The original donation price was \$50 with an engraved plaque, but when sales were slow, the price was reduced to \$25 each. At



the RNCIC's April 2001, with the bricks not selling, the Board was concerned about storing them, so a motion was passed that anyone who wanted them could have them if they would move them!

In May 1987 it was discussed that a brief reprieve from closing the Cemetery would come from the destruction of the former caretaker's house also known as the "lodge". Destruction of the house would make room for approximately 135 burial plots, but that would last little more than a year, allowing additional time to raise money to purchase land. It wasn't until the fall of 1990 that the old caretaker's lodge/maintenance building was demolished.

The land remained vacant until in August 1996 when the possibility of funding a columbarium for that location was discussed. In August 1997 construction began on the columbarium at the sight of the old maintenance building. The columbarium structures were started in October 1998; and in April 2000 the columbarium was finished and dedicated. It would allow for 1,200 cremations.

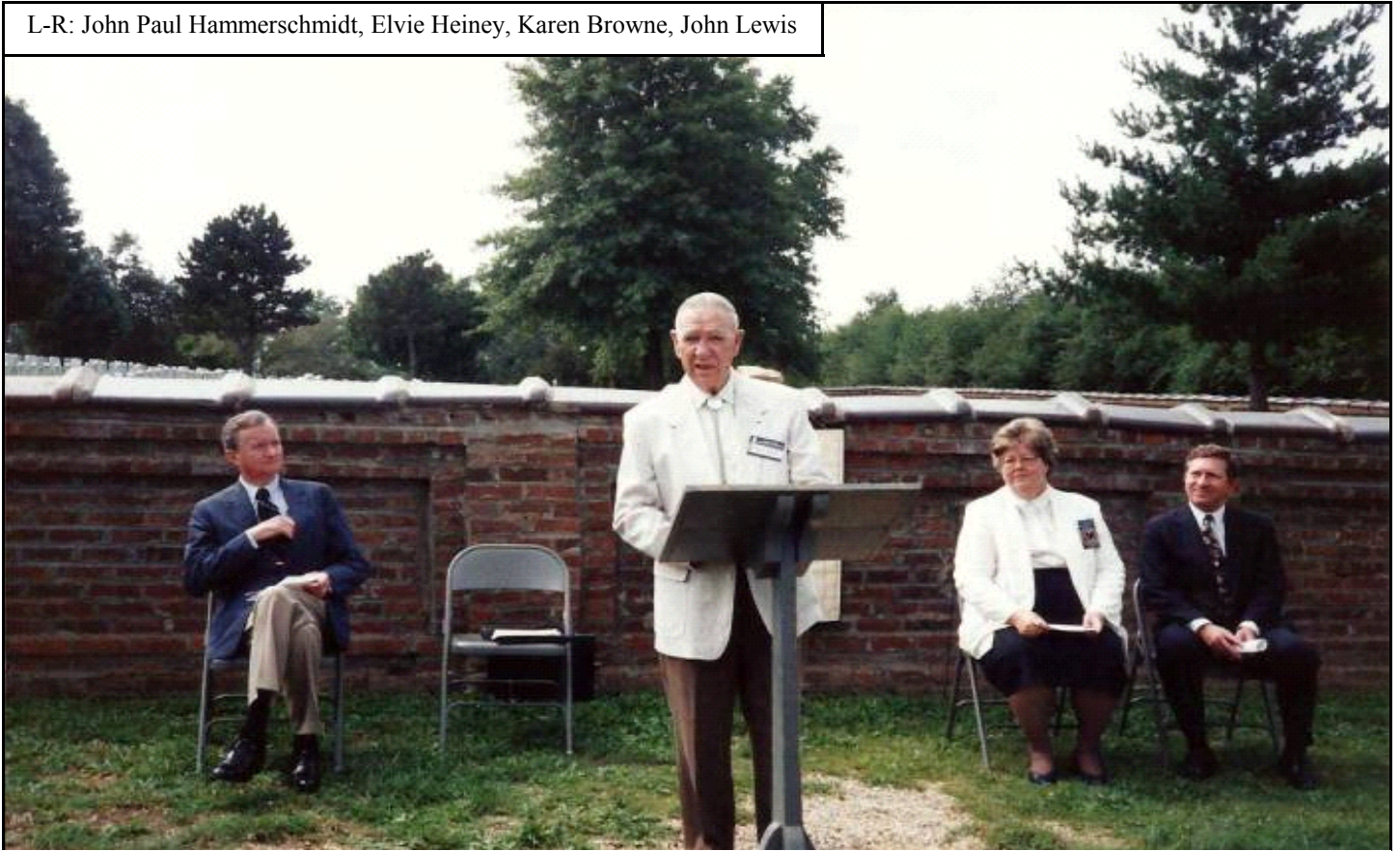
THE LATER YEARS OF THE RNCIC

On July 28, 1999, the Fayetteville National Cemetery, being the smallest active National Cemetery in the U.S., was recognized for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places means that the property is among some of the nation's most historically significant properties. The RNCIC and veteran groups in Northwest Arkansas have done much to improve the property, acquire additional land, and help keep the National Cemetery open and vibrant. The FNC was later added to the Civil War Discovery Trail.

With the donation of the 1.35 acres to the VA in October 2008, the burial capacity of the Fayetteville National Cemetery

(Continued on page 17)

L-R: John Paul Hammerschmidt, Elvie Heiney, Karen Browne, John Lewis



On September 5, 1991, there was a Mortgage Burning Ceremony as the loan from the Bank of Fayetteville was paid off. It marked the end of the first phase of enlarging the Cemetery. U. S. Representative John Paul Hammerschmidt was on hand to congratulate the RNCIC with special recognition given to Elvie P. Heiney, RNCIC President, and Ken Gibson, RNCIC Secretary-Treasurer. At the Ceremony it was said that this was “an auspicious day” in the long history of the National Cemetery in Fayetteville. This was truly a “sign of good omen,” a favorable sign that we will be successful in our mission to assure the continuation of this Cemetery.



