

# **REGIONAL NATIONAL CEMETERY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION**

**Formed to preserve and expand the  
Fayetteville National Cemetery**

**37 YEARS OF HISTORY  
1984 - 2021**

*Third Edition  
May 2022*

*Edited, revised and enlarged by Jake LAMKINS  
With an assist from Ron Butler & Lorna Sterrett*

## 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

**REGIONAL NATIONAL CEMETERY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION**

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

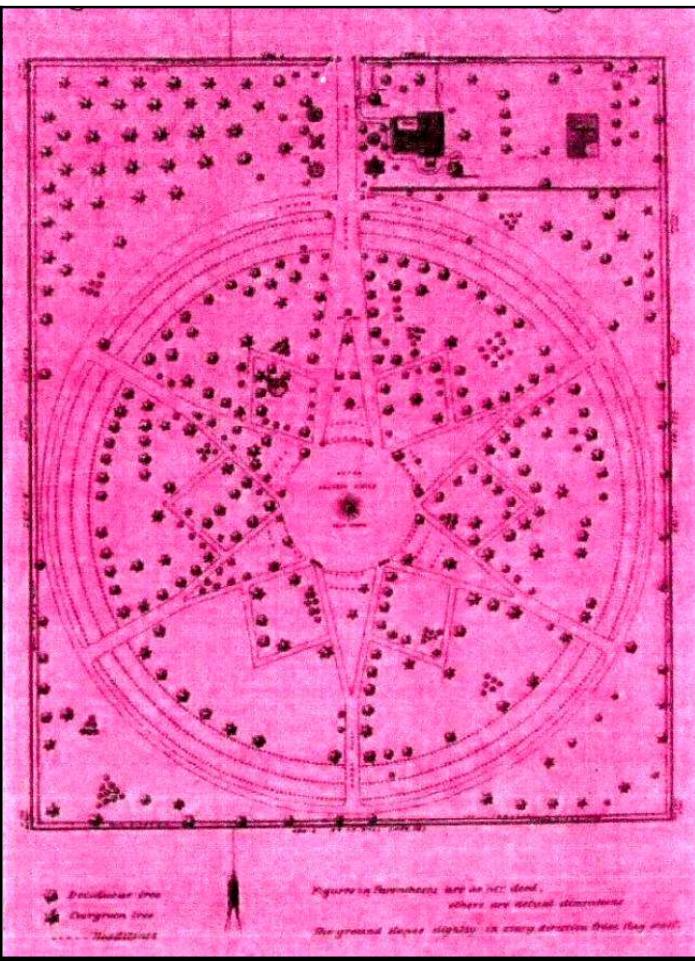
The Fayetteville National Cemetery is located on the south side of Fayetteville, Arkansas, at 1000 S. Lt. Col. Leroy Pond Avenue, about one mile southwest of the old courthouse. Although Frank Pierce, a hunter and trapper, first visited what became the Fayetteville area in 1819, the town was not officially 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.

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 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.

### 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.

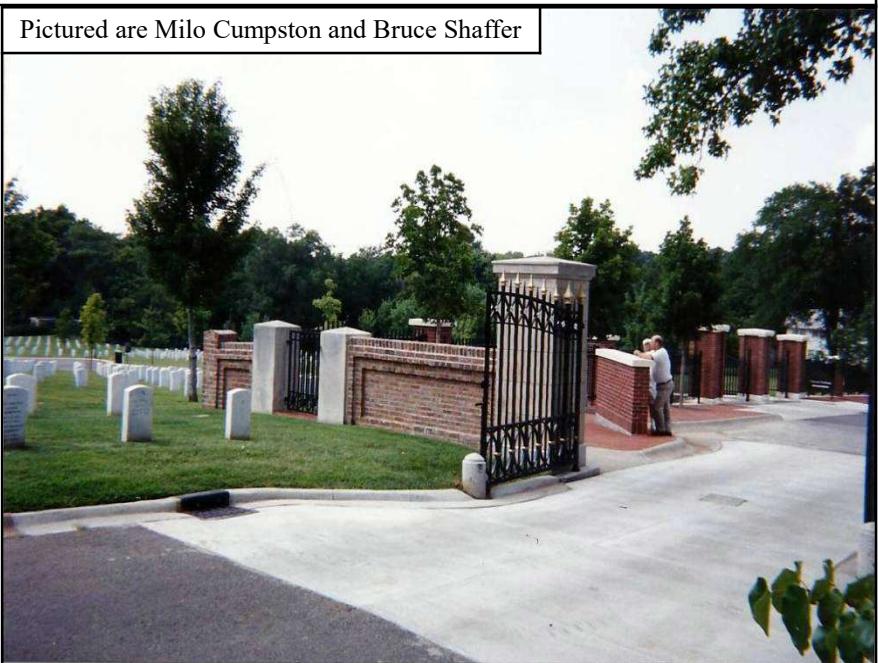
Although the corporation's name, Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation, may seem unusual, it is derived from the National Cemeteries Act of 1973 (PL 93-43) wherein the VA was authorized by Congress to acquire land and to construct regional national cemeteries in each of 10 Standard Federal 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 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,

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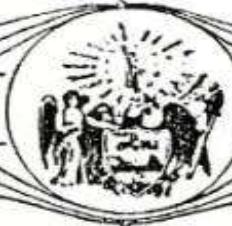


Pictured here are the three original founders of the RNCIC: L-R: Ken Gibson (died Feb. 1995), Col. Larry L. Browne, Jr. (for lack of a picture, his headstone at the FNC is pictured) (died Sept. 1988), and John "Bill" Murphy (died Jan. 2006).

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 1984*

PAUL RIVIERE

*Secretary of State  
By D.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 hereunto 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 23<sup>rd</sup> day of May 19 85

W. J. "BILL" McCUEN

Secretary of State

by W. J. McCuen Deputy

## THE MIDDLE YEARS OF THE RNCIC

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.

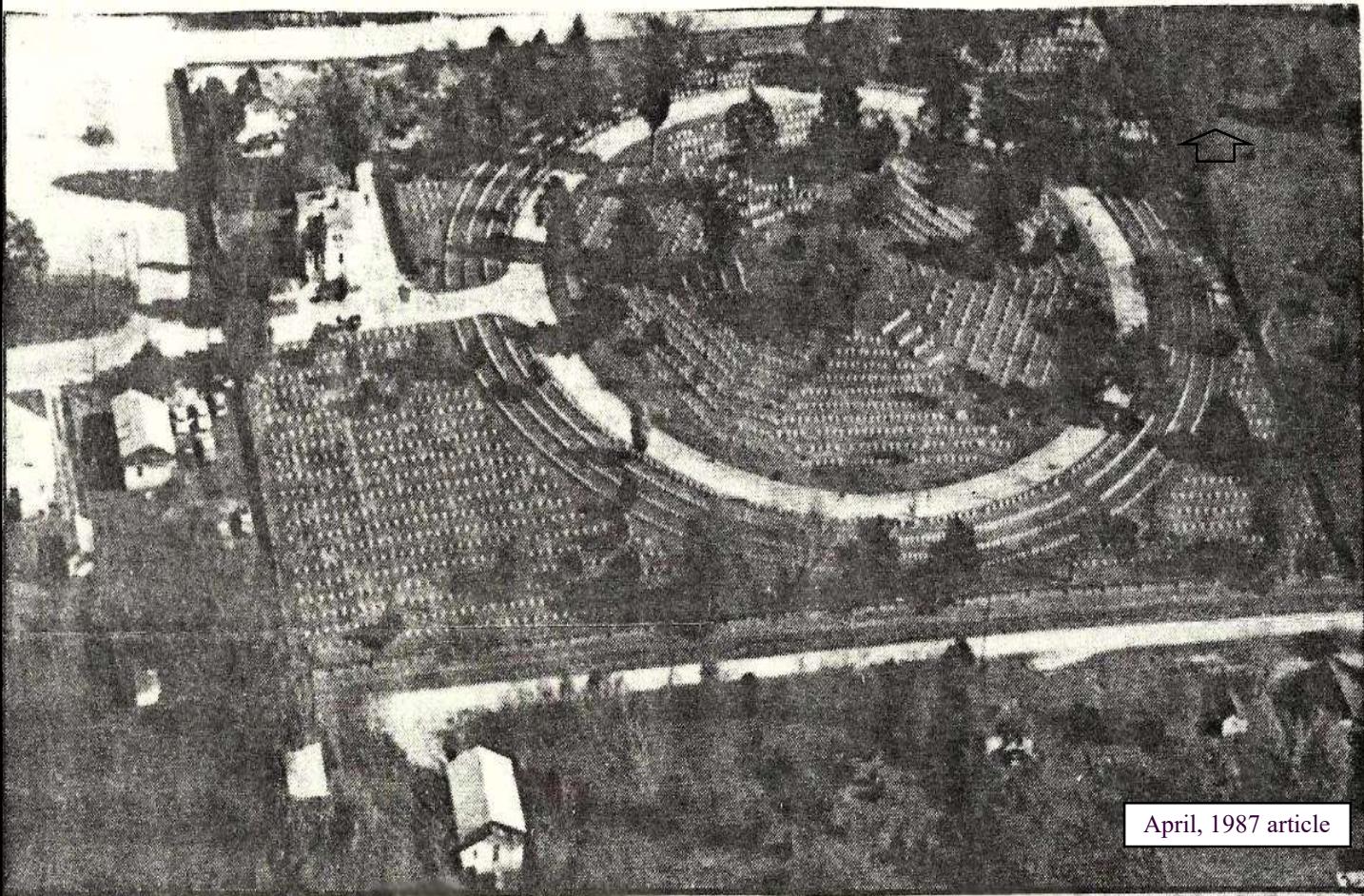
When the General LaFayette Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution became aware of the fact that the National Cemetery in Fayetteville would soon be out of grave spaces, a committee was formed to assist the RNCIC, and had its first meeting on January 14, 1987.

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.

**<—NORTH**

**Cemetery for Veterans Running Out of Space, Could Be Closed**

*Continued on page 12*



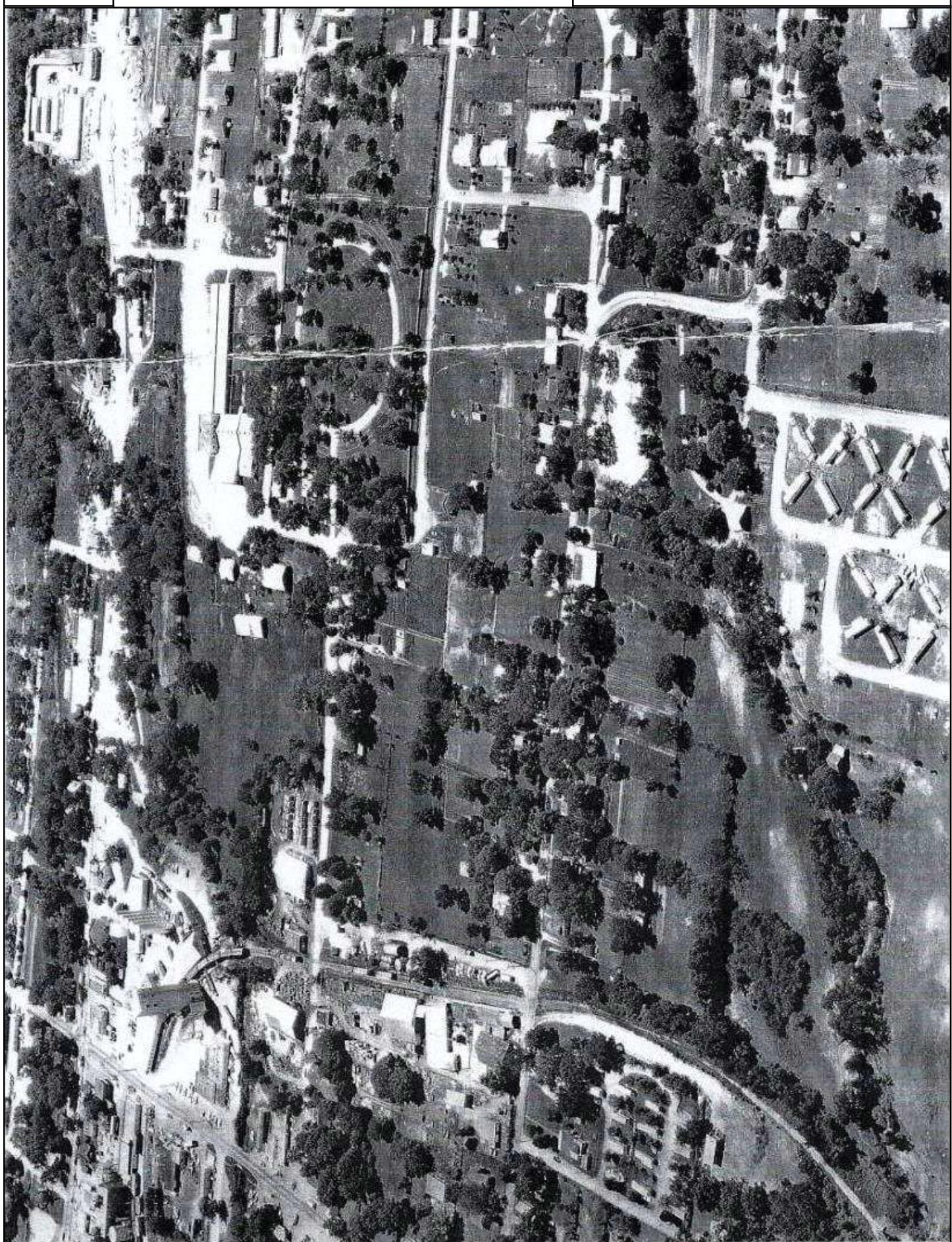
**Property at lower left and along street at bottom of photo would be acquired for cemetery**

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

← EAST

9

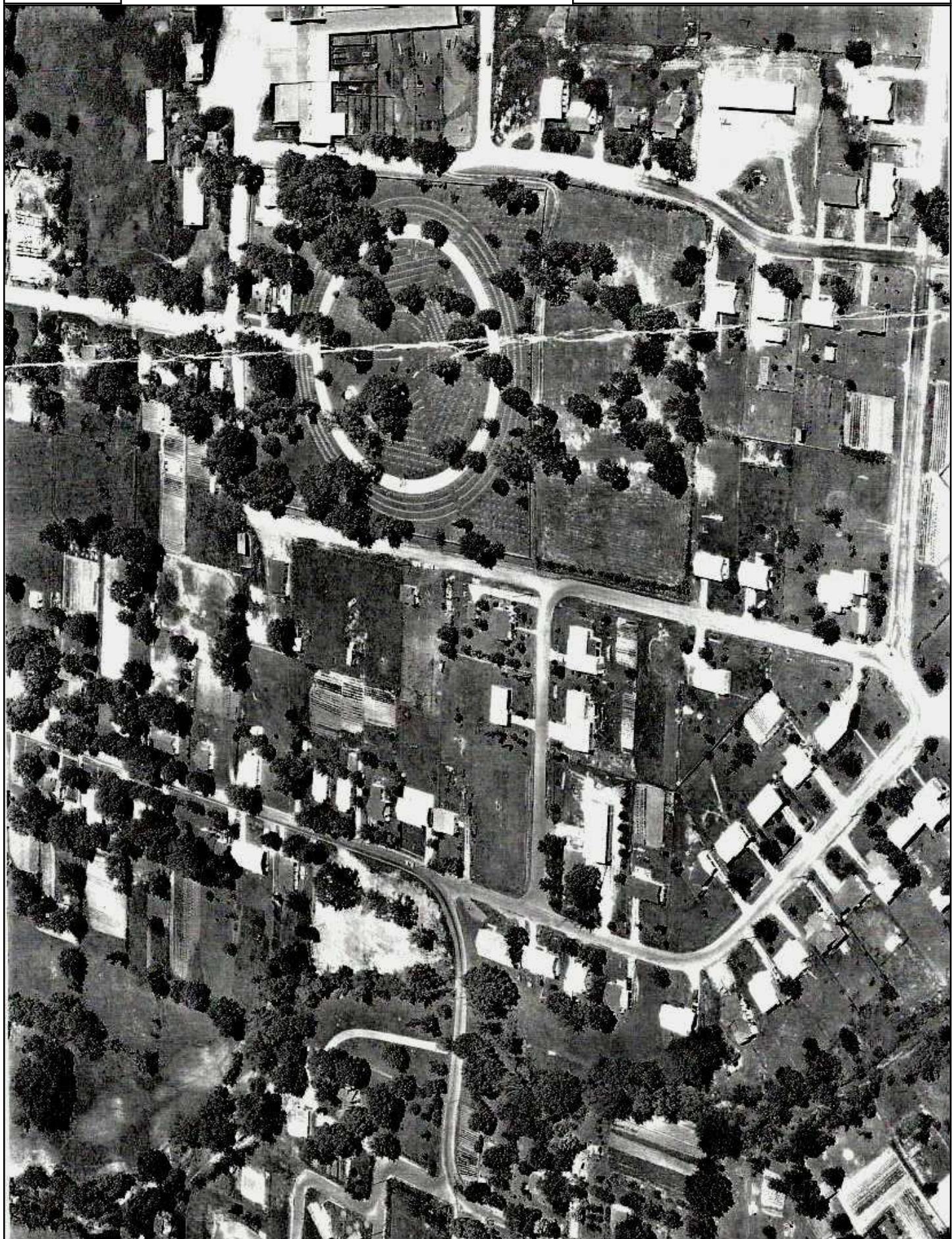
Photograph made prior to land purchases in 1989



←NORTH

10

Photograph made prior to land purchases in 1989



**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

### Hogeye

Vaunda Johnson,  
Hogeye,  
846-2497

**HOGEYE** — 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."

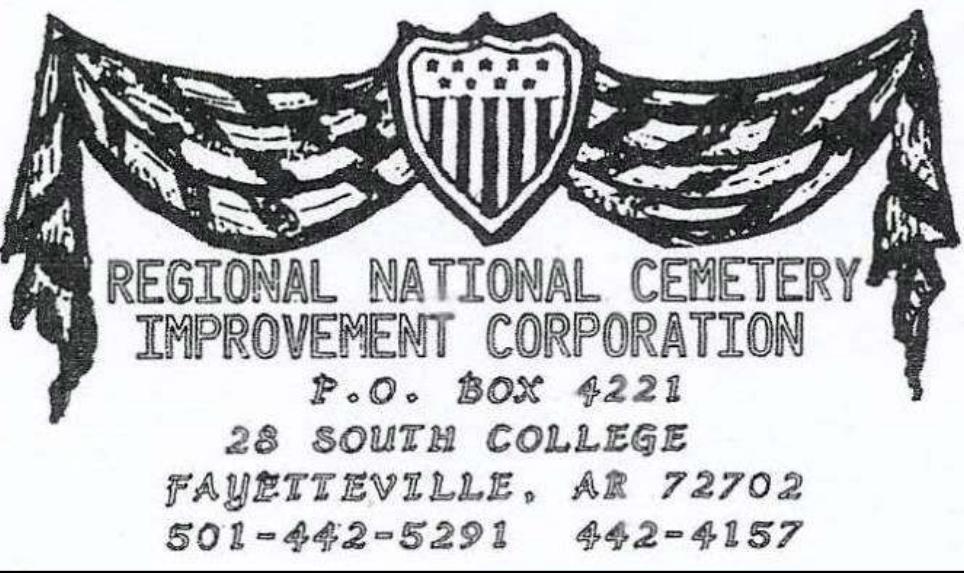
President Heiney stated it was his plan to write a letter to the VA in Washington with copies to the President of the United States, Secretary of the DVA Derwinsky, and all Congressmen and Senators in Arkansas. This letter would protest their letter of April 24, 1992, point out what has been accomplished 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



Meetings in the early years were held at the American Legion Hall, 28 So. College in Fayetteville as indicated by the letterhead stationery above from 1987.

the RNCIC's April 2001 meeting, the Board was concerned about the bricks not selling and storing them. 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 August 1996 when the possibility of funding a columbarium for that location was discussed. In August 1997 construction began on the columbarium at the site 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 one of the smaller active national cemeteries 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.