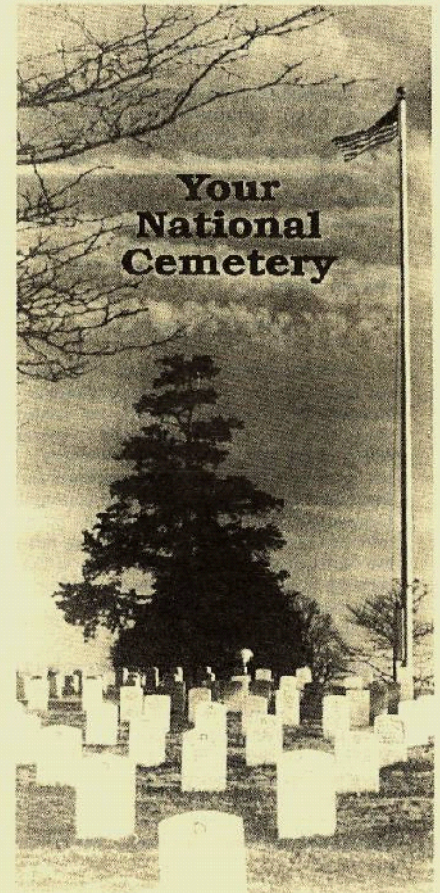
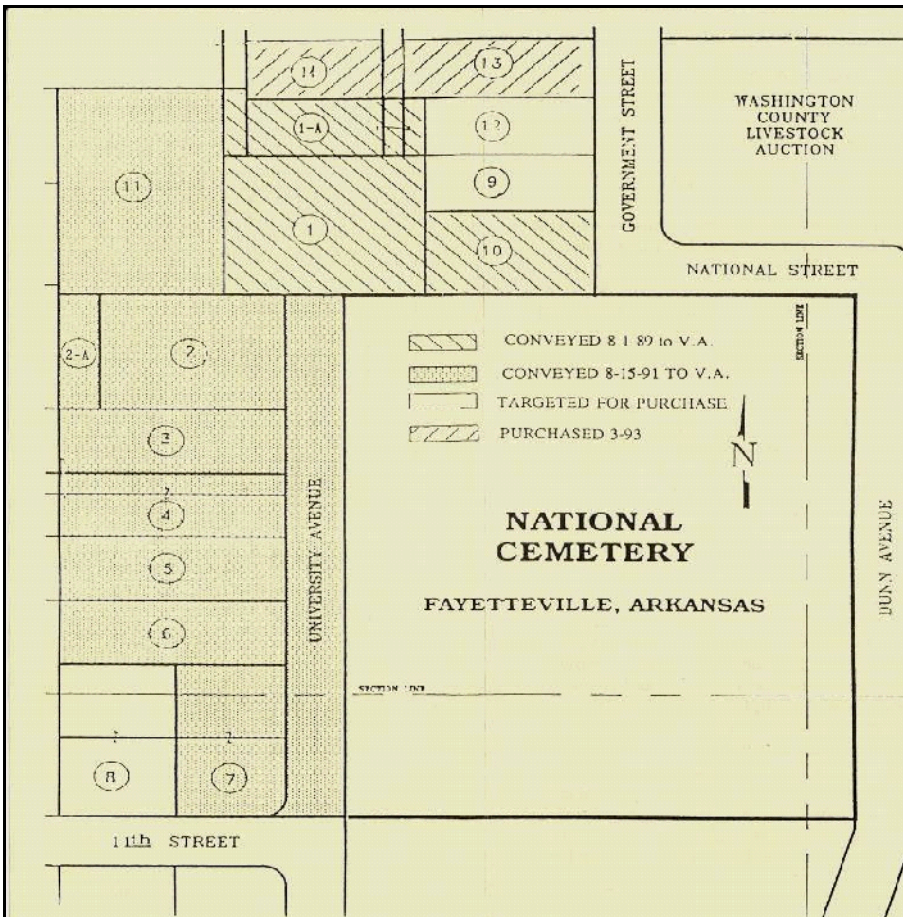
L-R: John Paul Hammerschmidt, Elvie Heiney, Karen Browne, John Lewis



L-R: U.S. Congressman John Paul Hammerschmidt "striking the match," Karen Browne, Elvie Heiney receiving the mortgage from John Lewis, and Gary Garten.



L-R: Unk, Unk, James Clark, Hoy Haight, John Paul Hammerschmidt, Roger Melton, Elvie Heiney, Unk, Milo Cumpston and Dick Steele



A Summer 1993 RNCIC brochure shows the progress made after nine years in acquiring land for the Fayetteville National Cemetery.

THE RNCIC

The Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation has been organized to aid in the expansion of the National Cemetery in Fayetteville. It is a legally constituted, not-for-profit corporation whose officers and directors are made up of veterans and non-veterans who work without compensation. Membership in the RNCIC is open to veterans and non-veterans alike.

RNCIC'S MISSION

The mission of the RNCIC is to secure the land adjacent to the existing National Cemetery so that the Cemetery can continue to receive veterans for interment. Veterans living in the Region and many veterans living outside the region have planned for their final resting place to be the National Cemetery in Fayetteville. Veterans far and wide, as well as locally, have strong ties to the Northwest Region of Arkansas, either through having been born there, having been raised there, or having family members buried there.

WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED?

Lots 1 through 7 and Lots 10 and 11 have been purchased and conveyed to the Veterans Administration. Lots 13 and 14 have been purchased, and University Avenue from 11th Street North to the south side of Lot 1 has been closed and is now a part of the National Cemetery. More than

175 graves have been opened in the new area. This provides a final resting place for veterans, veterans' spouses, and their children under certain circumstances.

THE NEXT GOAL

The federal government has provided a big help toward our goal by a one time grant of \$137,510. We are now "on our own" and must raise an additional \$110,000 to purchase Lots 8, 9, and 12 as shown on the map.

YOUR CONTRIBUTION

The Fayetteville National Cemetery is one of the original twelve in the United States that was authorized by President Lincoln after the Civil War for the burial of our military dead. There are one thousand five hundred and ten unknown soldiers buried in the Fayetteville National Cemetery.

During the past year, the National Cemetery has improved in many ways, thanks to donations from veterans, the community, the local and federal governments, who have helped so much. Now is not the time to stand still. There is much more to be accomplished if we are to meet our goals for improvement. We are far short of what we need to provide an excellent National Cemetery, one that our veterans, our community, and government will be proud of. We need your support.

Donations and established memorials are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

NAME _____		DATE _____
ADDRESS -- STREET OR BOX _____		
CITY _____	STATE _____	ZIP _____
Yes, I would like to help: — In Soliciting — In Public Information — As Team or Section Leader — By Donating \$ _____ to — By Writing Letters to the Editor — be paid over 2-year period.		
Place in an envelope and mail to: Ken Gibson, Secretary-Treasurer RNCIC P.O. Box 4221 Fayetteville, AR 72702		

RECEIPT

DATE _____

Received of _____
in total (partial) payment of donation.

By _____
Treasurer
RNCIC

RNCIC members about 1995: L-R: Helen Blackwell, Marshall Sayner, Roger Melton, Don Tuller, Dana Williams, Peggy McClain and Bob Sterrett.



RNCIC BOARD IN 1997: Standing L to R: Jack Flannery, Roger McClain-president, Bill Murphy, Bucky Crouch, Hoy Haught, Peggy McClain-secretary, Don Tuller-treasurer, Bob Sterrett. Seated: L-R: Milo Cumpston-vice-president, Keith Newhouse, Helen Blackwell, Marshall Sayner



Ronald Butler and Eugene Keister, Nov. 2013

(L) In November 2001 a huge pecan tree on one of the purchased lots needed to be removed to prepare the land for donation to the Cemetery. With many workers involved Margaret and Arnold Christie were able to make use of the firewood.

(R) Many of the land owners surrounding the Fayetteville National Cemetery are/were veterans and wished to see the FNC expanded to include their properties. In addition to the Christie properties, Eugene Keister (US Army WW II) and his family are currently negotiating to sell his property to the RNCIC.

(Continued from page 12) was increased by nearly 1,300 sites. A lot of the people who had started the RNCIC's mission had now passed away and many are buried at the FNC. It is important that we finish what they started.

In keeping with the times, the RNCIC web site was created by the fall of 2004. Jake Lamkins donated the annual cost and continues to do so as his contribution to the RNCIC. Previous attempts had been made in 1999 with our first web page being set up as a link from Attorney Ginger Middleton's page. Jake announced that he had made a memorial donation to the RNCIC to upgrade the website in November 2009. He bought the domain name RNCIC.com and also upgraded the website to a premium plan that does not have ads. A PayPal account was added to the web page in August 2014 to expedite payment of donations and memberships.

The number of RNCIC members in the early years was as many as 50, but by 2008 the attendance at meetings was down to four or five individuals. With the land donation in 2008 there was a public ceremony at the FNC with newspaper and TV

coverage.

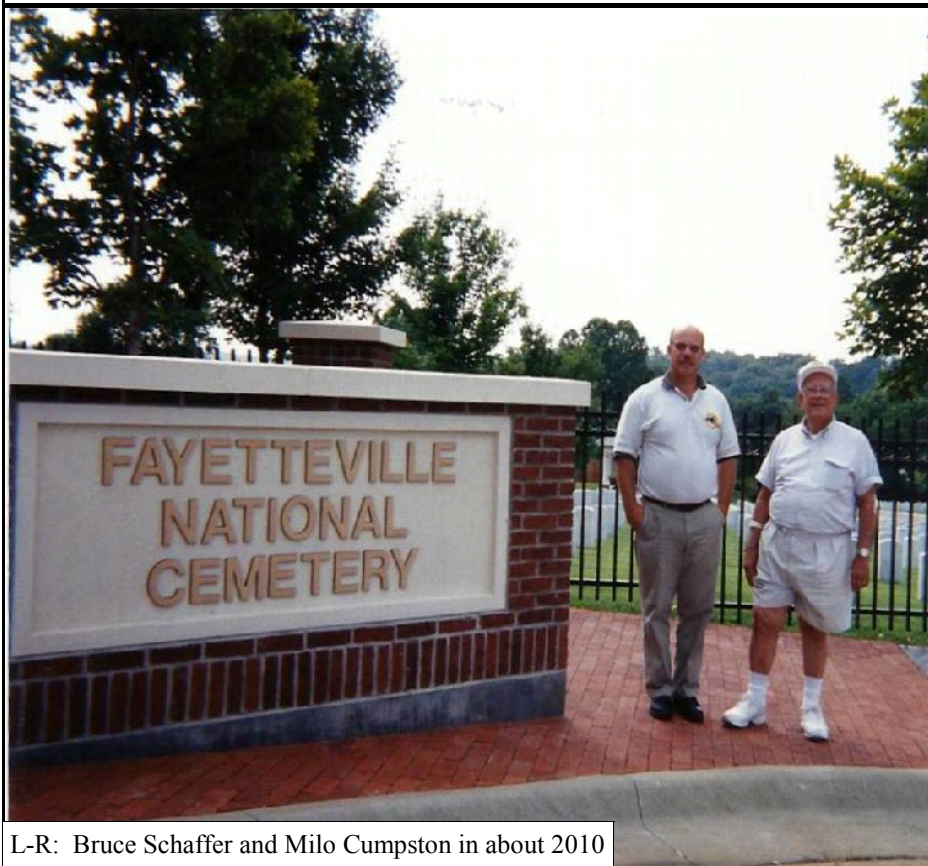
The plight of the Fayetteville National Cemetery gained attention in 2009 when a development company proposed building apartments for college students on the former Washington County Livestock area to the east of the Cemetery. The asking price for that property was in the millions of dollars and totally out of the range of the RNCIC to raise the money. Therefore our concentration is from Hill Avenue to Government Avenue and the abandoned railroad spur to the north and 11th Street on the south.