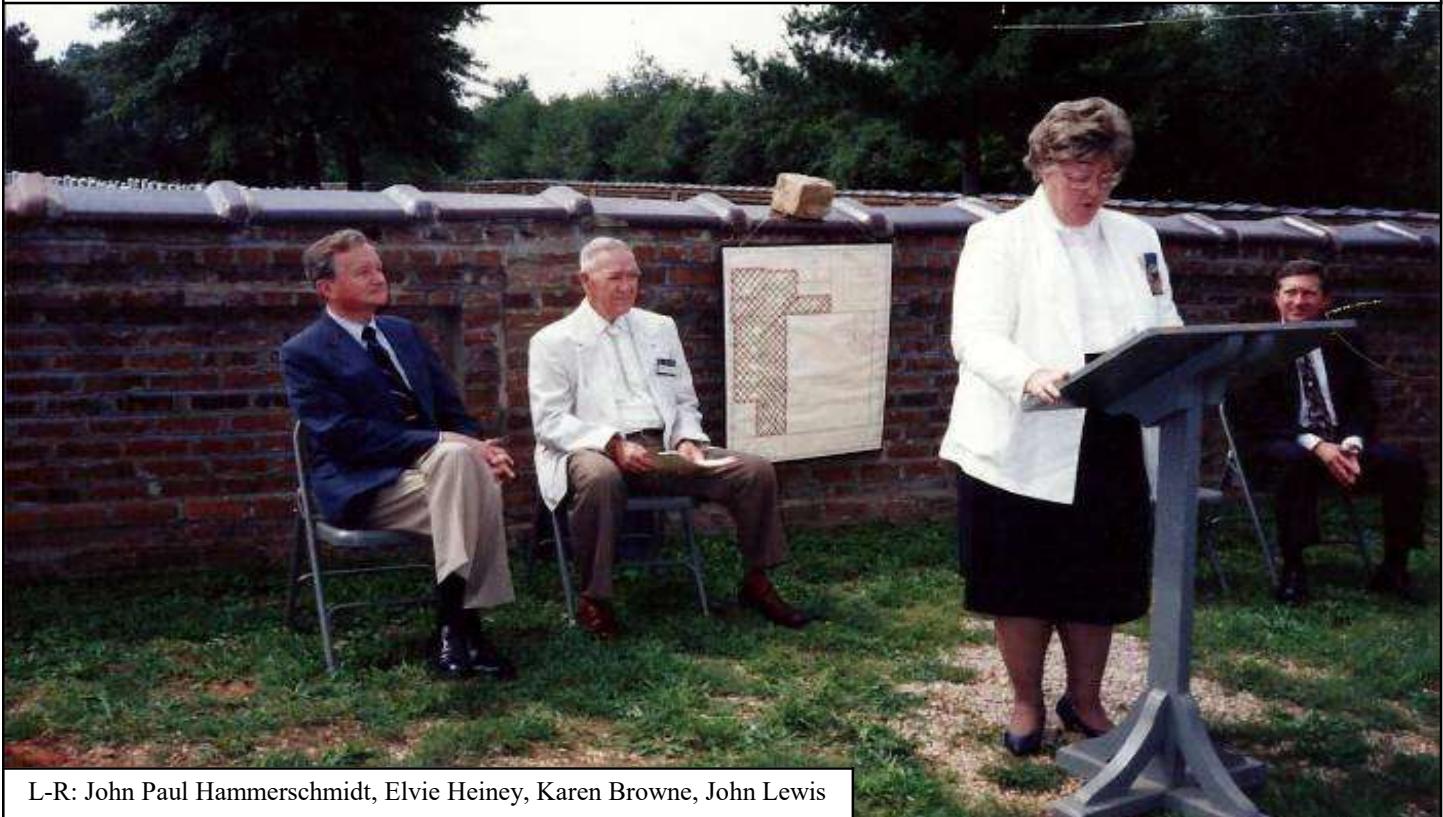
With the donation of the 1.35 acres to the VA in October 2008, the burial capacity of the Fayetteville National Cemetery

*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.



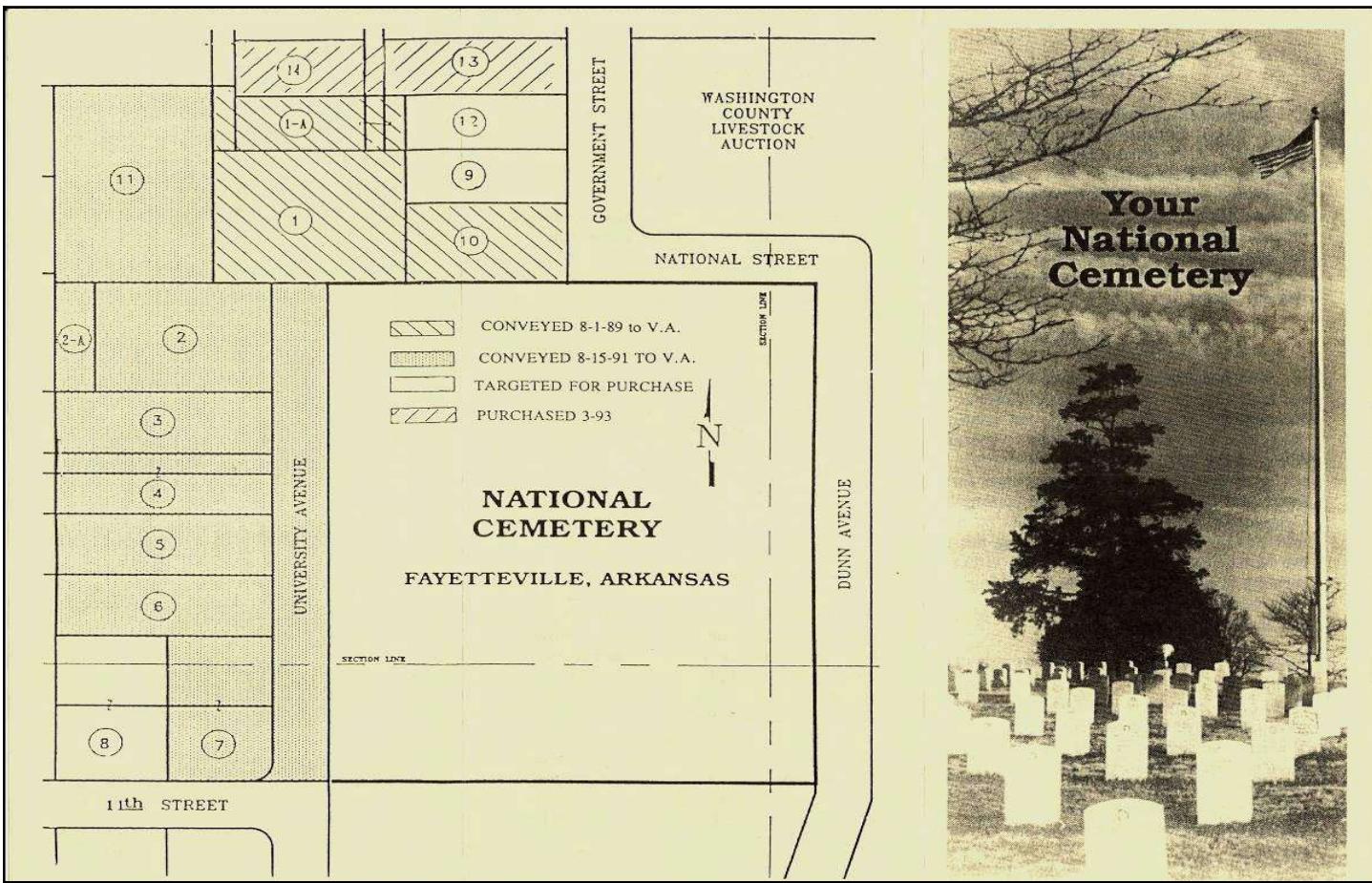
L-R: John Paul Hammerschmidt, Elvie Heiney, Karen Browne, John Lewis



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 Haught, 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	ADDRESS -- STREET OR BOX			DATE
	CITY	STATE	ZIP	
<input type="checkbox"/> As Team or Section Leader <input type="checkbox"/> In Solpecting <input type="checkbox"/> In Public Information <input type="checkbox"/> By Donating \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> By Writing Letters to the Editor				<input type="checkbox"/> By Pledging \$ _____ to 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

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 efforts and requests.



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

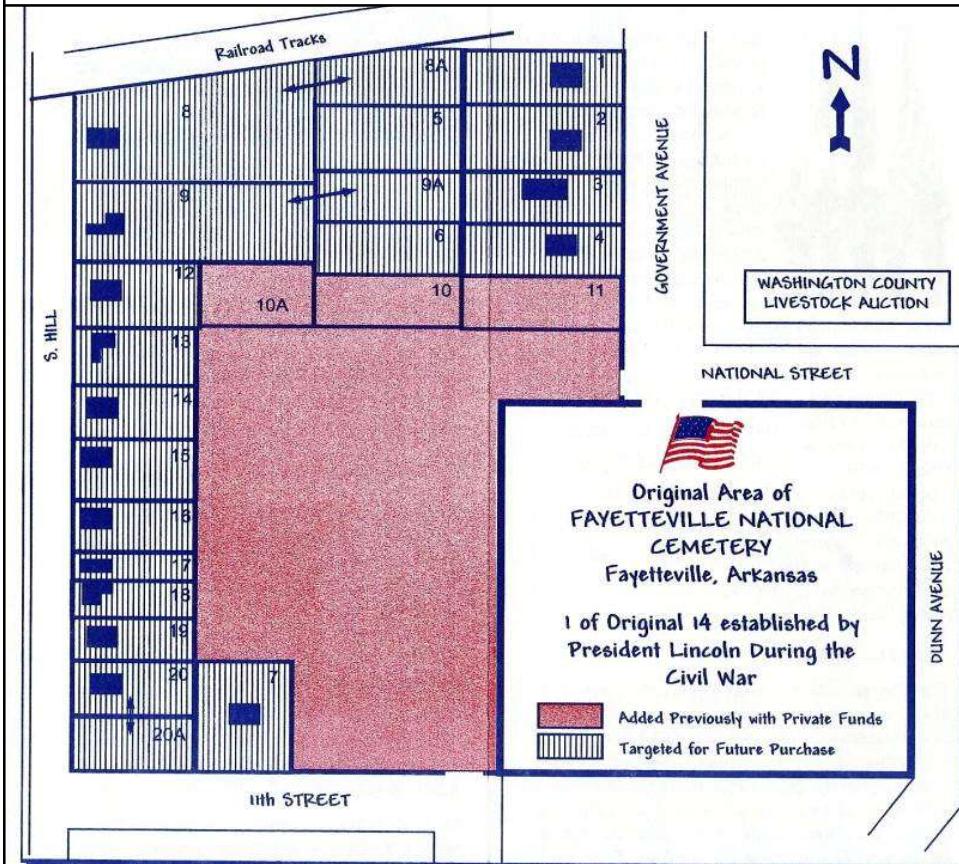
Under the leadership of RNCIC President Ron Butler, Annual Reports from the President, Vice President/Publicity, Secretary, Treasurer, Web Master, and Special Projects/Committee were implemented in 2012. This review made for a better informed Board of Directors with planning for future efforts and improvements.

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 four northern-most 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.

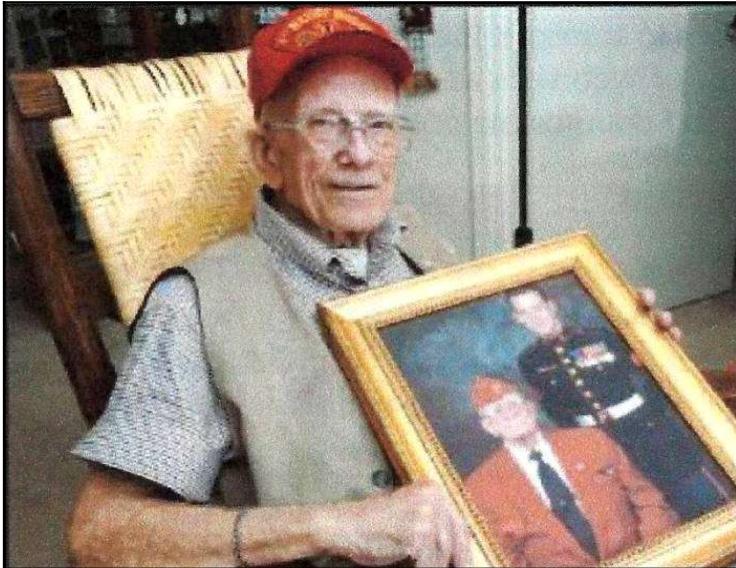


**UPDATE:**  
**Veterans**  
**National**  
**Cemetery**  
**and**  
**Our Veterans**  
**NEED**  
**YOUR HELP!**

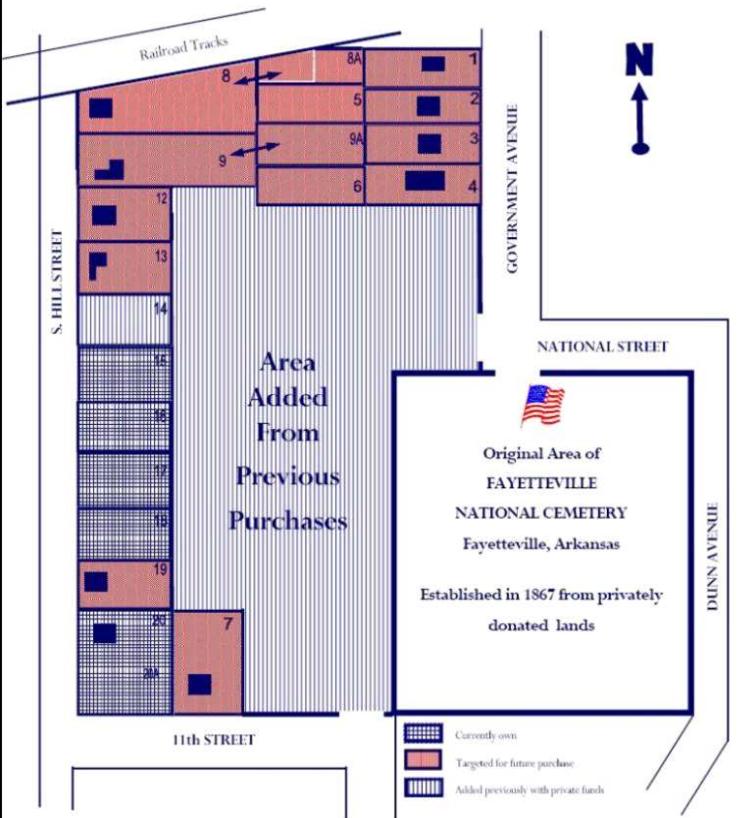


On May 28, 2010 local businessman and philanthropist Don Tyson donated \$75,000 to the RNCIC to buy land. Long time RNCIC supporters Peggy and Roger McClain were instrumental in getting the donation. L-R: Peggy McClain, Don Tyson, Archie Schaeffer and Roger McClain.