The Fayetteville National Cemetery is a pristine treasure for the City of Fayetteville. Each year on Memorial Day the Boy Scouts of America gather at the Cemetery to pay tribute to the fallen veterans by placing an American flag at each headstone.

Another fund raising effort was the request for Grant Funds from the Arkansas State Politicians' Discretionary Funds, and the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc. This proved to be a very viable help, and continues with our



Taking a break in November 2001 from cutting firewood and seated left to right: one of the workers, Milo Cumpston, and Arnold Christie.



L-R: Bruce Schaffer and Milo Cumpston in about 2010

efforts and requests.

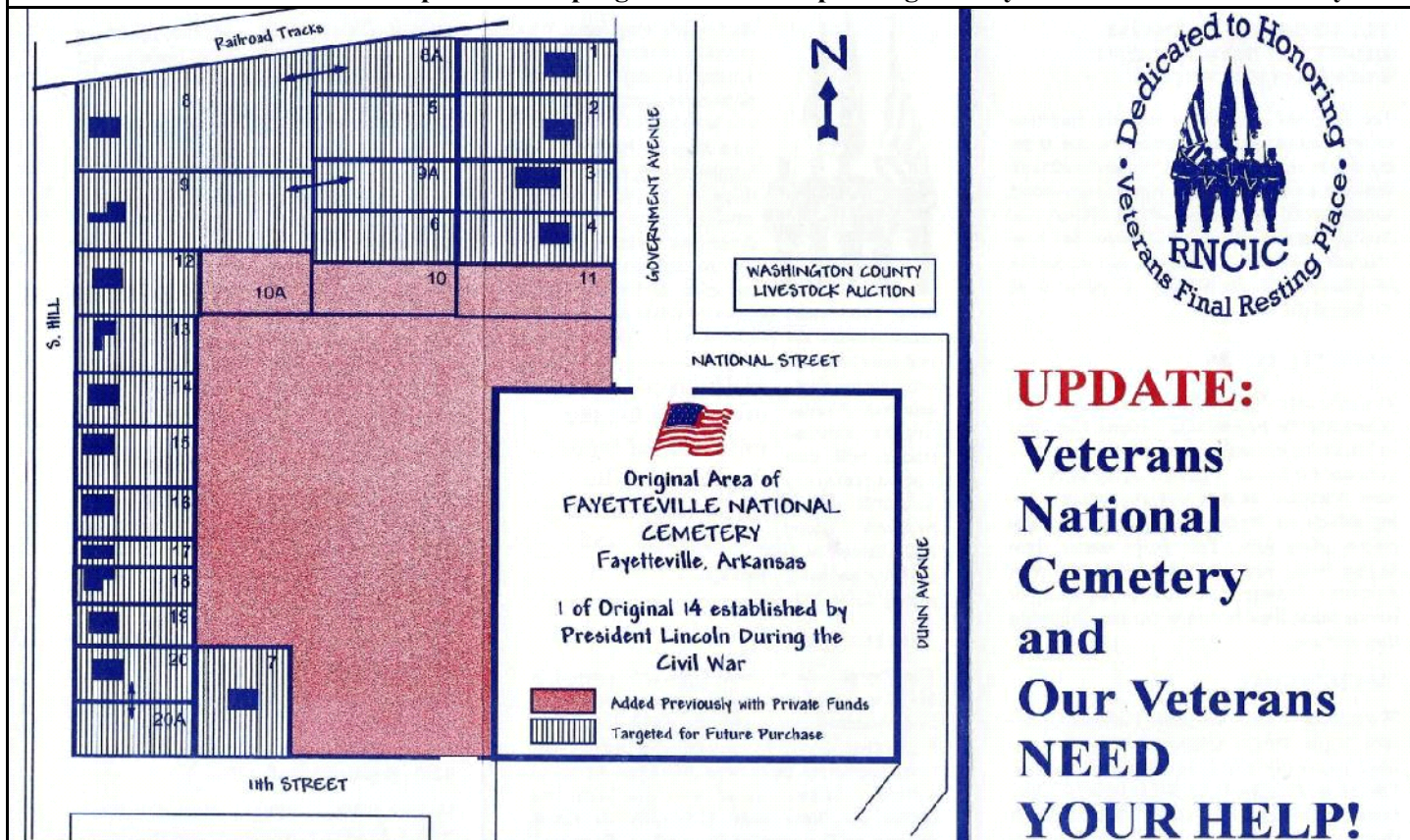
Under the leadership of RNCIC President Ron Butler, Annual Reports from the President, Vice President/Publicity, Secretary, Treasurer, Web Master, and Special Projects/Committee were implemented in 2012. This review made for a better informed Board of Directors with planning for future efforts and improvements.

Records indicate land donations to the VA:

- August 1989 – 3 lots
- August 1991 – 8 lots
- 1995 –1999 – 5 lots
- October 2008 – 4 lots
- November 2013 – 6 lots

Pending donations to the national cemetery at the end of 2014 include the 4 northernmost lots for which the RNCIC borrowed money to complete the purchase. We feared commercial interests such as apartments might buy it before we could get the money. Efforts to pay off the mortgage continue and the land will be donated within a year or two.

A 1995 RNCIC brochure map shows the progress made in expanding the Fayetteville National cemetery.

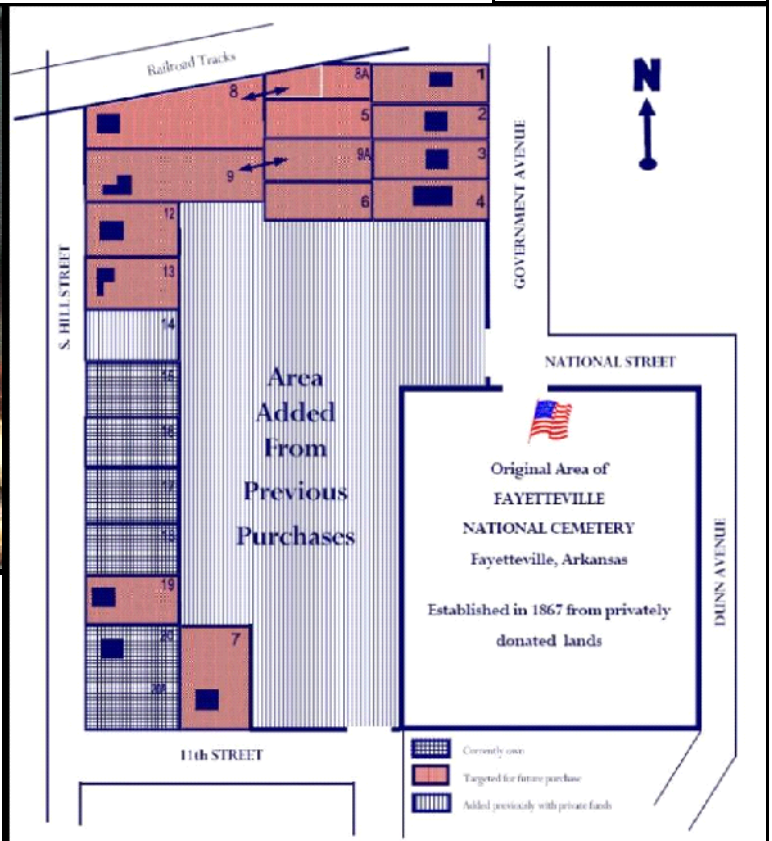


On May 28, 2010 local businessman and philanthropist Don Tyson donated \$75,000 to the RNCIC to buy land. Long time RNCIC supporters Peggy and Roger McClain were instrumental in getting the donation. L-R: Peggy McClain, Don Tyson, Archie Schaeffer and Roger McClain.

The official emblem of the Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation on the cover was designed by Peggy McClain.



Almost a decade had passed since the land donation to the VA in May 1999 until 1.35 acres were donated in October 2008, with special acknowledgment given to Milo Cumpston, who was a driving force in acquiring the properties. This donation included the first property to expand the Cemetery through to Hill Avenue. Milo was said to be the “backbone” of support for the expansion of the Fayetteville National Cemetery. Milo was a Charter Member of the RNCIC and active until his death in April 2009.



MEMBERSHIP IN THE RNCIC

In July 2011 the Board implemented membership dues effective January 1, 2012, and changed the By-Laws to do so.

Membership in the RNCIC is open to all individuals, representatives of organizations and clubs, in sympathy with its purposes. Meetings of the RNCIC are currently held at the American Legion Post 27, 1195 So. Curtis Avenue, Fayetteville, Arkansas, on the second Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m. We encourage active attendance and support to these meetings and the mission of the RNCIC.

According to research it is believed that there is no other organization like the RNCIC in existence. You are invited to become part of the RNCIC. Membership dues are annual except for Life memberships.

Join the Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corp.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please circle one:
 Lifetime \$500
 Organization \$500
 Sustaining \$100
 Supporting \$35
 Basic \$20

Membership dues are annual except for Lifetime and Organization. Please make checks payable to RNCIC and mail to RNCIC, P. O. Box 4221, Fayetteville, AR 72702. You can also pay online via PayPal at our website <http://RNCIC.com> Your support is appreciated.