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 \_\_\_\_\_

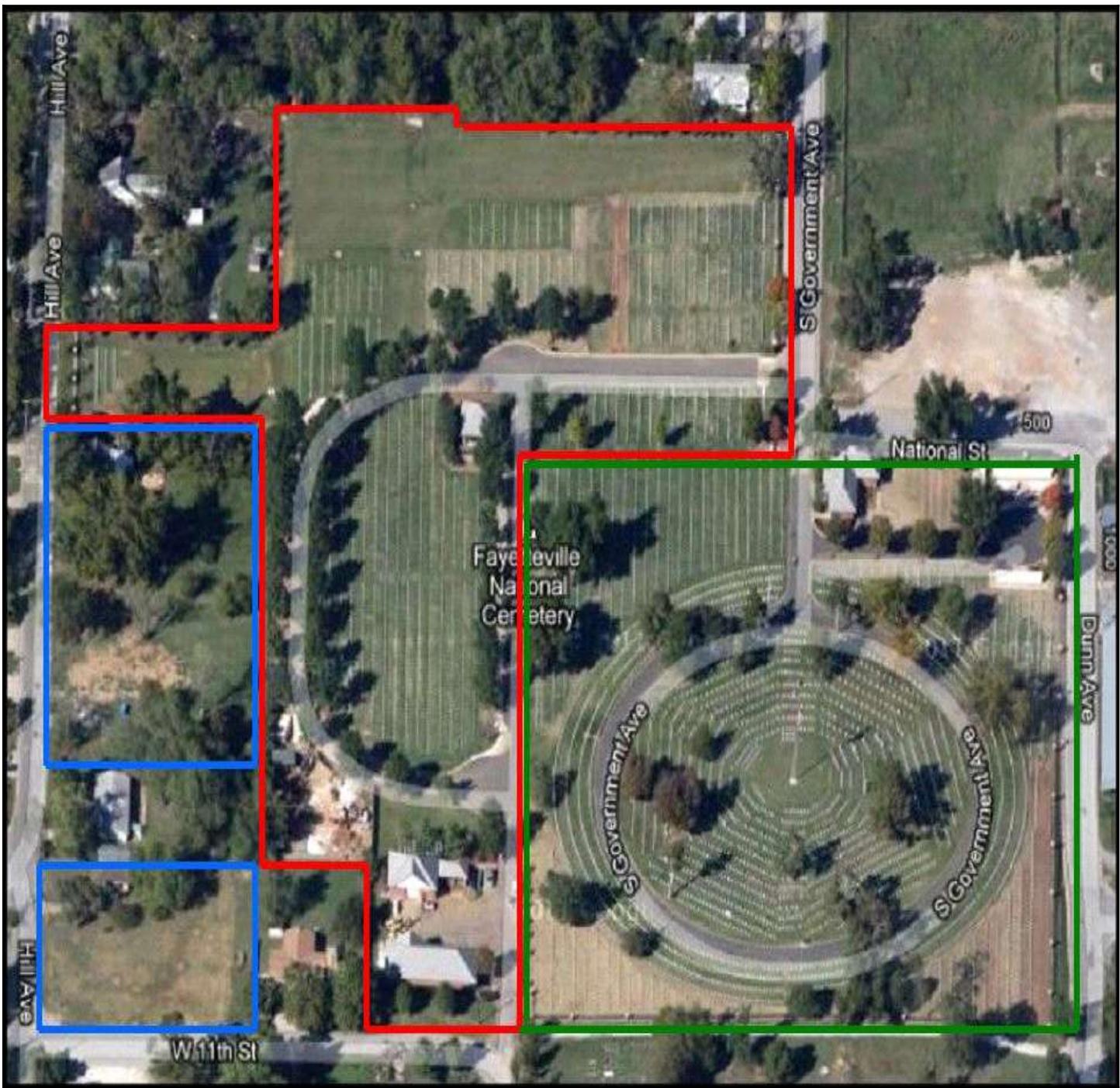
April 2010



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



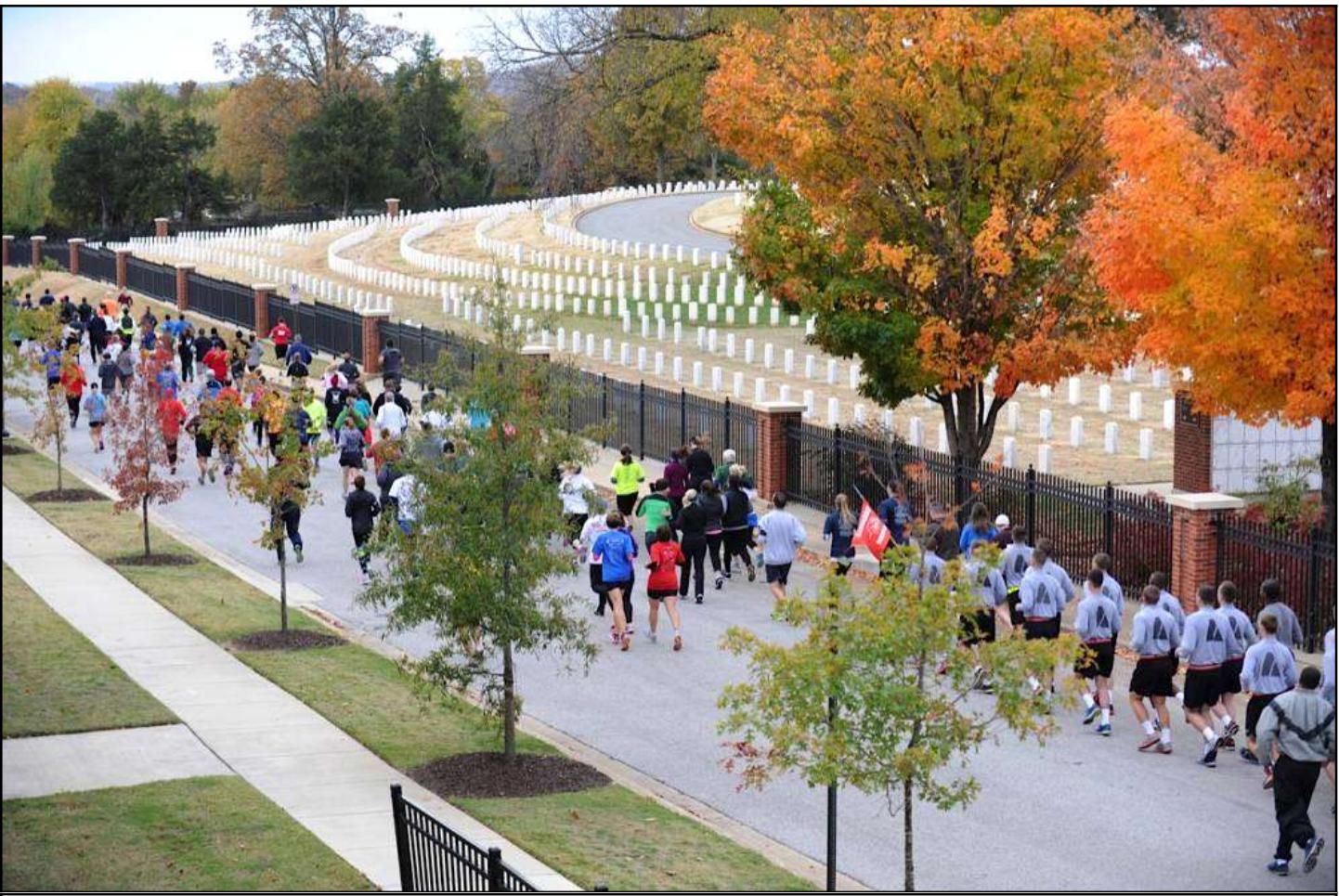
AERIAL PHOTO SHOWS RNCIC'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The green outline is the original Cemetery; The red outline is the land donated by the RNCIC since 1984; The blue outline is land donated to the Cemetery on November 9, 2013.

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 9,480, we want to keep the Cemetery open to honor as many veterans as possible.

Update for the second edition: As of Aug 2021, there are about 11,545 burials in the Cemetery according to FindAGrave.com.



In early 2009 Wes Stites and Josh Sakon, professors at the University of Arkansas joined our meetings. Josh was a runner 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 continued annually as a major fund raiser through sponsorships from Northwest Arkansas businesses until the COVID pandemic of 2019 cancelled it. 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.

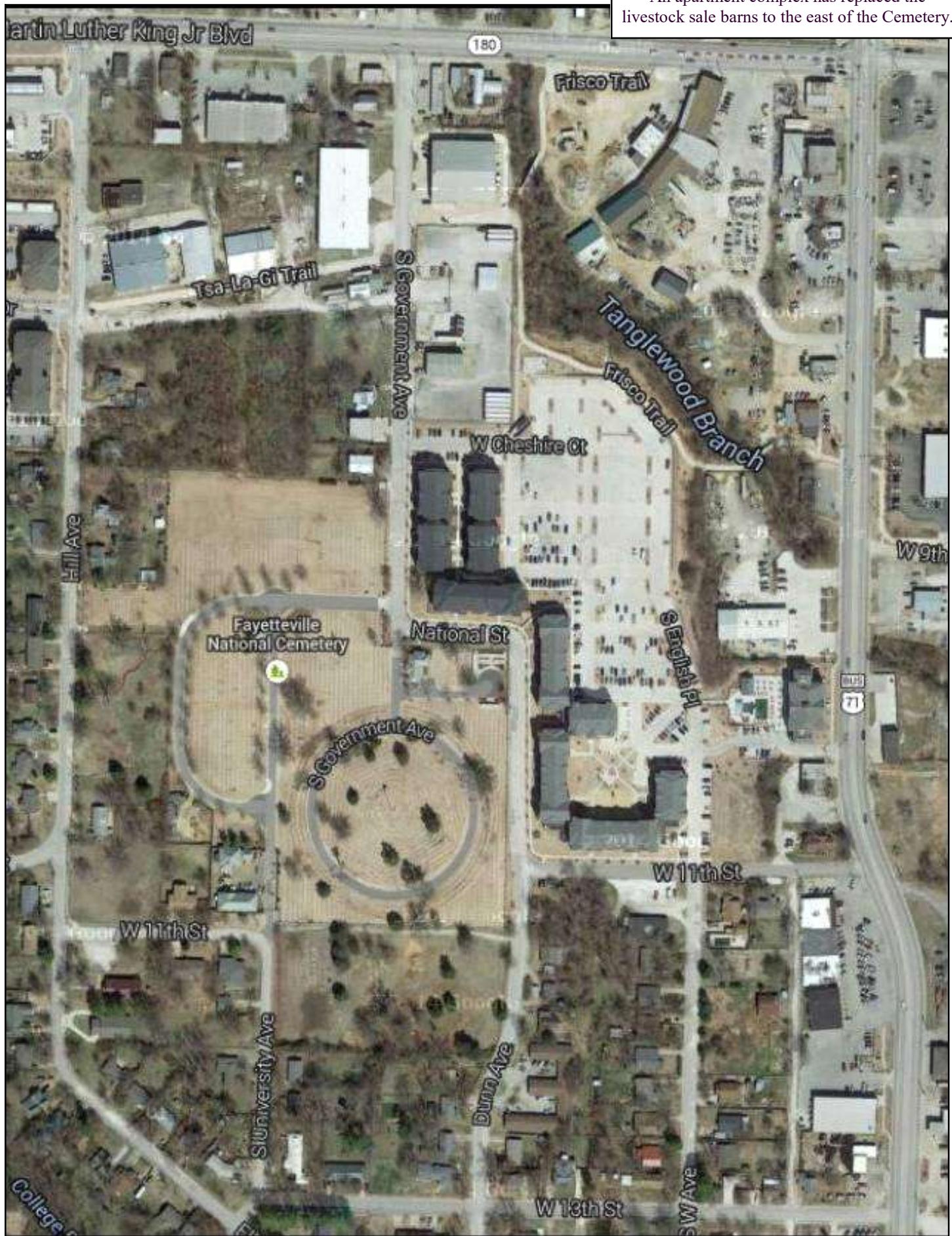
May 2010

The livestock sale barns are shown on the right to the east of the Cemetery.



January 2014

An apartment complex has replaced the  
livestock sale barns 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:**

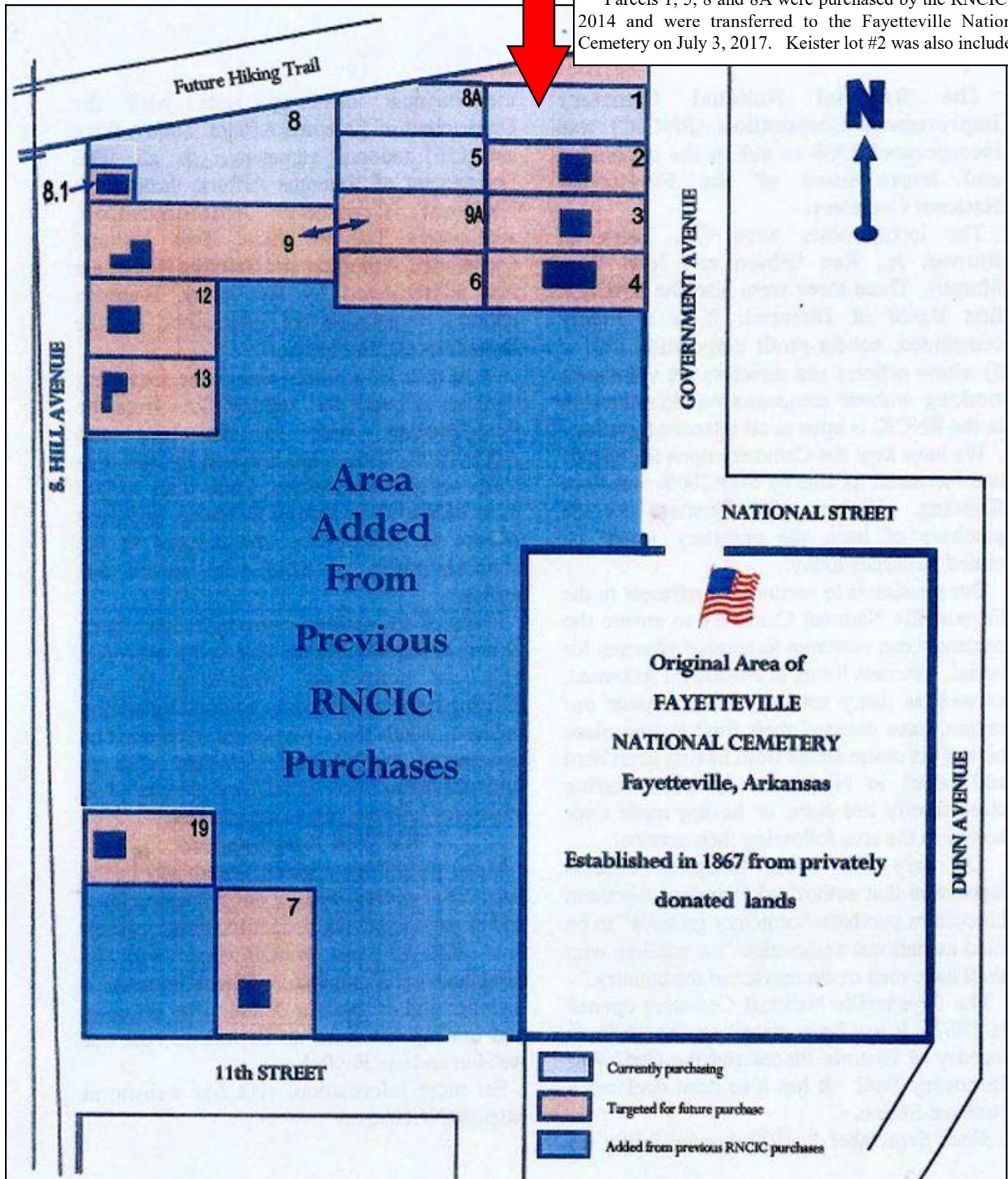
Lieutenant Colonel Ron Butler, President RNCIC  
Ms. Gloria Bailey, Director Fayetteville National Cemetery

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 Fayetteville National Cemetery for this ceremony. This was the donation which really created the ability of the Fayetteville National Cemetery 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 RNCIC in 2014 and were transferred to the Fayetteville National Cemetery on July 3, 2017. Keister lot #2 was also included.



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**

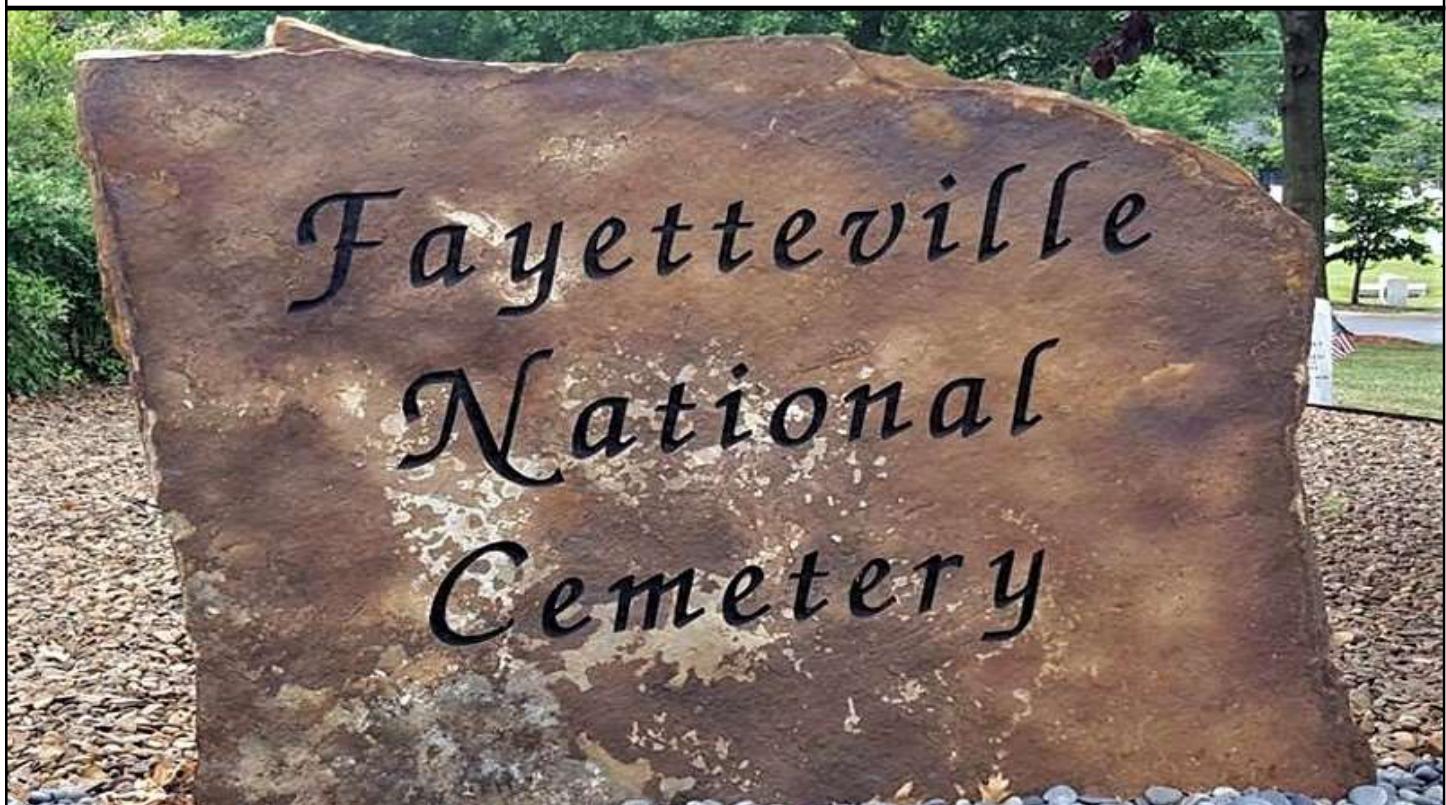
**REGIONAL NATIONAL CEMETERY IMPROVEMENT CORP. BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN 2014**

Ron Butler Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012 Re-elected Jan 11, 2014 Term ends Jan 2017	Jake Lamkins Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012 Re-elected Jan 12, 2013 Term ends Jan 2016	Aubrey Shepherd 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	Peggy McClain Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012 Re-elected Jan 12, 2013 Term ends Jan 2016	Lorna Sterrett Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012 Re-elected Jan 12, 2013 Term ends Jan 2016
Gary Culp Elected to the Board Jan 12, 2013 Term ends Jan 2015 GCulp@ix.netcom.com	Roger McClain Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012 Term ends Jan 2015	Wes Stites Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012 Re-elected Jan 12, 2013 Term ends Jan 2016
Jim Glover Elected to the Board Jan 12, 2013 Term ends Jan 2015 JimGlover@hotmail.com	Josh Sakon Elected to the Board Jan 11, 2014 Term ends Jan 2017	Merle Williams Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012 Term ends Jan 2015



Above: RNCIC Board of Directors on January 14, 2017, L-R: Roger McClain, Lorna Sterrett, Harold Crivello, Peggy McClain, Max Maxwell, Merle Williams, Gary Culp, Ron Butler, Wes Stites, Jake Lamkins and Josh Sakon.

Below: A stone marker placed at the Cemetery in recent years.



## NOTES ON THE RNCIC HISTORY, SECOND EDITION

A possible reprinting of the 30 year RNCIC History book published in 2014 was discussed with some form of addendum for current additions.

-RNCIC Minutes of May 15, 2021

LAMKINS EMail - RNCIC Contact list - May 20, 2021:

Re the recent minutes, I will start working on an update of the 2014 RNCIC history.

-Jake Lamkins

(5/20/21)

I decided to include some material left out of the first edition and add the annual reports that Lorna Sterrett, our secretary, has submitted annually for several years. Her reports date back to 2012 and I have reprinted them. They are great capsule reviews of what the RNCIC was doing. Information from the RNCIC minutes have augmented some entries. Thank you Lorna for all your hard work for veterans and the RNCIC! I dedicate this second edition to you. A later edition may be done to include the President's Reports by Ron Butler.

-Jake Lamkins

(6/19/21)

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## 2012

### **2012 Annual Report for the office of Secretary**

Effective Jan. 1, 2012, the RNCIC By-Laws were changed to initiate Membership Dues as follows: Lifetime \$500 --Sustaining \$100/yr. - Supporting \$35/yr. - Family \$20/yr. - Basic. \$10/yr.

**January** - 5K Race net proceeds (from Nov. 2011) \$6,005.57

**April** - Closed on the Brantley properties, lots #20 and #20A

**May** - New brochure created to incorporate a membership application as part of the one page brochure - and later added "RNCIC" to "Area Added From Previous RNCIC Purchases"

**June** -Yard sale held on the former Brantley property (June 8 & 9) plus donation from Beverley Swaim's garage sale-netting \$1,616.84 total

**August** - Annual Report to the State of Arkansas for Non-Profit Corp. submitted by Pres. Ron Butler and filed with the RNCIC Secretary's records

**September** - Remind President to appoint 3 members to serve on Nominating Committee to appoint 4 new board members for a three year term effective Jan. 2013 through Dec. 2015

**November** -- Annual Reports due at Jan, meeting, Remind Pres., VP, Sec., Treas., Webmaster, Special Projects/Comm. (Merle & Wes)

**December** --Send an email or hard copy letter to all current members on record so that they are notified in writing at least 10 days prior to the January meeting for the purpose of the election of officers. There were 21 members on record at the end of 2012.

### **2012 Annual Report for the office of President**

This is the first of the annual reports, covering the events and activities of the office of President, RNCIC for the year 2012.

#### **1. Significant Events**

A. Monthly Meetings - For calendar year 2012, the President has presided over the eleven (11) monthly meetings conducted by the RNCIC. With exception of the June, 2012 meetings, all have been held at American Legion Post 27, Fayetteville. The June meeting was held at the RNCIC owned house located on Lot #20.

B. Speaking Engagements - The President presented the RNCIC history and current status to the Fayetteville Purple Heart Chapter 460, the Fayetteville Noon Lions Club, the Bella Vista Chapter of The Military Officers Assn of America and the Springdale Rotary Club. All resulted in favorable remarks and in most cases, a welcome donation.

#### **C. Fund Raisers**

(1) Gun Show Participant - This was a one-time event planned as a RNCIC Publicity project, resulting in the distribution of many RNCIC brochures and over \$200.00 in donations.

(2) Yard Sale - This was another one-time event, beginning with planning for disposal of the residual assets from the Lot #20 home, and augmented by donations from RNCIC members & friends. Board member Beverley Swaim also held a yard sale at her home, with profits donated to the RNCIC. This effort required extensive work and effort, but did generate over a thousand dollars in sales.

(3) Veterans 5-KM Race - The fourth annual Veteran's 5-KM race conducted by the RNCIC was completed on 10 November



Ron Butler was RNCIC President from 2011 until 2018. His leadership and dedication to the RNCIC mission are an inspiration to all of us.

2012. The previous races have been successful fund raisers due to the efforts of the RNC1C members soliciting sponsors and supporters. Our Race Director, Wes Stites and his associates, have been the organizing and managing force to make this a profitable effort. The estimated profit from this event is \$8,000.00. The membership has given their approval for a Fifth Annual Race, to be held on November 9th, 2013.

D. Un-Planned Donations - As of mid-year the RNCIC has received two un-planned, but very welcome gifts. The first was from the Estate of Mrs. Porter (\$20,000), and the second was a check from ARVEST Bank in the amount of \$250.00. The RNC1C has also been the recipient of many individual donations. The report of the Treasurer lists these by name and month.

E. Northwest Arkansas Economic Development Grant - With the assistance of Representative Charlie Collins, the RNCIC prepared and submitted a proposal for a \$3,000.00 Grant. Early in December, we received notice that our Grant Project was approved, and that a check would be coming. Currently, plans are already prepared to accept the Grant on 12 January 2013 on the site of the last RNCIC land purchase. We have invited Charlie Collins, Mike Norton, Mayor Jordan & Gloria Bailey to provide appropriate remarks for the Ceremony. Vice-President Williams has coordinated the media to cover the presentation.

2. Contact/Coordination with other Organizations - The RNCIC welcomes and encourages contact & coordination with all other organizations and agencies, having compatible missions & goals.

A. Bella Vista Chapter, Military Officers Assn of America - As the guest speaker for this Chapter in March, I was presented with a check in the amount of \$1,000.00 for the RNCIC.

B. Northwest Arkansas Chapter, Military Officers Assn of America - This Chapter has designated the month of June each year for donations to the RNCIC: this year the donation was \$1,800.00.

C. National Order of the Purple Heart, Fayetteville, Chapter 460. As a result of another guest speaker presentation, this Chapter presented the RNCIC with a check for \$500.00.

D. Memorial Day 2012 - The RNCIC assisted the organizers of this organization with coordinating the Ceremony at the Fayetteville National Cemetery. Also, the RNCIC offered additional parking for the attendees utilizing the six lots currently owned by the RNCIC.

E. Springdale Rotary Club - This speaking engagement was another opportunity for RNCIC publicity & distribution of RNCIC brochures.

F. Noon Lions, Fayetteville - The President was the guest speaker for this organization.

G. Fayetteville National Cemetery - The President and several other RNCIC members maintain coordination with the Cemetery Director, Ms. Gloria Bailey and her staff to ensure continuity of all our efforts.

H. Veterans Affairs Realty Specialist - Since the retirement of Mr. Dudley Schadeburg from this office in early Spring, coordination with the acquisition and transfer of RNCIC-owned land continued with Ms. Lynn Harrison. She retired on 30 September, and her replacement, Mr. Ed Swift is now our 'Point-of-Contact' for the Veteran's Affairs Administration.

I. Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks - As a seven-year Volunteer at the Hospital, I also serve on The Voluntary Service Executive Board, thus maintaining close coordination with the Voluntary Service Office, as well as with the Hospital Director and staff elements.

J. Lindsey & Associates Realty - During this year, we have been very fortunate to have the technical assistance and advice of Mr. Jeff Whitmer, of this firm. He has prepared all of the technical documentation for the purchase of the six properties, purchased by the RNCIC, doing so it at no cost to the RNCIC.

K. Bronson Abstract Company - As with the Lindsey & Associates Realty firm, the RNC1C has received the technical assistance of Ms Lela Davis of this firm; documenting the sale, the transfer of funds and issuing title insurance, all at no cost to the RNCIC.

3. Contracts - The RNCIC has completed six informal contracts during this year.

- A. The purchase of Lots #15, #18 & #20—20A
- B. The demolition of house on Lots #15 & 18

C. Sale of the house located on Lot #20 - This contract was completed on 6 August, with the sale of the house for \$1.00, and the subsequent, 'no cost removal' of the house, foundation and underground utility lines by the buyer, Mr. Shane Cantrell (Combs House Movers).

D. Loan of Funds - This was a promissory note in the amount of \$14,500.00, enabling the purchase of Lots #20 & 20A. With the receipt of additional donations and the profits from the Fourth Annual Veterans 5-KM Race, the loan was paid in full on 6 December, including interest. The original note, marked paid in full, was delivered to the RNCIC Treasurer. *<The loan was made by Ron Butler with minimal interest! -Jake>*

4. Land Acquisition & Delivery to VA - This summary includes the four properties (Lots # 15, # 16, #17 & 18) which were actually purchased prior to 2012, but which have now been offered to VA in 2012, as part of the total package of six RNCIC-owned properties.

#### A. Land Acquisitions.

- (1) Lot #15 (976 S. Hill Ave.) - Purchased from Mr. & Mrs. Joe Wilson on 18 July, 2011, for \$60,000.00.
- (2) Lot# 16 (1028 S. Hill Ave.) - Purchased from Mr. Bobby Fritz & Ms. Donna Vaughn, on 19 August, 2005, for \$43,700.00.
- (3) Lot #17 (1048 S. Hill Ave.) - Purchased from Mr. Carter Ward, Ms. Vickie Franklin & Ms. Jacqueline Drake, on 20 June 2000, for \$ 60,000.00
- (4) Lot #18 (1064 S. Hill Ave.) - Purchased from Mr. Alex Mahler & Ms. Lori Mahler, on 15 April, 2011, for \$60,000.00.
- (5 & 6) Lots #20 & #20A (1098 S. Hill St) - Purchased from the heirs of Suzanne Brantley (Mr. & Mrs. David Brantley & Mr. & Mrs. Michael Stohler), on 19 March, 2012, for \$52,500.00.

B. Delivery to VA - Although the RNCIC has formally offered the VA Realty Office all currently owned properties, the actual transfers are pending the results of 'due diligence' and several surveys (environmental, title & neighborhood) to be conducted by VA Realty Office contracted firms. The change of personnel at VA Realty Office, has delayed the work on the land transfer: Mr. Ed Swift advised that he wouldn't be able to work on this until after the first of January 2013. He has assured me that the transfer will occur prior to 30 May 2013, in time to meet our planned 'Land Transfer Ceremony', currently planned to occur at the conclusion of the Annual Memorial Day Ceremony at the Fayetteville National Cemetery. (See also paragraph 2, H above)

#### 5. Objective and Goals for 2013

Objective - Ensure every eligible veteran has the opportunity to be interred in the Fayetteville National Cemetery. This is an 'open-ended' objective, as no definitive ending date can be determined.

#### Goals-

A. RNCIC Membership — Considering the current membership size of the RNCIC (17), it is my personal opinion, that we, and our predecessors, have done, and continue to do an outstanding job of accomplishing our stated mission; however, when we analyze the age of our members, we find that we have a vast majority. (10) over the age of 60. One of our most critical goals for the future of the RNCIC, has to be the active recruiting of additional, younger, energetic persons to carry on the work of the Regional National Cemetery improvement Corporation.

B. Improve the financial posture of the RNCIC - Although the RNCIC has received a significant number of donations during 2012, the purchase of Lots 20 & 20A would have totally depleted our cash balance, and thus was the need for a personal loan in order to complete the purchase of those two lots. Currently other properties adjacent to the current Cemetery could be purchased, if the funds were available. We need to actively explore additional opportunities for grants, both from the private sector and various levels of government.

C. Land Acquisition - The RNCIC must continue to update plans for continuous land acquisition. As of 2010 there were over 40,600 veterans living in Washington and the adjacent five counties. We have no firm numbers of how many will wish to be interred in the Fayetteville National Cemetery, however, we do know the numbers are certain to increase, and we simply must continue to ensure there will be adequate room.

A related factor is the beginning of increased land prices, from the depressed prices of the last few years. We have already purchased many of the adjacent, lower-cost properties, and we can expect to pay more for those remaining.

A third consideration is the already-demonstrated lack of any support for land acquisition from the Federal or State Governments.

Another consideration is the increased level of interest of local land developers; unless another significant down-turn in the



Lorna Sterett, RNCIC Secretary, and Jake Lamkins, RNCIC Webmaster, at the Feb 2015 board meeting

economy takes place, developers will continue to be interested in south Fayetteville as sites for apartments and commercial businesses.

Regardless, we must plan far ahead of where we are today, or, simply say ‘we failed’ and disband the RNC1C, when the Fayetteville National Cemetery can no longer accommodate our veterans. I am not at all interested in doing that.

Submitted on this 9th Day of February, 2013

Ronald L. Butler

President, Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation

## 2013

### **2013 Annual Report for the office of Secretary**

**January** – A check for \$3,000 was presented as a project award from the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District.

A net profit of \$9,264.60 was reported from the 5K Race in Nov. 2012. The Sponsorship Levels for the 2013 Race were changed to Four Star \*\*\*\* - Three Star \*\*\* - Two Star \*\* - One Star \*.

The Annual Meeting was held with the Nominating Committee presenting the names of four new term Board members. Those elected were Jake Lamkins, Peggy McClain, Lorna Sterrett, and Wes Stites for three year terms expiring at the end of 2015.

The twelve Board members elected the following officers and installed for 2013: Ron Butler, President – Merle Williams, Vice President – Lorna Sterrett, Secretary – Harold Crivello, Treasurer.

**February** – Annual Reports for 2012 were presented by the President, Vice President/Public Relations, Secretary, and Webmaster. The reports were copied and distributed to the Board of Directors at the March meeting.

Ron presented an article from the IRS website stating that we (the RNCIC) are “one of one” of our type of non-profit organization of its kind in the United States.

**April** – The American Legion Post 36 of Holiday Island became the first veteran organization to purchase a Life Membership. Any organization will have one vote, but the RNCIC meetings are open to any and all of their post members for the lifetime of either organization.

Another check from the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District was received in the amount of \$3,303.

**August** - The Arkansas Report for Non-Profits and the IRS 2012 Report were filed.

**September** – A new membership/donation form was approved by the Board to include Organizations at \$500 (lifetime), removed Family memberships, and changed Basic memberships from \$10 to \$20 effective January 1, 2014.

An application was prepared by Wes Stites and the RNCIC Board approved it for signature by President Ron Butler to request funding from the Arkansas State Senators’ and Representatives’ Discretionary Funds.

An article in the “Arkansas Democrat Gazette” prompted discussion regarding the U of A Trustees approval of a building project on university owned land east of Hill Avenue and south of MLK Jr. Blvd.

The President appointed three members to serve on the Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of four members for three year terms. Those on the Nominating Committee are: Jim Glover, Roger McClain, and Gary Culp, with their report due at the Jan. 11, 2014 meeting. The four terms expiring at the end of 2013 are Ron Butler, Harold Crivello, Budd Saunders, and Aubrey Shepherd.

**October** – Firm commitments were reported from four congressmen for a total of \$56,000 from the Politicians’ Discretionary Fund. Others are still pending.

Gary Culp donated \$100 for the RNCIC’s founding membership in the Northwest Arkansas Veterans Coalition. A revised RNCIC brochure was printed with new membership/donation information and a new map. (*Attached*)

**November** – The 5K Race was held on November 9, 2013, starting at 8 a.m. from the gates of the Fayetteville National Cemetery. Following the race the RNCIC officially presented six lots along Hill Avenue (2.3 acres of land) adjacent to the Fayetteville National Cemetery, to the US Department of Veterans Affairs. (Lots 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, and 20A)

**December** – The December meeting was cancelled due to the laying of the Wreaths Across America at the Cemetery on the same date and time. Notified members of the Annual Meeting of the Membership to be held in January 2014 for the purpose of electing four directors for a three year term. Installation of Officers for 2014 will follow. Membership at the end of 2013 is at 30 members (*an increase of 9 members over 2012*).