I would like to make a donation of \$ _____

In memory of _____ or honor of _____

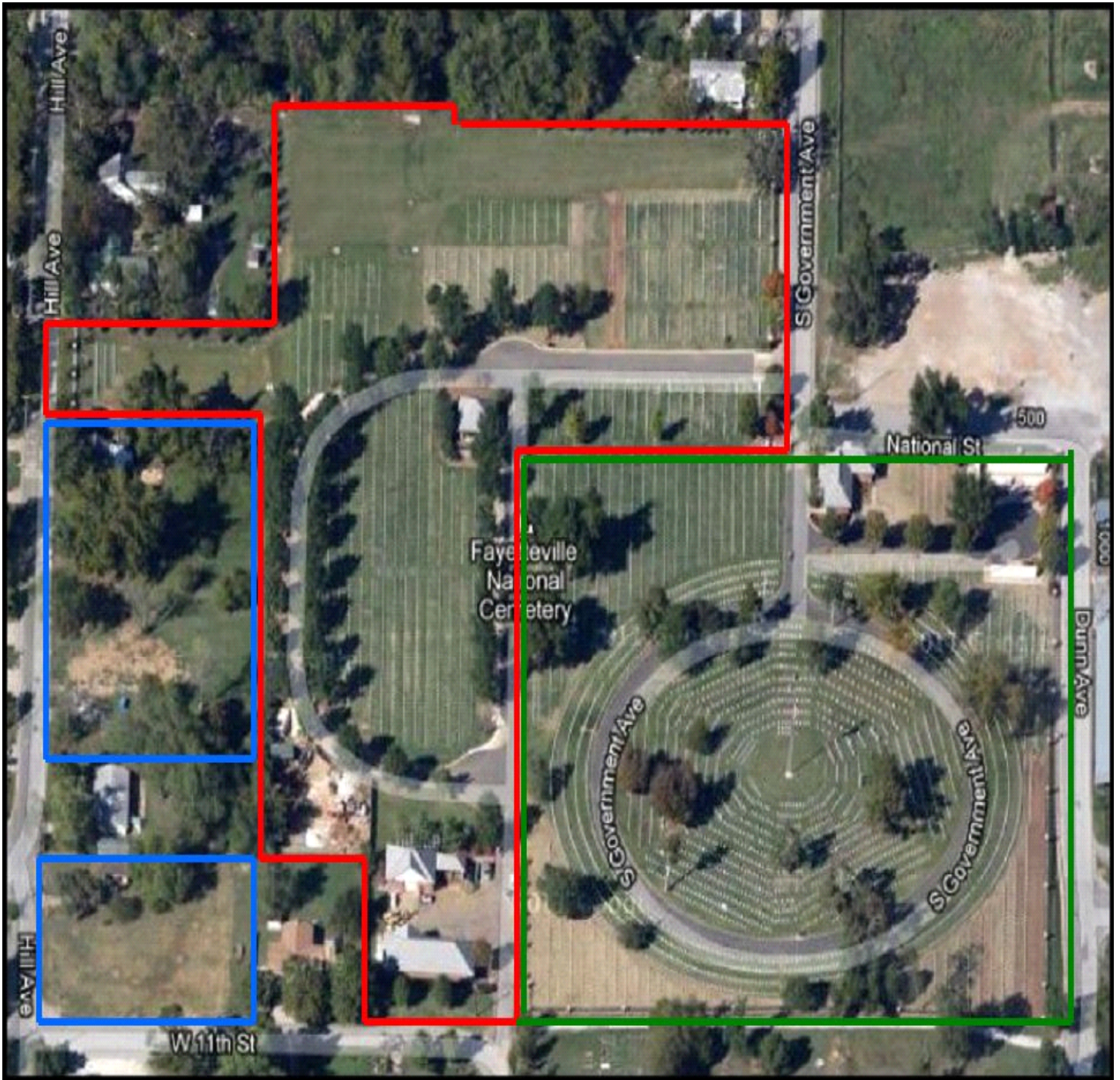
April, 2010



The size of burial plots has changed over the years to provide more burials per acre. Original grave sites were 6 ft. by 12 ft. Currently an entire crypt field is prepared with burial vaults being placed 3 ft. by 8 ft. and placed side by side to allow for maximum usage of the land space. The vaults are then covered with top soil until a vault area needs to be opened for a burial.



Among the veterans at rest at the Fayetteville National Cemetery is longtime and hardworking RNCIC volunteer Milo Cumpston and Medal of Honor recipient Clarence B. Craft (US Army WWII and Korea). The north Fayetteville, Arkansas post office is named the Clarence B. Craft Post Office Building



AERIAL PHOTO SHOWS RNCIC'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The green outline is the original cemetery; The red outline is the land donated by the RNCIC since 1984; The blue outline is land donated to the cemetery on November 9, 2013.

Mr. Tom Ruck, Director of the Fayetteville National Cemetery, was quoted as saying, "We at Fayetteville National Cemetery and the NCA realize what a treasure the RNCIC is to America and the Veterans in Northwest Arkansas. Without the RNCIC, Fayetteville National Cemetery would not be the place of honor that it is today. As the new Cemetery Director, I personally want to say thank you for all you do, it is truly appreciated!"

It was stated in a press release in May 1987 that the RNCIC's sole purpose is to purchase land adjoining the Cemetery, turn the land over to the Federal Government, and having done this "the corporation will be dissolved."

Ten properties still remain in our sight. With the number of interments at the Fayetteville National Cemetery in December, 2014 at approximately 9480, we want to keep the Cemetery open to honor as many veterans as possible.

Our work is not complete and thus "the corporation cannot be dissolved."



In early 2009 Wes Stites and Josh Sakon, Professors at the University of Arkansas and Josh being a runner, joined our meetings and introduced the idea of doing a 5K Race as a fund raiser. The name for the first 5K Race was "Veterans Memorial 5K Run" and the date was set for November 7, 2009. The race continues annually as a major fund raiser through sponsorships from Northwest Arkansas businesses. This photo was taken during the 2014 race.