### **2013 Annual Report for the office of President**

This Annual Report highlights the events and activities of the Office of President, RNCIC for the calendar year 2013.

#### 1. Significant Events

A. Monthly Meetings - For the calendar year 2013, the President presided over ten (10) monthly meetings of the RNCIC. The meeting for November 2013 was the Veterans 5 KM Race, with no formal meeting held. In keeping with tradition, no formal monthly meeting was held in the month of December.

B. Speaking Engagements - The Director of the Fayetteville National Cemetery requested the President to be the Keynote Speaker for the annual Memorial Day Ceremony on 27 May 2013. The President was also honored to speak at the Fayetteville Veteran’s Hospital Commanders Conference on 17 October 2013, and also spoke at the Transfer of Land to the Department of Veterans Affairs Ceremony on 9 November 2013.

C. Fund Raisers - The Fifth Annual Veterans 5-KM Race, planned and conducted by the members and associates of the RNCIC,

was held on 9 November 2013. As in previous years, this has been a successful venture due to the efforts of RNCIC members contacting sponsors and supporters. A continuing thanks is extended to our Race Director, Wes Stites and his associates for their efforts to organize and conduct this Race. A final accounting has yet to be completed, however, we can anticipate a significant profit.

D. Grants - The Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation received notice of approval of the following two significant Funding Grants:

1. Western Arkansas Planning & Development District, Inc. - This Grant was announced by letter dated 12 November 2013 & stated the RNCIC was approved for \$2,000.00. This amount has been received and deposited.

2. Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc. - This Grant was announced by letter dated 16 December 2013, and advised the RNCIC has been approved for a Grant totalling \$62,000.00. At this time, two checks, totalling \$50,000.00 have been received and deposited.

E. Un-Planned Donations - This year has seen a number of unplanned, significant donations from both individuals and local Veterans groups and organizations. These are listed in the Treasurer's Report. All donations are most welcome and will certainly accelerate the next land acquisition.

2. Contact/Coordination with other Organizations - Continuing contact and coordination with other organizations having compatible missions and goals helps to ensure the recognition of the RNCIC's efforts and mission accomplishment.

A. Government:

- 1) NCA, Department of Veterans Affairs
- 2) Director, Fayetteville National Cemetery
- 3) Director, Fayetteville VA Health Center of the Ozarks
- 3) City of Fayetteville

B. Veterans Organizations:

- 1) Military Officers Assn. of America
- 2) Military Order of the Purple Heart
- 3) Veterans of Foreign Wars
- 4) American Legion & Auxillary
- 5) Combat Veterans Motorcycle Assn.
- 6) 'Bo's Blessings'
- 7) NW Arkansas Veterans Coalition

C. Other

- 1) Western Arkansas Planning & Developement District
- 2) NW Arkansas Economic Development District

D. Civic: In this category, the RNCIC continues contact & coordination efforts with numerous individuals and businesses which have continuously provided support and sponsorship for the RNCIC fund-raising efforts. More information may be found at the monthly Treasurer's reports and the Vice-President's Report.

3. Contracts - There were no contracts issued by, or to, the RNCIC for the year 2013.

4. Land Acquisition & Delivery to Dept of Veterans Affairs -

A. No land acquisitions were made by the RNCIC during 2013.

B. All of the land parcels owned by the RNCIC (Lots 15, 16, 17, 18 & 20/20A) were legally delivered to The Department of Veteran Affairs, beginning with the formal Letter of Offer on 24 April, 2013. Extensive negotiations with the Department of Veterans Affairs continued until notice was provided on 13 August 2013, that The Secretary had approved the acquisition of the properties. Involved were three separate contracts issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs, to conduct environmental testing, surveys of all parcels, and pollution control. No problems were noted and the 'due diligence' continued until the final closing date of 30 October 2013, at the VA's designated agent; WACO Title, Co., Fayetteville. The formal transfer of the properties from the RNCIC to the Department of Veterans Affairs was made on 9 November, in conjunction with the 5th Annual Veterans 5 KM Race. (Refer to the Annual Report of the Vice President, Merle Williams, for details concerning the formal transfer).

5. Mission for 2014 and Beyond - Ensure there will be adequate space in the Fayetteville National Cemetery to provide the opportunity for every eligible veteran to be interred therein. This is an open-ended mission, as no 'end date' can be determined.

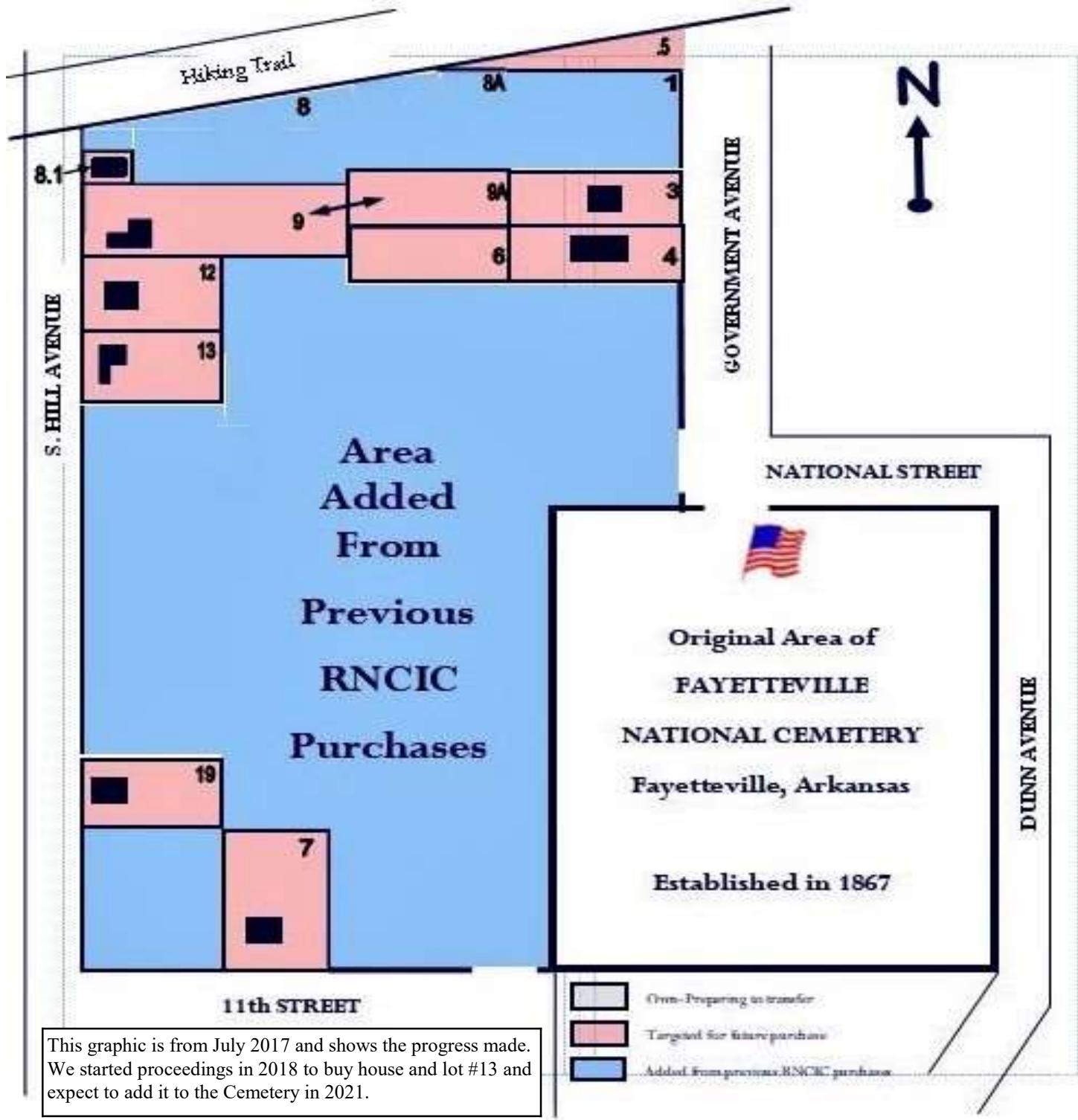
6. Goals & Objectives - The goals and objectives for 2014 remain similar to 2013, however, are restated as follows;

A. First Goal - Improve RNCIC Financial Position - Although our financial position is improved over 2013, we are in need of several thousand additional dollars. At this time, the RNCIC is in a position where critically needed, additional land is available, however we do not have the funds to make the purchase. The two Grants recently awarded (Thanks to Wes Stites!) are a significant help, however, we must actively explore additional grants, in both the private and government sectors.

1) Objective 1 - By the end of 2d Quarter 2014, secure funding in the amount of approximately \$100,000.00.

2) Objective 2 - By the end of 4th Quarter 2014, finalize the purchase of additional, critically located property, with no outstanding debt.

B. Second Goal - Continue the acquisition of land for the continued expansion of the Fayetteville National Cemetery. The last available information (2010) concerning veteran population in the five county radius was in excess of 41,000. This number can now be realistically expected to increase by several thousand. There has been no attempt made to determine a population that might wish to be interred in the Fayetteville National Cemetery, but we can be certain the number will increase with the passing of veterans from past



conflicts.

1) Objective 1 - Review all available parcels of land in the area bounded by Government Street on the East side, Hill Avenue on the West side, 11th Street on the South, and the Arkansas - Missouri Railroad Right-of-way on the North side.

2) Objective 2 - Classify the available parcels of land into two categories; 'Critical' and 'Secondary'; critical being defined as those parcels needed to discourage any further commercial development and establish easily defined boundary. These same categories, then provide the priority for RNCIC purchase.

C. Third Goal - Increase active RNCIC Membership and actively seek additional members, both individual and organizational. While the RNCIC has gained some new members, we must continue to attract more people, who are in sympathy with the stated purposes of the RNCIC, as contained in the RNCIC By-Laws.

1) Objective 1 - By the end of 2d Quarter, 2014, recruit at least four additional individual members, who will actively

participate in the work of the RNCIC.

2) Objective 2 - By the end of 4th Quarter 2014, recruit an additional two organizations, who will actively participate in the work of the RNCIC.

**SUMMARY** - In all respects, this has been a very sucessful year for the RNCIC, and the credit for our success goes to each and every RNCIC member. As always, the question remains - 'Are we there yet ??, and of course, the answer is 'No, not yet'; but we are going forward; we are making significant progress in our mission of expanding our Fayetteville National Cemetery.

What's next? The short answer is - more of the same; only bigger, faster & better. I'd ask each and every member to do some serious thinking about what we can do to improve our organization and it's performance. When you come up with a suggestion, jot it down and bring it to the attention of the organization; will your suggestion always be acted upon as you wish? Perhaps not, but I will assure you, every suggestion will receive attention.

I extend my personal thanks to each and every one of you for your support and your understanding throughout this past year.

Submitted this 11th day of January, 2014,

Ronald L. Butler

President, Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation

## 2014

### 2014 Annual Report for the office of Secretary

**JANUARY** - A separate bank account was set up at Arvest for Grant Funds awarded to the RNCIC from Arkansas State Congressmen's Discretionary Funds.

A net profit for the 2013 5K Race was reported at approximately \$9,500. The date for the 6th annual 5K Race was set for November 8, 2014.

The Annual Meeting was held with the Nominating Committee presenting the names of four new term Board members. Those elected were Ron Butler, Harold Crivello, Aubrey Shepherd, and Josh Sakon for three year terms expiring at the end of 2016.

The twelve Board members elected the following officers and installed for 2014: Ron Butler, President; Merle Williams, Vice President; Lorna Sterrett, Secretary; and Harold Crivello, Treasurer.

**FEBRUARY** - Annual Reports for 2013 from the President, Vice President/Public Relations, Secretary, and Webmaster were distributed to Board members. A motion was passed to commence the monthly meeting at 10 a.m. instead of 10:30 a.m.

**MARCH** - The Audit Committee found an accurate accounting of the 2014 fiscal year. The Board voted to agree to the \$205,000 asking price from CAPHO for lots numbered 1,5,8, and 8A (approx. 2 acres) with \$80,000 down, and the balance being carried by CAPHO at 5.5% interest for 20 years with no early repayment penalty, and all surface mineral rights to convey.

**APRIL** - Closing on lots 1,5,8, and 8A took place on April 7, 2014, at Lindsey Reality.

**MAY** - The separate bank account for Grant Funds with \$64,100 was closed with a check being written for partial payment of the lots purchased from CAPHO in April.

A private funding source proposed to pay off the CAPHO mortgage. The Board approved the signing of a promissory note of indebtedness to the lender for the amount of the current mortgage to be repaid at an interest rate of less than 2%.

With 2014 being the 30th anniversary of the RNCIC it was decided to organize a history booklet.

**JUNE** - The Board voted that only one signature be required on the Arvest checks, since a monthly charge would be incurred for a two signature account. Either the President or the Treasurer would be authorized as stated on the bank's signature card.

A resolution dated June 14, 2014, was signed by eleven Board members (excluding Ron Butler) to accept Ron Butler's offer to satisfy the terms of the current mortgage with CAPHO. A revised mortgage will be held by Ron Butler with the balance coming as a donation from Ron,

**JULY** - The final payoff with CAPHO was delayed until a written proposal from CAPHO could be reviewed.

**AUGUST** - CAPHO requested that the RNCIC withhold payment of the loan until Jan. 2015 for their tax benefit. PayPal was set up on the web page.

**SEPTEMBER** - A Nominating Committee was appointed to secure names for four Board positions expiring in January 2015.

**OCTOBER** - Discussion of final preparations for the 5K Race in November.

**NOVEMBER** - The sixth annual 5K Veterans Memorial Race was held on Saturday, November 8, 2014, at 8 a.m. beginning at the



Lorna Sterrett has been RNCIC secretary since 2011 and assumed additional duties as treasurer in 2020. Her devotion and financial support have been immense.

She is simply irreplaceable!

main gate of the Fayetteville National Cemetery.

**DECEMBER** - Harold Crivello, Treasurer, submitted his resignation effective Dec. 31, 2014. The date for the 5K Race in 2015 was set for November 14, 2015.

The check for the final balance due to CAPHO Investments LLC will be dated January 2, 2015, for lots 1,5, 8, and 8A, with final exact amount being computed.

Membership Data: End of 2012 - 21 members, End of 2013 – 30 members, End of 2014 – 25 members

## **2014 Annual Report for the office of President**

This 2014 Annual Report highlights the events and activities of the Office of President, RNCIC for the Calendar Year 2014.

### **1. SIGNIFICANT EVENTS**

#### **A. Monthly Meetings**

For the calendar year 2014, the President presided over eleven (11) monthly meetings of the RNCIC. The November meeting was the Veterans 5 K race, with no formal meeting held.

#### **B. Speaking Engagements**

The President was invited to speak at the ARVEST Veterans Day Ceremony held at the Fayetteville ARVEST Bank, and received a \$500 Sponsorship check from ARVEST.

#### **C. Fund Raisers**

The Annual Veterans 5 Km Race, planned and conducted by all RNCIC members and associates of the RNCIC was held on 8 November, 2014. This was our most profitable fund raiser ever, bringing in over \$32,000.00. The significant increase in profit this year was largely due to the leadership efforts of Peggy McClain, who continually monitored the progress and urged all members to secure more sponsors and donations. A very hearty thanks is extended to our Race Directors, Wes Stites and Josh Sakon, along with their associates, for their leadership and efforts in organizing and conducting the race.

#### **D .Grants**

The Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation, received a large financial boost from the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District. This \$62,000 grant was gratefully acknowledged by the RNCIC.

A second Grant, of \$2,000.00 was provided by the Western Arkansas Planning & Development District. These grants provided the majority of the funds needed for the down payment of the purchase of Lots 1,5, 8 and 8a from CAPHO Investments.

#### **E. Unplanned donations**

As in previous years, the RNCIC has received several unplanned, significant, donations from area individuals, Veterans groups and similar organizations. All such donations are listed in the monthly Treasurer's report. These donations are most welcome and have provided additional, essential funds for land acquisitions.

### **2. Contact /Coordination With Other Organizations** - The continuation of coordination and contact with other organizations having compatible missions and goals significantly improves the recognition of the RNCIC's efforts and mission accomplishment.

**A. Government** — Several Federal, State and Local government agencies have provided grants, advice, support and assistance to the RNCIC, these include:

1. Department of Veterans Affairs
2. National Cemetery Administration
3. Fayetteville Veterans Administration Hospital
4. State of Arkansas Grant Agencies
5. City of Fayetteville

#### **B. Veteran's Organizations**

1. Military Officers Association of America
2. Military Order of The Purple Heart
3. Veterans of Foreign Wars
4. American Legion & Legion Auxiliary
5. Combat Veterans Riders
6. Bo's Blessings'

#### **C. Business & Civic**

The RNCIC continues co-ordination and contact with numerous individuals, organizations and businesses that have provided support and sponsorship for the annual Veterans 5KM Race. The RNCIC website reflects a current listing of these contacts.

### **3. Contracts** - The RNCIC entered into two very significant contracts during 2014; both involving the acquisition of additional land for the eventual expansion of the Fayetteville National Cemetery.

**A. CAPHO Investments** — As a result of the RNCIC's acceptable offer to CAPHO Investments of \$205,000.00 for Lots 1, 5, 8 & 8a, a mortgage was entered into with CAPHO Investments for the balance of the purchase price (\$ 125,000.00) at 5.5% interest for a 20 year period. The RNCIC was later able to secure a donation of \$61,635.00, and accepted a promissory note in the amount of \$72,135.00 at 1.9% interest. With the availability of this supplemental funding, the RNCIC proposed to pay off the CAPHO mortgage early. The early mortgage pay-off created a potential tax situation for the lender, thus the lender requested RNCIC pay only on the principal for the period April through December, with no penalty. The lender, CAPHO Investments, signed the release on 2 January 2015.

B. Promissory Note — The RNCIC Board of Directors accepted the Note in the amount of \$61,635.00, at the interest rate of 1.9 %, payable by 2017.

<Ron Butler provided both the donation and the loan to make this transaction possible. -Jake>

#### 4. Land Acquisition (Lots 1, 5, 8 and 8a)

A. With the approval of the RNCIC Board of Directors, the RNCIC President began negotiations with the owner, CAPHO Investments. This land acquisition is considered essential in the RNCIC's Long - Range plan, to preclude or discourage commercial or private development south of the new Fayetteville Trail (Tsa-La-Gi Trail). After several offers and counter-offers, CAPHO Investments and the RNCIC arrived at an acceptable price of \$205,000.00. (See paragraph 3, above for details of the financing of this property)

B. Several considerations were involved with the decision to purchase this property:

- \* Would the Department of Veterans Affairs accept this property in the event RNCIC could purchase this land and offer to donate it to the Department of Veterans Affairs? Close coordination with the National Cemetery Administration resulted in a written acceptance decision.

- \* Purchase of this land could well discourage private and/or commercial development of the other available land in the area of the Fayetteville National Cemetery's area of interest.

- \* Could the RNCIC realistically expect to generate enough funds to complete this acquisition?

- \* Expending all available funds, plus creating indebtedness, could preclude the purchase of other available parcels.

C. With the positive approval of the Board of Directors, the property closing occurred on April 7th, 2014. As soon as the deed/title is cleared, the property will be offered to the Department of Veteran Affairs, for the purpose of expanding the Fayetteville National Cemetery.

5. Mission for 2015 — The Mission of the Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation for the year 2015, remains the same as for 2014, which is:

'Ensure there is, and will be, adequate space in the Fayetteville National Cemetery to provide the opportunity for every eligible veteran to be interred within. This remains an open-ended mission, as no 'end date' can be determined.'

#### A. First Goal: Improve RNCIC Financial Position.

Our financial position continues to fluctuate; examining it on any specific month, one might be tempted to think we are very well off, but when looking at it over the whole year, and taking our indebtedness into consideration, we find achievement of this goal is elusive. We currently have some additional properties available, but have inadequate funds to make the purchase.

The Grants awarded in 2013 were significant but we definitely need to further explore and actively pursue additional grant sources.

Likewise, the 5 Km Veterans Races have allowed us more flexibility for land purchase, however, we need to think about an alternative if these races are no longer supported by our sponsor base.

#### B. Second Goal : Continue the acquisition of land for essential expansion of the Fayetteville National Cemetery.

The 2010 Veteran population in this area was over 41,000 and has undoubtedly increased by several thousand, thus we have no way to produce a valid number of veterans who may wish to be interred in the Fayetteville National Cemetery. In the event of another protracted, intensive conflict, we could well find ourselves in the same situation that VA Medical care experiences. We would need the burial space now, and not later.

Objective 1. Review all available parcels of land in the area bounded by Hill Ave. to the West, Government Street to the East, 11th Street to the South, and any/all parcels South of our recent acquisition. Actually, this objective is progressing quite well. We know with some degree of certainty, what properties are available, but we are constrained by lack of funds.

Objective 2. Classify the available parcels into two categories, Critical and Secondary.

Critical being defined as essential to discourage commercial / private development.

Secondary being defined as parcel that will be needed, but not expected to be needed for interments in the immediate future.

C. Third Goal - Increase RNCIC Membership and actively seek additional members, both individual and organizational. While we have gained some new members, not many are actively engaged in the business of the Corporation. I do not mean to imply that we should look down on those members, nor exclude any not actively involved, but certainly we need more direct, active workers.

Objective 1. By the end of 2d Quarter 2015, recruit at least three individual members who will actively participate in the work of the RNCIC, and one organization, that will actively assist the RNCIC in such areas, such as fund raising, publicity and similar activities.

Objective 2. By the end of the 4th Quarter, 2015, recruit at least two additional individual members and one additional organization.

SUMMARY — In every respect, this has been a very successful year for the RNCIC; we have accomplished a great deal, such as a most successful fund raiser (6th Annual Veterans 5 KM Race), we've purchased an extremely valuable property, we've participated in public ceremonies involving the National Cemetery. In addition to the fund-raising, we have raised an awareness about the National Cemetery for an untold number of people who had no idea that we even had a National Cemetery, nor where it is. Who did all of this? The credit for all that the RNCIC has accomplished belongs to each and every member of this organization.

I'll repeat some of what I wrote in last year's Summary — As always, the key question remains - 'Are we there yet?' Are we done raising money; are we done buying property; are we done donating property to the Department of Veterans Affairs ? The answer of

course, is 'No', but we are making very visible progress, and we're not stopping.

In closing this report, I again extend my personal thanks to each and every member for making this a year of great progress. None of those 'good things' that are recited in this report would have happened without the dedication and efforts of you all. Your continued support and understanding have made my work a pleasure.

Submitted this 10th day of January 2015,

Ronald L. Butler

President, Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation

## 2015

### **2015 Annual Report for the office of Secretary**

**JANUARY** - The new Fayetteville National Cemetery Director, Tom Ruck, attended his first RNCIC meeting along with Chris Turner.

The Annual Meeting was held with the Nominating Committee presenting the names of four new Board members. Those elected were Merle Williams, Gary Culp, Jim Glover, and Roger McClain for three year terms expiring at the end of 2017.

The twelve Board members elected the following officers and they were installed for 2015: Ron Butler, President; Merle Williams, Vice President; Lorna Sterrett, Secretary; and Peggy McClain, Treasurer.

**FEBRUARY** - Annual Reports for 2014 from the President, Vice President/Public Relations, Secretary, Webmaster, and the History Committee were distributed to the membership in attendance.

A policy was passed by the Board that the RNCIC Secretary distribute the Monthly Meeting Minutes to the Board members and to any other active paid members upon their request. A policy was also passed by the Board that the RNCIC Secretary distribute the Monthly Meeting Agenda to the full paid membership.

Ron obtained a copy of the official survey from the Washington County Assessor's Office showing the RNCIC's northern boundary between Government Avenue and Hill Avenue (Lots #1,5,8, and 8A).

**MARCH** - Ron read a letter from the National Cemetery Administration initiating the proposed land donation process for Lots #1,5,8, and 8A.

**APRIL** - Announcement of a Revision of the RNCIC By-Laws proposing an amendment to Article IV - Board of Directors to add Section 3 to state the following: The Fayetteville National Cemetery Director, or one of the Director's representatives, may serve as ex-officio member of the organization's Board of Directors. Vote to take place at May meeting.

**MAY** - The 2015 Race Organizational Chart was approved which will establish better guidelines and accountability for the annual races.

The motion passed to amend Article IV - Board of Directors to add Section 3 to read: The Fayetteville National Cemetery Director, or one of the Director's representatives, may serve as ex-officio member of the organization's Board of Directors.

A Roll Call of Honor will be held at the Cemetery for Memorial Day starting on May 24 (1330 Sunday-0830 Monday) reading all the names of the veterans interred at the Cemetery and their branch of service.

**JUNE** - In a realignment phase of the VA, the Fayetteville National Cemetery has become a part of the Memorial Service Network III out of Denver, Co.

A motion was passed to pay off the note plus interest held on Lots #1, 5, 8, and 8A. That gave the RNCIC clear ownership to enable transfer to the VA.

**JULY** - Ron submitted a letter to Tom Ruck, Director of the FNC, that the RNCIC desires to begin the transfer of the parcels of land (Lots #1,5, 8, and 8A) to the VA for expanding the FNC.

Following months of contacts/negotiations Robert Jordan declined the RNCIC'S offer to purchase his lots #6, 6A and 9.

The Board passed a motion for Ron to pursue an offer for the purchase of Lot #2 (Keister).

**AUGUST** - Tom Ruck reported that the fence at the FNC is now in place on Hill Avenue to include the properties on the west of



Harold Crivello was the RNCIC treasurer from May 2008 until January 2015.

the Cemetery.

**SEPTEMBER** - Ron received a letter from Kevin Downey with the VA stating the due diligence is in process for the RNCIC's donation of lots #1, 5, 8, and 8A.

**OCTOBER** - Tom Ruck reported that a new columbarium for 520 will have ground breaking in December of this year. Development of the properties along Hill Ave. is estimated for 2019-2020. Existing Cemetery space is expected to be filled by 2020-2021.

**NOVEMBER** - The seventh (7th) annual 5K Veterans Memorial Race was held on Saturday, November 14, 2015, at 8 a.m. beginning at the main gate of the NFC.

**DECEMBER** - The profit of the 5K Race was reported as \$22,511.30 with one or two expenses still outstanding.

**2015 FINANCIAL PLANNING** - Properties of interest for the year 2015 were: Eugene Keister (Lot #2); Robert Jordan (Lots #6, 9 and 9A); Christie Estate (Lot #13); Mayer (Lot #19). No property was purchased in 2015.

**MEMBERSHIP DATA** - End of 2012-21 members, End of 2013 - 30 members, End of 2014 – 25 members, End of 2015 - 30 members.

## **2015 Annual Report for the office of the President**

This 2015 Annual Report highlights the significant events and activities of the Office of President, Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation, for the calendar year 2015.

### **1. Significant Events:**

A. Monthly Meetings - For calendar year 2015, the President presided over ten Monthly meetings of the Board of Directors, and one General Membership meeting. The meeting for November was used for the annual Veterans 5KM Race, with no formal meeting conducted.

B. Speaking Engagements - There were no speaking engagements conducted by the President for 2015.

C. Fund Raiser - The Seventh (7th) Annual Veterans 5 KM Race, planned and conducted by all RNCIC members, and associates of the RNCIC was held on 14 November 2015. The summary report of the Race was published separately by the RNCIC Treasurer. A very hearty thanks is extended to our Race Directors, Wes Stites and Josh Sakon, along with all RNCIC members for their leadership and efforts in planning, organizing and conducting the Race.

### **D. Financial Grants**

1. On 19 June 2015, the RNCIC was the recipient of a Grant from the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc., in the amount of \$20,000.00, for the purpose of additional land purchase. Although the Grant funds were received and deposited in the RNCIC Account, the actual purchase of land and the resulting expenditure of the grant funds has been delayed by the land owner in that the owner is reluctant to agree to a closing date, due to some family concerns.

2. Other grant information - Several Grant inquiries have been submitted to local and National firms. Only one has thus far responded, telling us that the RNCIC's situation is not compatible with their programs. Follow-up continues with the remaining firms.

3. Unprogrammed/Unplanned Donations - As in previous years, the RNCIC has received several significant unprogrammed and unplanned donations from area individuals, veterans groups and similar organizations. All such donations are listed in the monthly Treasurer's Reports. These donations are most welcome and have provided additional, essential funds for land acquisitions. All donations, memorials and similar gifts are acknowledged by letter to the individual giver.

2. Contact/coordination with other Organizations & Agencies - The continuation of coordination and contact with other organizations having compatible missions and goals significantly improves the recognition of the RNCIC's efforts and mission accomplishment.

A. Several Federal, State & Local Government agencies have provided advice, support and assistance to the RNCIC. These include:

- 1.) Department of Veterans Affairs
- 2.) National Cemetery Administration
- 3.) Fayetteville Veterans Administration Hospital
- 4.) State of Arkansas Grant Agencies
- 5.) City of Fayetteville
- 6.) Washington County, Arkansas

### **B. Veterans Organizations**

- 1.) Military Officers Association of America
- 2.) Military Order of the Purple Heart
- 3.) Veterans of Foreign Wars
- 4.) American Legion & Legion Auxillary
- 5.) Combat Veterans Riders
- 6.) Bo's Blessings

C. Business and Civic Organizations - The RNCIC continues coordination and contact with numerous individuals, organizations and businesses that have provided support and sponsorship for our annual Veterans 5KM Race. The RNCIC website (RNCIC.com), reflects a current listing of the contacts.

3. Contracts - The RNCIC entered into no new contracts for Calendar Year 2015, nor were any existing contracts closed.

4. Land Acquisition

A. Lots 1, 5, 8 & 8a - After extensive negotiations, offers and counter-offers, the owner of these lots (CAPHO Investments), and the RNCIC arrived at an agreeable price of \$205,000.00. The closing for these properties happened on 7 Apr, 2014, and as soon as the deeds & titles were cleared, the lots were offered for donation by letter to the Director, Fayetteville National Cemetery; Department of Veterans Affairs. Recent correspondence from the Department of Veterans Affairs, Executive Director of Acquisiton, Logistics and Construction, advises VA will soon begin the 'due-diligence' process for formal acceptance of the property.

B. Lot 2 - The RNCIC made no land purchases during 2015. Extensive and lengthy negotiations for Lot #2 began 8 January 2015 and continue to date. An acceptable price of \$63,500.00 was negotiated on 11 September 2015, however, a closing date for the sale has not been able to be determined. The owner recently advised that she still wants to sell the property for the previously agreed price, however, family concerns delay the actual sale.

C. Additional Properties in the RNCIC's area of concern remain available for sale, however, no formal inquiries have been made pending the final sale of Lot #2 (see above).

5. Mission for 2016 - The stated mission of the Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation (RNCIC) remains the same as for previous years: 'Ensure there is, and always will be, adequate space in the Fayettevile National Cemetery, to provide the opportunity for every eligible veteran to be interred wthin.' This remains an 'open-ended' mission, as no completion, or end date can be determined.

#### 6. Goals and Objectives

A. First Goal - Continue to Improve the RNCIC's Financial Position Our financial position continues to fluctuate, based on the income from the annual 5KM Race, and donations from the many individuals and organizations in the area, that are sensitive to our needs. However, as soon as we complete the purchase of another property, our balance hovers at, or, near the zero point, and, in some cases, we have needed to negotiate a loan to complete the transaction.

The Grant from the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District Corporation was certainly a significant assist, however, we need to further explore the availability of grant funds. As the opportunities to purchase additional properties arise, we must be ready to make a timely, reasonable offer, without a major effort to raise capital funds.

Grant Information has been requested from the following Corporations: USAA Insurance and George's Poultry. Follow-up continues with both firms.

#### B. Second Goal - Continue the acquisition of land for the essential expansion of the Fayetteville National Cemetery

The estimated 2014 Veteran population in the area served by the Fayettevile National Cemetery is well over 50,000, and has undoubtedly increased by several thousand, thus we have no way to determine a valid number of veterans who may wish to be interred in the Fayetteville National Cemetery. In the event of another protracted, intensive conflict, we could find ourselves in the same situation that VA Medical care now experiences. We would need to make burial space in the Faetteville National Cemetery available now & not later.

The impact of Cremation versus traditional in-ground burials - The Director of the Fayetteville National Cemetery recently reported an increasing number of cremated remains, over the traditional in-ground burials. The major significance of this change is that traditional in-ground burials require a far greater amount of land space than do cremated remains. The long term impact could well extend, to some unknown degree, the useful life of currently available land now managed by the Fayetteville National Cemetery.

Objective 1 - Review all available parcels or land in the area bounded by Hill Avenue to the West; Government Avenue to the East, 11th Street to the South and all available parcels South of the latest RNCIC acquisition. Actually, this objective is progressing quite well. We know with some degree of certainty, what properties are available now. Additional effort should be expended to assemble the necessary information for all the other properties which are within the boundaries listed above.

#### Objective 2 - Classify the available parcels into two categories, Critical and Secondary.

'Critical' being defined as an essential purchase to discourage commercial and/or private development.

'Secondary' is defined as being parcels that will be needed for future Cemetery expansion, but not needed for interments in the immediate future (perhaps, five to seven years out).

C. Third Goal - Increase RNCIC membership, and actively seek additional members, both individual and organizational. While we have gained several new members, not many are actively engaged in the business of the Corporation. I do not wish to imply that such members are less valuable than fully active members, but certainly we must actively recruit more direct, active and younger members. An informal survey of persons present at a recent meeting revealed that only two are under 60 years of age.

Objective 1 - By the end of 2d Quarter 2016 (March 2016), recruit at least three members who will actively participate in the work of the RNCIC, and recruit at least one organization that will actively assist the RNCIC in such areas as fund raising, publicity and similar activities.

Objective 2 - By the end of the 4th Quarter 2016 (September 2016), recruit at least two additional members and one additional organization to fulfill the same activities as above.

#### REPORT SUMMARY

In every respect, this has been another successful year for the RNCIC, we have accomplished a great deal, such as another very successful fund-raiser (the 7th Annual Veterans 5 KM Race), and although we've not made any land purchases during Calendar Year 2015, we're close to another purchase. We've participated in public ceremonies at the Fayetteville National Cemetery, in addition to the fund-raising, we have all raised an awareness about the Fayetteville National Cemetery for an unknown number of local citizens who had no idea Fayetteville even had a National Cemetery, or where it is.

This is the work done by every member of the RNCIC - no one member or person has done it all.

In closing I'll repeat what I wrote last year - As always, the key questions remain - Are we there yet? Are we done raising money? Are we done buying property? Are we done donating property to the Department of Veterans Affairs? The obvious answer to all these questions is a resounding 'NO; but we are making progress and we have no intention of stopping the work that our past leaders started.

Once again, I extend my personal Thanks to each and every member for making this another year of progress; none of the 'great things' recited in this report, or any of the other reports, could have happened without the total dedication and effort of YOU ALL!!! Your continued support and understanding have made my job a pleasure.

Ronald L. Butler  
President, RNCIC

## 2016

### 2016 Annual Report for the office of Secretary

**JANUARY** - The RNCIC Annual Meeting was held with the Nominating Committee presenting the names of four new Board members. Those elected were Jake Lamkins, Peggy McClain, Lorna Sterrett, and Wes Stites for three year terms expiring at the end of 2018.

The Board Members elected the following officers and they were installed for 2016: Ron Butler, President; Merle Williams, Vice President; Lorna Sterrett, Secretary; and Peggy McClain, Treasurer.