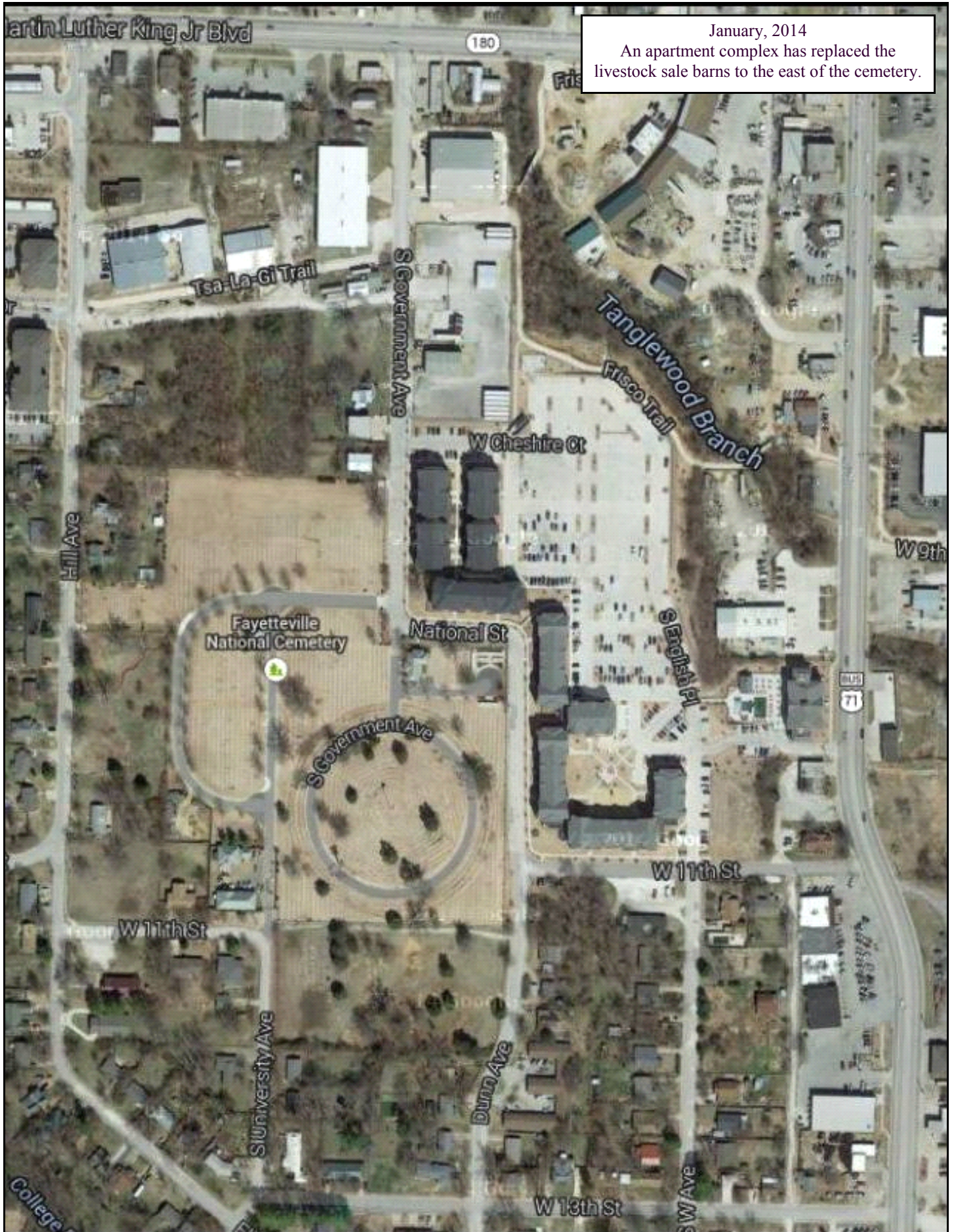


WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

In December of each year Walmart donates thousands of live green wreaths as part of the Wreaths Across America. Hundreds of people come out to place a wreath at each headstone.

May 2010
The livestock sale barns are shown
on the right to the east of the cemetery.





The Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation (RNCIC)

Presentation of 2.3 Acres of land to The US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)



FAYETTEVILLE NATIONAL CEMETERY

Saturday, November 9, 2013

Fayetteville National Cemetery

The Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation (RNCIC) is proud to present to the US Department of Veterans Affairs 2.3 acres of land adjacent to the Fayetteville National Cemetery for the purpose of providing space for future burials. The RNCIC has been purchasing and donating land to the VA since 1984, thereby allowing the cemetery to continue to provide burial space for US service men and women and their families. Today's donation is the largest single land transfer to the VA ever made by the RNCIC.



Green—1867 original acreage; Red—additions by RNCIC to date; Blue—Today's addition

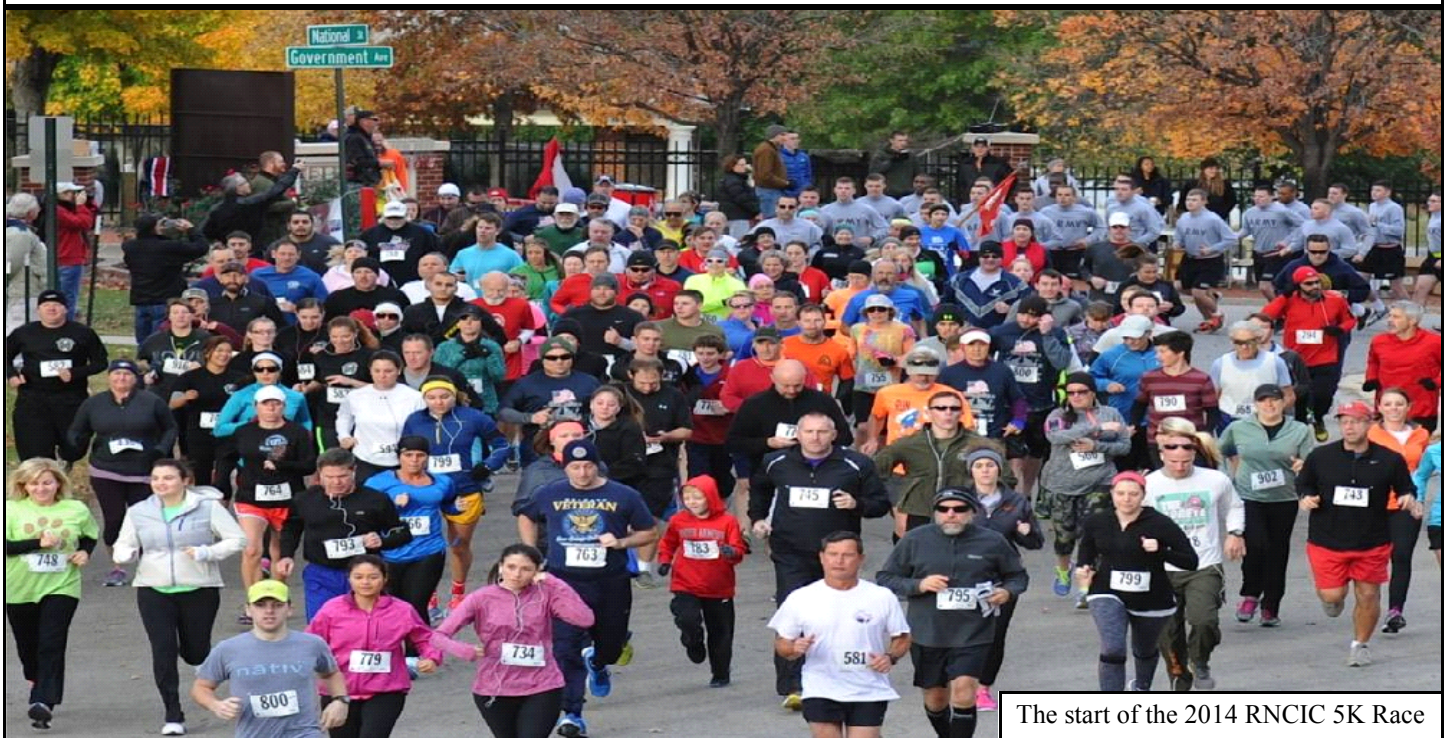
Recognition of significant contributors to RNCIC mission

Presentation of Certificate of land transfer:

Lieutenant Colonel Ron Butler, President RNCIC

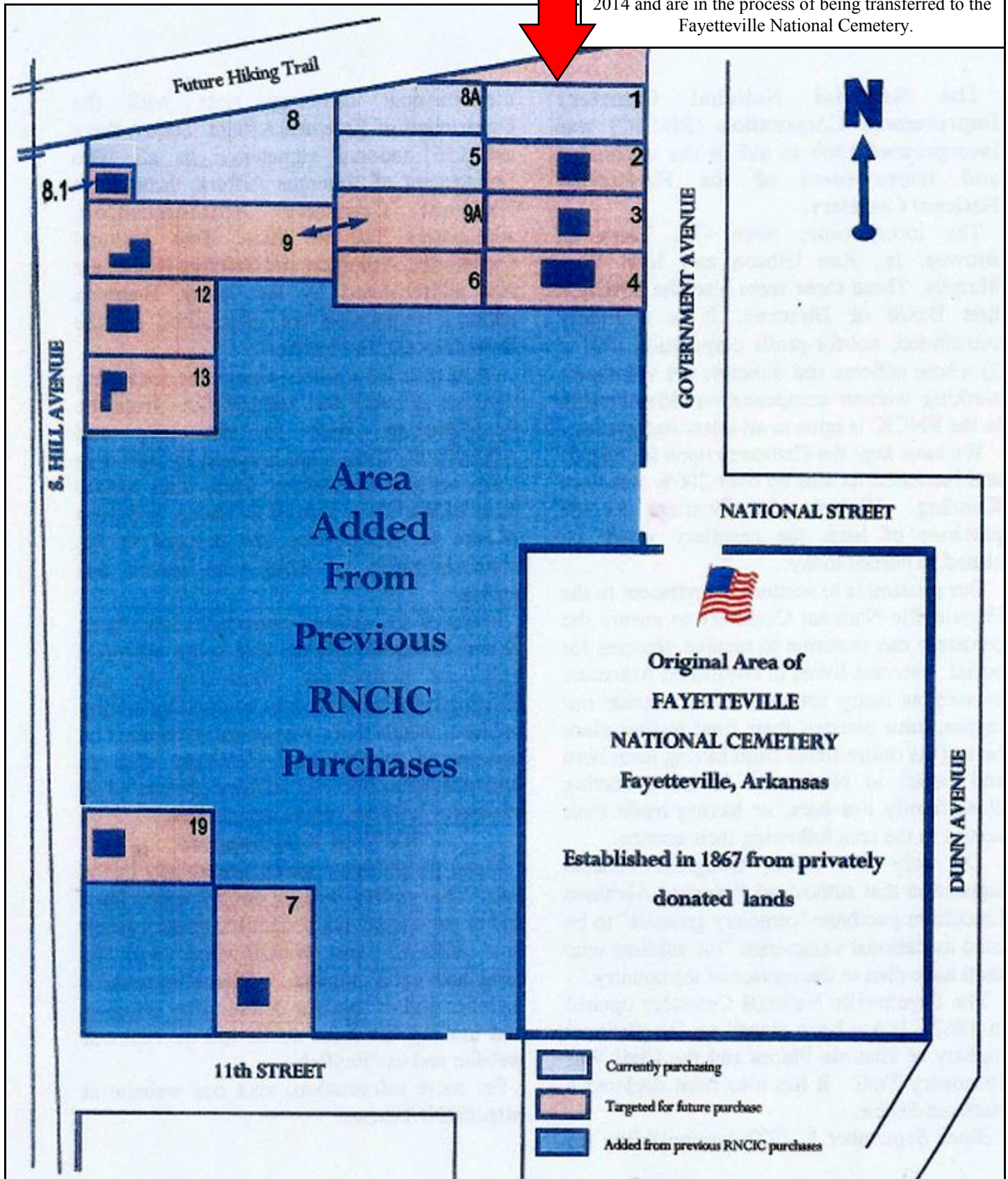
Ms. Gloria Bailey, Director Fayetteville National Cemetery

On Saturday morning, November 9, 2013, following the fifth annual 5K Race, the RNCIC donated 2.3 acres of land (6 lots) to the VA. The largest crowd ever, gathered at the gates of the FNC for this ceremony. This was the donation which really created the ability of the FNC to expand west to So. Hill Avenue and to join up with the one lot on Hill Ave. previously donated in 2008. The Cemetery fence will be moved in 2015 to include some of these areas.



The start of the 2014 RNCIC 5K Race

Parcels 1, 5, 8 and 8A were purchased by the RNCC in 2014 and are in the process of being transferred to the Fayetteville National Cemetery.



By the end of 2014, the RNCIC's 30th year, the group had purchased 30 properties with 10 properties remaining on the current RNCIC brochure map. Those 30 properties purchased translate into roughly 13 acres adjoining the Cemetery at a cost of approximately \$846,000.

Without the long-term, continued efforts of the members of the RNCIC, this expansion project would not be possible, and the Fayetteville National Cemetery would have been closed to new burials back in the 1980s.



RNCIC OFFICERS FOR 2014 ARE SWORN IN JANUARY 11, 2014

L-R: Lorna Sterrett, secretary, Harold Crivello, treasurer, Ron Butler, president and Merle Williams, vice president

REGIONAL NATIONAL CEMETERY IMPROVEMENT CORP. BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN 2014

Ron Butler
Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012
Re-elected Jan 11, 2014
Term ends Jan 2017

Harold Crivello
Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012
Re-elected Jan 11, 2014
Term ends Jan 2017

Gary Culp
Elected to the Board Jan 12, 2013
Term ends Jan 2015
GCulp@ix.netcom.com

Jim Glover
Elected to the Board Jan 12, 2013
Term ends Jan 2015
JimGlover@hotmail.com

Jake Lamkins
Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012
Re-elected Jan 12, 2013
Term ends Jan 2016

Peggy McClain
Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012
Re-elected Jan 12, 2013
Term ends Jan 2016

Roger McClain
Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012
Term ends Jan 2015

Josh Sakon
Elected to the Board Jan 11, 2014
Term ends Jan 2017

Aubrey Shepherd
Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012
Re-elected Jan 11, 2014
Term ends Jan 2017

Lorna Sterrett
Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012
Re-elected Jan 12, 2013
Term ends Jan 2016

Wes Stites
Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012
Re-elected Jan 12, 2013
Term ends Jan 2016

Merle Williams
Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012
Term ends Jan 2015