The RNCIC 30 Year History project was completed and the booklets were distributed to the Board members, Life members, the FNC, area libraries, area museums, and other interested parties. Eighty three (83) copies were printed as a memorial to Bob Sterrett at no charge to the recipients. Extra booklets are retained by the Secretary.

Annual Reports for 2015 were distributed to the membership at the meeting.

Mr. Tom Ruck, FNC Director, reported on the successful Wreaths Across America with over 4,000 in attendance on Dec. 12, 2015, and 10,000 wreaths being placed on all grave sites and the columbarium at the FNC. Bo's Blessings disassembles the live wreaths to recycle the wire and ribbons, and have made donations to the RNCIC in the past for our help with this project.

The Board voted to set the date for the 8th annual Veterans Memorial 5K Race for Nov. 12, 2016, so work can proceed throughout the year for this major fund raiser.

**FEBRUARY** - The Audit committee consisting of Lynn Mack, Cliff Madewell, and Mike Culpepper found the 2016 Financial Records to be in order and signed an audit confirmation.

**MARCH** - The March meeting was cancelled due to Ron Butler's surgery and recovery.

**APRIL** - Tom Ruck, FNC Director, announced that there would be a ground breaking on Monday, April 11, for the new columbarium in the northeast corner containing 520 niches.

Closing took place on April 5, 2016, for our Lot #2 (Keister) at 605 Government Ave. The agreed price with Mrs. Sheila Budd, owner, was \$63,500. Mr. and Mrs. Keister have vacated the house.

Tom Ruck confirmed that the VA has agreed to make an amendment for our next land donation to the VA to include Lot #2 along with the Lots #1,5, 8 and 8A already in process.

**MAY** - The May meeting of the RNCIC was held at the home of Ron and Lynn Butler with a champagne brunch following the meeting in honor of their marriage on Feb. 14.

Tom Ruck was reassigned to a National Cemetery in the Los Angeles area leaving an immediate vacancy in the FNC Director's position.

**JUNE** - At the April Board meeting Peggy requested that the RNCIC By-Laws be changed to read that the audit be done in January and the results reported at the February meeting, since the financials are not ready until the close of the calendar year. Therefore with the proper notice, the following was submitted to the Board for final approval and revision of the By-Laws: (a) An audit committee composed of three members who are not officers of the organization shall be appointed annually by the President at the last Board of Directors meeting of the calendar year. (b) The audit committee shall conduct a review of the financial records of the Treasurer and the organization at the first Board of Directors meeting of the new calendar year. (c) The audit committee shall provide a report of the results of its review at the next Board of Directors meeting of the new calendar year. The motion was made, seconded, and the vote was unanimous for revision of the By-Laws Article 6, Section 4 Audit.

**JULY** - A grant application with the NW Arkansas Economic Development District was submitted for the amount of \$15,000 project money to use at our discretion for clearing Lot #2 and repayment of the loan on this property.

Mr. Albert (Max) Maxwell was introduced at the meeting as the newly appointed FNC Director. He reported that 540 niches have been added to the Cemetery.

**AUGUST** - The Jordan house (Lot #9) being in extremely poor condition has been removed.

The VA has begun their Due Diligence inspections for the properties offered by the RNCIC to the VA (our Lots #1, 5, 8 and 8A). It was voted to partner with Bo's Blessings on race solicitations. (*see Sept. for specific conditions*)

**SEPTEMBER** - Bo's Blessings became an Organization/Life member. Race solicitations secured by these new members will be turned in to the RNCIC Treasurer. In an agreed partnership between the RNCIC and Bo's Blessings, one half of the value of these solicitations will be paid to Bo's Blessings after the race.

The Board voted to purchase 100 - 14" x 22" signs at \$250 to give to sponsors, for yard postings, etc. to display and promote the

5K Race in November. The Board also voted to purchase 250 goody bags for the racers.

Three representatives with the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Assoc. attended the meeting to discuss demolition and removal of the Keister house. The project would be presented to their members to enlist volunteer work.

**OCTOBER** - A check for \$15,000 was received from the NW Arkansas Economic Development District for a grant request which specified demolition of the house and clearing of our Lot #2 property, and repayment of a loan for \$13,500 to Ron Butler made in order to help us purchase the property.

The FNC Director reported that the VA is in the process of clearing the northern most properties (our Lots #1, 5, 8 and 8A).

The Combat Veterans Motorcycle Assoc. agreed to set Saturday, Nov. 19, as the day to demolish the house on Lot #2. Ron drew up a summary of the work to be done and a Waiver of Liability. Ladies of the RNCIC served lunch to the volunteers.

**NOVEMBER** - The eighth (8th) annual Veterans Memorial 5K Race was held on November 12, 2016, at 8:00 a.m. beginning at the main gate of the FNC.

**DECEMBER** - A race summary indicated over 200 runners and a profit this year of \$26,173.78.

A contract was established with Mr. David Dumbroski for the amount of \$5,200 to finish clearing Lot #2 to present the lot to the VA along with Lots #1, 5, 8 and 8A. It was hopeful that the offer to Donate to the VA will be closed in January 2017. Holding a public ceremony for the land donation was discussed by the Board.

The motion was made and passed unanimously to pay off the \$13,500 loan to Ron Butler for clear title on Lot #2.

The President appointed Jim, Roger, and Gary to serve on the Audit Committee at the January 2017 meeting after the closing of the 2016 Financial Records.

The President appointed Cliff, Wes, and Harold to serve on the Nominating Committee to report at the January 2017 meeting.

At Ron's request the Board members were asked to submit their preferences for order of priority for land purchases. This outline contained suggested actions and costs prepared by Peggy.

**2016 PROPERTIES ACQUIRED AND TARGETED** - Lot #2, 605 So. Government Ave, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Keister's residence (WW II veteran) was purchased from their daughter, Mrs. Sheila Budd, and closed on April 5, 2016, for \$63,500.

Ron made several contacts with Mr. Jordan regarding his property (our numbered Lots #9, 9A and 6), but negotiations were not resolved.

**MEMBERSHIP DATA**- End of 2012 - 21 members, End of 2013 - 30 members, End of 2014 – 25 member, End of 2015 - 30 members, End of 2016 - 31 members.

## 2016 Annual Report for the office of President

**INTRODUCTION** - As with previous Annual Reports, an examination of our 2016 activities points to a very busy and successful year. The purchase of another parcel of land and our Annual Veterans 5 KM Race were the most significant items. Both items will be further discussed in detail throughout this report, under their applicable headings. Also, we still have significant work to do, as explained under the Goals & Objectives.

### 1. Significant Events

A. **Board of Directors Meetings**- During calendar year 2016, the President presided over ten (10) monthly meetings of the Board of Directors, and the Annual General Membership Meeting. A formal meeting was not held in November, with the Eighth (8th) Annual Veterans 5 KM Race being held in place of a monthly meeting.

B. **Speaking Engagements** - No speaking engagements were conducted by the President during 2016.

C. **Fund Raisers/Eighth (8) Annual Veterans 5 KM Race** - Although all eight (8) of these races have demanded a lot of work by all members, all have been profitable ventures in terms of monetary profit, and certainly in terms of publicity. Our sponsorship lists keep growing & likewise, we have achieved a degree of publicity that would be difficult to achieve by any other means. The detailed report concerning the conduct of the Race is found in the 'Race Director's Report.' A very hearty 'Thanks' to our Race Directors, Wes Stites and Josh Sakon, for managing the Race, and to our Treasurer, Peggy McClain, for 'bringing in' the majority of the funds! Likewise, our sincere thanks to all the local & area businesses for providing, funds, prizes and support.

D. **Financial Grants** - As a direct result of Vice-President Merle Williams efforts, the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc. provided a direct grant in the amount of \$15,000.00, to be used for the repayment of the loan needed for the purchase of Lot#2, and for the clearance of the property to meet VA Standards. This Grant was particularly important in order to include Lot #2 with Lots 1, 5, 8, & 8a, being offered for donation to VA for expansion of the Fayetteville National Cemetery.

### E. Unprogrammed/Unplanned Donations

(1) The Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation is most fortunate to be the recipient of several significant and unplanned donations from area individuals, veterans groups, and businesses. All donations are reported in the Treasurer's Monthly Report, and receive a tax letter, acknowledging the receipt. All donations, memorials and similar gifts are also acknowledged with a personal note of thanks from the President.

(2) The President has been recently contacted by a Representative of a National Corporation concerning a grant to be used for land purchases. The Board of Directors provided input and the Treasurer developed the required information. The information packet was presented to the Corporate Representative for review and further action. (Response is pending)

(3) A significant donation was made by member Gary Culp, who removed much of the scrap metal from the demolished house on Lot#2.

F. **Land Donation to VA** - The parcels of land purchased in the previous year (Lots 1, 5, 8 & 8a) have been formally offered by

letter for donation to the Department of Veteran Affairs, for expansion of the Fayetteville National Cemetery. In addition, the recently cleared Lot #2, was added to the prior donation offer. The VA selected contractor has been engaged in completion of that portion of the 'Due Diligence' to be accomplished on-site. The actual transfer of these parcels may occur in early 2017.

## 2. Contact/Coordination with Other Organizations & Agencies.

The continuation of contact and coordination with other organizations and agencies, having comparable missions and goals, significantly improves the recognition of our efforts and mission accomplishment.

A. Federal, State & Local Government agencies - Many of which have provided advice, assistance and support to the RNCIC.

- 1.) Department of Veterans Affairs
- 2.) National Cemetery Administration
- 3.) Fayetteville National Cemetery
- 4.) Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks (Fayetteville VA Hospital)
- 5.) City of Fayetteville
- 6.) Washington County, AR.

## B. Veterans Organizations - These include:

- 1.) Military Officers Association of America
- 2.) Military Order of the Purple Heart
- 3.) Veterans of Foreign Wars
- 4.) American Legion & Legion Auxiliary
- 5.) Combat Veterans Riders
- 6.) Bo's Blessings
- 7.) Post 27, American Legion (for providing meeting facilities)

C. Business & Civic Organizations - The RNCIC continues coordination and contact with numerous individuals, civic organizations and businesses that have provided support and sponsorship for our Annual Veterans 5KM Race. Our RNCIC website reflects the current listing of these contacts (RNCIC.com).

3. Contracts - The RNCIC has entered into only one contract during the year; this contract was to complete the clearance of Lot #2. Several volunteers from the Combat Veterans Riders (CMVA AR 7-2) provided labor and equipment to begin the demolition of the buildings on Lot #2, however, it could not be completed within the time available, and thus it became necessary to contract the remaining work. With the Board of Directors approval, the RNCIC entered into a contract with Mr. David Dombroski, of 'Dave's Odd Jobs' on 5 December 2016, to remove the remains of the house located on Lot #2, and all rubbish, fence, etc.. Upon satisfactory completion the contractor was paid the amount of \$5,200.00. Satisfactory completion of the work was documented by the completion of the 'Contracting Officers Certification' checklist.

## 4 Land Acquisition

A. Lot #2 (605 S. Government Ave) - The RNCIC closed on this parcel on 4 April 2016, after several months of negotiations with the owner, involving re-locating her parents. As previously reported, this property was offered to VA, as being included with the offer of Lots 1, 5, 8, & 8a.

B. Remaining properties - There are ten (10) properties remaining in the National Cemetery area, which encompasses the area south of the East-West Trail, the area east of Hill Ave., the area West of Government Ave. and north of 11th Street. Based on the judgement of the Board of Directors, a priority list for acquisition has been developed. (See paragraph 1, D 2, above for details)  
\*CANNOT FIND IT!

5. Mission for 2017 - The stated mission of the Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation remains the same as in previous years:

"Ensure there is, and always will be, adequate space in the Fayetteville National Cemetery to provide the opportunity for every eligible veteran to be interred within." This remains an 'open-ended' mission as no completion or 'end date' can be determined.

## 6. Goals & Objectives

A. First Goal - Improve the RNCIC's Financial Position.

Although the purchase of land does continue, we need to have sufficient funds available to make reasonable, timely offers as future properties become available.

B. Second Goal - Continue the acquisition of land for the essential expansion of the Fayetteville National Cemetery.

The 'Objectives' for this Goal, contained in the 2015 Annual Report, have both been completed.

C. Third Goal - Increase RNCIC Membership, and actively seek additional members, both individual and organizational. As stated in the 2015 Annual Report, we must actively recruit more active, younger members. With most members being elderly, we are limited in our ability to perform direct labor, such as demolition of buildings and clearing property being donated to VA.

Objective 1 - This objective has been achieved on a 'task' basis; one organization (Bo's Blessing) has actively participated in the Annual Veterans 5KM Race, bringing in additional sponsors & funds. Another organization, CVMA AR 7-2, (Combat Veterans Association) actively participated in the demolition of the house on Lot #2.

Objective 2 - By the end of the 4th Quarter 2017 (December 2017), recruit at least three new, active RNCIC members, and one additional organization to actively assist in such areas as fund raising, publicity and similar activities.

## REPORT SUMMARY

In summation, this year must be considered another successful year for the RNCIC; we have accomplished many of our projects,

accomplished several of our objectives, and have offered for donation, five (5) parcels of land to VA for the essential expansion of the Fayetteville National Cemetery. Certainly, the conduct of our 8th Annual Veterans 5 KM Race, has to be recognized as a success, both from a financial basis, and also, as an organizational triumph.

Again, these successes are due to the efforts of every member of the RNCIC; think what we could do with additional members to help!!!

The questions we always hear are still with us - ‘Are we there yet?’ ‘Are we done raising funds?’ ‘Do we have enough land for the Cemetery?’ ‘How many years will the land we’ve donated last?’ The answers are still the same too, ‘we simply don’t know, but until our veterans quit dying, we’ll continue to make sure they all have a place in this honored Cemetery.’

I again extend my personal thanks to each and every member of this organization for making this year another year of progress. None of the progress we’ve made this year could have happened without your dedication and efforts. Your continued support and understanding have made my work easier and better.

Ronald L. Butler  
President, RNCIC

## 2017

### **2017 Annual Report for the office of Secretary**

**JANUARY** - The RNCIC Annual Meeting was held with the Nominating Committee presenting the names of four new Board members. Those elected were Ron Butler, Josh Sakon, Aubrey Shepherd, and Harold Crivello for three year terms (2017-18-19).

At the Board of Directors meeting the Board members elected the following officers and they were installed for 2017: Ron Butler, President; Merle Williams, Vice President; Lorna Sterrett, Secretary; and Peggy McClain, Treasurer.

Lot #2 (Keister) is now totally cleared and leveled. This lot will be offered to the VA along with lots #1, 5, 8, and 8A purchased from CAPHO.

Annual Reports for 2016 were distributed to the assembled membership.

**FEBRUARY** - The date for the 2017 Veterans Memorial 5K Race was set for Nov. 4, 2017. The race coordinator of the Fayetteville Marathon had already listed the Nov. 11 date (Veterans Day).

The Audit Committee found the 2016 Financial Records to be in order and signed an audit confirmation.

**MARCH** - Max Maxwell, Director of the FNC, brought two notebooks containing valuable newspaper clippings, photographs, and other information about the early years of the RNCIC, which he found in the FNC offices.

**APRIL** - Christine Turner will be retiring from the FNC effective April 30.

Max reported that a 100th remembrance ceremony for WWI Veterans would be held at the FNC during April.

**MAY** - Max discussed Memorial Day events with a 20 hour reading of all interments at the FNC.

“The Moving Wall,” a replica of the Viet Nam Memorial Wall in Washington D.C., will be at the Fayetteville VA Hospital from May 18-22.

**JUNE** - The Due Diligence by the VA had not been completed at the time of this meeting. Ron contacted the supervisor in charge at the VA for timely results.

**JULY** -- Max reported that the VA environmental surveyor had recently conducted a visit to the FNC and signed off on all items.

A public ceremony was held on July 3 in observance of the RNCIC’s 2.4 acres presented to the VA and also the 150th anniversary of the FNC. This was the largest land donation to date from the RNCIC.

**AUGUST** - Numerous attempts to contact Mr. Bob Jordan have been made for his Lots #6, 9, and 9A. The house on the property has been removed.

**SEPTEMBER** - After making an offer to purchase the three lots from Mr. Bob Jordan, it was learned that the property is no longer for sale.

**OCTOBER** - Max reported that the NCA has recognized the Fayetteville National Cemetery as an “Organization of Excellence” based on their last inspection. The Baldridge Award will be presented to the FNC.

**NOVEMBER** - The ninth (9th) annual Veterans Memorial 5K Race was held on November 4, 2017, at 8:00 a.m. beginning at the main gate of the FNC.

**DECEMBER** - A Race Summary indicated there were 142 runners and a net dollar profit this year of \$24,255.62.

Ron appointed Wes, Gary and Merle to serve on the Audit Committee to audit the 2017 Financial Records at the close of the January 2018 meeting.

Ron appointed Jake, Aubrey, and Mike to serve on the Nominating Committee and to report at the January 2018 meeting with names of four new Board members for nomination.

**PROPERTIES ACQUIRED AND DONATED TO THE VA IN 2017** - Lots #1, 2, 5, 8, and 8A for 2.4 acres, the largest single donation, securing the northern boundary of the Fayetteville National Cemetery up to the Trail were donated to the VA on July 3, 2017.

**MEMBERSHIP DATA**- End of 2012-21 members, End of 2013 - 30 members, End of 2014 – 25 members, End of 2015 - 30 members, End of 2016 - 31 members, End of 2017 - 34 members

## 2017 Annual Report for the office of President

This 2017 Annual Report highlights the significant events and activities of the Office of President, Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation, for the calendar year 2017.

### 1. Significant Events

A. Monthly Meetings - for Calendar year 2017, the President presided over eleven (11) monthly meetings of the Board of Directors, and the January 2017 Annual Membership meeting.

B. Speaking Engagements - The President was selected as the speaker for the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Fayetteville Veterans Hospital on 11 November, to include reviewing the history & mission of the RNCIC.

C. Fund Raisers - The Ninth (9th) Annual Veterans Memorial 5KM Race, planned, directed and conducted by the members and associates of the RNCIC, was held on 4 November 2017. The details of the Race are contained in the Annual Report, published by the Race Director and his staff. Funding information is contained in the Treasurer's Annual Report. A continuing Thanks is extended to the Race Directors, Wes Stites, Josh Sakon and their staff, also to our Treasurer, Peggy McClain for managing the collection and use of sponsor funds.

D. Grants - A request for Grant funding was submitted per instructions of the Grantee's representative in October 2016. To date, no further information has been received.

E. Unplanned donations - As in previous years, several unplanned, significant donations have been received from both individuals and local veterans groups and organizations. All such donations are most welcome, and will certainly accelerate future land acquisitions. The Treasurer's Report contains further information about these donations. All donations, memorials and similar gifts receive a tax information letter from the Treasurer, and a personal Thank-You note from the President. Two recent, significant examples of such gifts was the Veterans Day Choral Concert presented by four local area choral groups. The proceeds from the concert are being divided between the RNCIC and the Bella Vista Veterans Wall of Honor. The second was a gift of \$2500.00 from Bo's Blessings, resulting from the dedicated work of that organization.

F. Fayetteville National Cemetery 150th Anniversary - In conjunction with the transfer of 2.4 acres of land to VA, the RNCIC planned, organized and conducted the 150th Anniversary Ceremony on 29 June. Congratulations to Vice President Merle Williams for all his work with this project. The land transfer details are addressed at paragraph 3 below.

G. Contact & Coordination with other Organizations - The continuing contact and coordination with other organizations having compatible missions and goals, aids with the recognition of the RNCIC's efforts and mission accomplishment.

#### 1) Government related

- a) Department of Veterans Affairs
- b) National Cemetery Administration
- c) Director, Fayetteville National Cemetery
- d) Director, Fayetteville VA Health Center of the Ozarks
- e) City of Fayetteville

#### 2) Veterans Organizations

- a) Military Officers Association of America
- b) Military Order of the Purple Heart
- c) Veterans of Foreign Wars
- d) American Legion & Legion Auxiliary
- e) Combat Veterans Motorcycle Assn
- f) American Legion Post 27 (provides RNCIC meeting facilities)

#### 3) Other

- a) Fayetteville National Cemetery Advisory Council
- b) Bo's Blessings

4) Business and Civic - The RNCIC continues coordination and contact efforts with numerous local and area businesses and individuals, which have provided continuing sponsorship and support for the RNCIC's fund-raising projects. (See the RNCIC website for a listing)

2. Contract Information - There were no contracts issued or received by the RNCIC during calendar year 2017.



Wes Stites (L) and Josh Sakon at the January 2017 RNCIC Board meeting.

They coordinated the 5K Race until it was killed by the COVID Pandemic.

Wes was on the Board from 2012 until 2022 and was President from January 2018 until January 2020. He resigned from the Board in May 2021.

Josh served on the Board from January 2014 until January 2020.

### 3. Land Acquisitions or Delivery to the Department of Veterans Affairs

A. There were no RNCIC land acquisitions made during calendar year 2017. Although a substantial offer was made to the owner of Lots 9, 9a and 6, our offer was rejected. Contact with the owner will continue.

B. Over two acres of land owned by the RNCIC (Lots 1,2,5,8 & 8a) were donated to the Department of Veteran Affairs in conjunction with the 150th Anniversary of the Fayetteville National Cemetery. A congratulatory letter was received from the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, Department of Veteran Affairs. (See also paragraph 1.F above)

### 4. Mission Needs for 2018 and Beyond

A. Basic RNCIC Mission - 'Ensure there is, and always will be, adequate space in the Fayetteville National Cemetery to provide the opportunity for every eligible veteran to be interred therein'. This is an 'open-ended' mission as no 'end date' can be determined.

B. Future Needs - Considering the amount of land remaining in what we consider the current 'boundaries' of the Fayetteville National Cemetery (West of Government Avenue; East of S. Hill Avenue, South of the Sa La Gay trail, and North of Eleventh Street), we find there are only ten (10) parcels remaining, with three parcels, currently declared to be 'not for sale' by the owner. At least four (4) parcels will be costly (+\$100,000) to purchase (estimated to be Lots 3, 8.1, 12, 13), not including costs to clear.

With these constraints to be considered, very serious and detailed planning must be undertaken this year, regarding future expansion of the Fayetteville National Cemetery. Where do we go from here?

#### C) Short-Range Needs

1) 'Vacation' of the alley between properties 6 & 4; 9a & 3. The process has been started, but remains incomplete. Having this alley vacated results in better use of the properties and complies with NCA desires.

2) Complete 'Right of First Refusal' for all remaining properties. No action has been taken to meet with the owners of the remaining properties, nor has a legally sufficient document been constructed. Having this action completed will allow the RNCIC to be better prepared to respond quickly to an owner's decision to sell.

### 5. Goals & Objectives

A. First Goal - Improve the RNCIC' Financial Position. We must have sufficient funds on-hand, or rapidly available, in order to purchase property as soon as it becomes available. A 'target' amount should be developed through Board of Directors action.

B. Second Goal - Continue the acquisition of properties, contiguous with the current National Cemetery boundaries, for the urgent expansion of the Fayetteville National Cemetery. Completion of this goal will be impacted by the actions taken in accordance with paragraph 4, b above.

C. Third Goal - There is no change in this goal, as described in the 2016 Annual Report. We have made progress with Objective 1; three organizations have become 'Life members'; American Legion Post 36, Bella Vista MOAA Chapter and Bo's Blessings.

Objective 2 (Recruit at least three new, active members by end of 4th Quarter 2017): This objective has been partially achieved with the November membership of Tim Barnett. Two other persons plan to attend the January 2018 meeting and become members.

### 6. Summary

Calendar year 2017 most certainly must be considered another very successful year for the Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation. We have accomplished several vital projects, such as:

- \* planned, organized and conducted the 150th Anniversary Ceremony of the Fayetteville National Cemetery.
- \* donated over two acres of land to the Department of Veteran Affairs.
- \* planned, organized & conducted the 9th Annual Veterans Memorial 5KM Race.
- \* accomplished some of the Goals/Objectives established in previous years.

When examining the work that was involved for the completion of the projects above, the credit for our success is clearly due to the performance of each and every member of the RNCIC. Again, when reviewing the degree of success with our stated mission; we are faced with the same questions asked several years ago: 'How many years before the Fayetteville National Cemetery is filled and closed to new burials'? 'Are we done raising funds and buying land?' Our answers remain the same as then - until our veterans quit dying, we'll continue to make sure they have a place in this honored cemetery with their comrades in arms!

In closing, I extend my personal and heartfelt thanks to each and every member of the Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation for the work each of you has accomplished in making 2017 another year of really significant progress. With this in mind, get ready for 2018, a year that will have more of the same or even greater challenges!

Ronald L. Butler

President, Regional National Cemetery Improvement Corporation

## 2018

### 2018 Annual Report for the office of Secretary

**JANUARY** - The RNCIC Annual Meeting was held with the Nominating Committee presenting the names of four new Board members. Those elected were Merle Williams, Roger McClain, Gary Culp, and Jannie Layne for three year terms (2018-19-20).

A letter from Ron Butler indicated that he would not be a candidate for the office of President of the RNCIC for the coming year 2018. At the Board of Directors meeting the Board members elected the following officers, and they were installed for 2018: Wes Stites, President; Merle Williams, Vice President; Lorna Sterrett, Secretary; and Peggy McClain, Treasurer.

The treasurer presented the final figures for the 2017 Veterans Memorial 5K Race. There was a net dollar profit for the race of

\$20,277.33 with 142 runners.

The Robert Jordan properties (our lots 6, 9, & 9A) are no longer for sale at this time according to Mr. Jordan.

Annual Reports were distributed by the secretary to the assembled membership.

**FEBRUARY** - Due to the absence of the secretary no minutes were recorded from this meeting. However, it was reported that the Audit Committee approved the Treasurer's records for 2017 at this meeting.

**MARCH** - The date for the 2018 Veterans Memorial 5K Race was set for November 10, 2018.

**APRIL** - Discussion was held regarding future land purchases. It was agreed at this time to concentrate with the lots listed on our brochure map. Other lots outside the map area would be held for future consideration.

**MAY** - Memorial Day events to be held at the Fayetteville National Cemetery were discussed. A table was requested for the Avenue of Information on Memorial Day, and a wreath furnished by the RNCIC. RNCIC brochures (1,000) will be included in the day's program handout.

It was reported in the Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette that on April 25, Mr. Steve Best, Regional Director for the National Cemetery Administration, presented the government's highest honor for organizational excellence and customer satisfaction to The Fayetteville National Cemetery.

**JUNE** - The American Legion Post 27 which grants us the use of their building for our monthly meetings will no longer have a person on the premises to open for our meetings. A key and the alarm code were turned over to Merle (and later to Wes) for the opening and closing of the building for our meetings.

**JULY** - Acting on the Board's previous discussions, Wes contacted the U of A Special Collections Library regarding the storage of the old RNCIC records and history. They were very receptive to storing our documents. The material will be kept indefinitely and stored in one place rather than among different Board members. It will be accessible to us at any time. Items will be gathered together in the future for this purpose.

Jannie Layne offered to assume the responsibility of maintaining the RNCIC Facebook account.

The Board voted to pursue contact with Mr. Peter Christie regarding our Lot #13, the Christie Estate. They are ready to sell to the RNCIC per their deceased father's request (Arnold Christie).

**AUGUST** - A meeting was held with Ron, Merle, and Peter & Patsy Christie to discuss preliminary information on the purchase of our Lot #13 at 920 So. Hill Avenue. An appraisal dated Dec. 31, 2014, valued the property at \$85,000.

Mr. Steven Best, Director, Continental Division of the National Cemetery Admin. mentioned on a previous visit to the FNC that, "Under the proper circumstances the VA can purchase land adjacent to existing National Cemeteries for cemetery expansion if the land was for sale by the owner." Merle advised him of the current status with the Christie property, and Mr. Best advised that he was looking into it.

Max Maxwell, FNC Director, reported that the maintenance building and spoils will be relocated to the extreme southwest corner of the Cemetery (formerly our lots 20 & 20A - Brantley), and the Cemetery fence will be in place around that corner.

**SEPTEMBER** - Max Maxwell, FNC Director, informed the group that he has been reassigned to Biloxi, MS effective October 1, 2018.

Max reported that the city has paved the area along the entire northern boundary of the Cemetery, and the FNC will place a fence on the Cemetery property as soon as possible. The properties along Hill Ave. are ready to develop with work beginning in 2019.

The Board passed a motion to offer the Christie heirs \$80,000 for their property, with closing to take place after January 1, 2019.

**OCTOBER** - The purchase of the Christie property has been confirmed with the Christie family with the purchase price of \$80,000 and closing to take place after January 1, 2019.

**NOVEMBER** - The tenth (101) annual Veterans Memorial 5K Race was held on November 10, 2018, at 8 a.m. beginning at the main gate of the FNC.

**DECEMBER** - Final figures for the race were not available at the time of this meeting. There was an estimate of \$17,500 in cash donations, \$13,000 in-kind donations, and approximately 126 runners that day. Other methods of fund raising were discussed with the race being tabled until the next meeting.

Wes stressed the importance and the priority of recruiting new members to attend the meetings and to support the work effort.

Wes appointed members to the Nominating Committee to report at the January 2019 meeting with the names of four new Board members for nomination. He also appointed members to the Audit Committee to conduct an audit of the 2018 Financial records following the January 2019 meeting.

No new properties were acquired or donated to the VA in 2018.

Membership Data -- End of 2012 -- 21 members, End of 2013 -- 30 members, End of 2014 -- 25 members, End of 2015 -- 31 members, End of 2016 - 31 members, End of 2017 -- 34 members, End of 2018 -- 36 members. Life Members added this year - Harold Crivello and Grant & Kimberlee Siemens.

## 2019

### 2019 Annual Report for the office of Secretary

**JANUARY** - The RNCIC Annual Meeting was held with the Nominating Committee presenting the names of four members for the Board of Directors. Those elected were: Tim Burnett, Peggy McClain, Lorna Sterrett, and Wes Stites for three year terms

(2019-20-21). Jake Lamkin's name was placed in nomination for the one year Board term (2019) remaining from Ron Butler. The nomination was approved, and the above mentioned five members were elected and installed.

Skip Solomon, the newly appointed Fayetteville National Cemetery director, was introduced. He and his wife, Angie, came from Natchez, MS, with his service at FNC beginning on Nov. 11, 2018.

The treasurer presented the final figures for the 2018 5K Veterans Memorial Race. There was a net profit of \$14,941.94. The Board voted to hold the 11th 5K Veterans Memorial Race on November 9, 2019.

With the approval of the Board the RNCIC checking account was moved from Arvest to First Security Bank because of fees implemented by Arvest.

At the Board of Directors meeting the Board elected the following officers and they were installed for 2019: Wes, Stites, President; Merle Williams, Vice President; Lorna Sterrett, Secretary; and Peggy McClain, Treasurer.

**FEBRUARY** - A new Communications Committee was formed to implement new features to RNCIC's Facebook and other social media accounts in an attempt to reach out to more people.

The Audit Committee reported that the 2018 Financial records were accurate and signed off by the committee members.

The RNCIC Secretary brought two file boxes to be turned over to the U of A Special Collections Library. These boxes contained RNCIC articles from the 1980's up to 2015, legal documents regarding RNCIC land purchases and donations to the VA from 1989 to 2015, and "The National Cemetery at Fayetteville" by W. J. Lemke. Wes will deliver to the U of A Special Collections Library.

**MARCH** - Mr. Bob Jordan, owner of our lots numbered 6, 9, and 9A, has told the RNCIC that his property is no longer for sale. In searching real estate records on those properties, the three separate properties have been sold by Mr. Jordan to three unnamed individuals for \$1 each.

**APRIL** - Clarification to a statement made in the March RNCIC minutes: The FNC director, has obtained a copy of a real estate document indicating that Robert Jordan sold his three lots to Ammen Jordan for the total of \$1 in 2012.

A copy of the deed for the parcel of land which the RNCIC purchased from CAPHO and turned over to the VA in 2017, still listed the RNCIC's ownership on one of the four lots at the Washington Co. Assessor's Office. The FNC Director will resolve this.

**MAY** - The transaction of the properties purchased from CAPHO and donated to the VA in 2017 was done properly, but not recorded correctly by the Washington County Assessor's Office. The transaction is now correct on the county records showing the United States of America as owners of the lot in question.

The RNCIC participated in a Veterans Family Festival on Saturday, May 25, Shiloh Square in Springdale and passed out its brochures. The Veterans Healthcare System of the Ozarks sponsored the event to provide area veterans with current information regarding benefits earned and available to all veterans.

Discussion began on the RNCIC having a banner or other signboard for our promotional events. The Communications Committee began work on a design, cost, etc.

**JUNE** - Vice President Merle Williams was a speaker at the Memorial Day service. RNCIC brochures (500) were inserted with the day's program.

Contact was made with Peter Christie acting for the Christie Estate regarding the sale of the property at 920 So. Hill Ave (our lot #13). Lindsey Co. and Bronson Title were also included in preparation for the closing.

The motion was made and passed that the RNCIC president or the RNCIC treasurer are both authorized to sign real estate transactions on behalf of the RNCIC.

A motion was made and passed that the RNCIC treasurer will have a cashier's check prepared for the \$80,000 agreed upon purchase price of the Christie property plus the final closing costs listed by Bronson Title.

**JULY** - Preparations for closing on the Christie property continued. Everyone was encouraged to solicit sponsors for the 5K Veterans Memorial Race to be held on Saturday, November 9, 2019.

**AUGUST** - Closing on 920 So. Hill (our lot #13) took place on August 2, 2019, for a final amount of \$80,509.27. Arnold and Margaret Christie (both deceased) wanted their property to be sold for the Fayetteville National Cemetery, and the heirs of their estate acknowledged and fulfilled their request.

A discussion was held on approaching businesses and foundations, etc. for future financial support.

**SEPTEMBER** - Demolition and clearing of the property at 920 So. Hill was discussed and set for the weekend of Nov. 15-17. President Wes Stites submitted his resignation effective at the end of this year due to his promotion and increased work load at the University of Arkansas which will involve more traveling.

Treasurer Peggy McClain submitted her resignation effective at the end of this year after seven years on the job.

The FNC Director reported that awards for FNC expansion will be given Oct. 1, and work along Hill Avenue should begin in November or December. The expansion will include traditional sites, crypt in-ground sites, and a cremation columbarium, all along Hill Avenue. The maintenance shop building will be moved to the southwest corner.

The FNC Director also reported that by the VA's fiscal year end on Sept. 30, 2019, there will be an estimated 500 total burials this year at the Cemetery. This includes in-ground burials and cremations, veterans and spouses.

**OCTOBER** - The need for a volunteer race coordinator was expressed if the race is to continue due to the amount of organizational work required.

Preparation continued for organization of volunteers to assist Steve Real who offered his equipment and time to tear down the house, etc. on the Christie property #13 on the weekend of November 15-17.

It was noted that in addition to the resignations of the president and the treasurer, the vice president, Merle Williams, offered his resignation effective at the end of this year. The thinking was that this would open up the slate of officers to the younger members.

**NOVEMBER** - The 11th annual Veterans Memorial 5K Race was held on November 9, 2019, at 8 a.m. beginning at the main gate of the FNC.

**DECEMBER** - Peggy presented the 2019 Race Summary with 134 runners registered. Sponsorships/donations were down significantly at \$14,010; race entry fees were \$2,800; in-kind donations were \$11,426 for total race contributions of \$28,236. After expenses of \$3,549, the final cash profit was \$13,261. Discussion of future races will be handled by the new Board at the January 2020 meeting.

A motion was made and passed to authorize the RNCIC to get outside bids and hire a company for total clean-up of the Christie property.

The Nominating Committee submitted their report for the names of four members to be submitted for the RNCIC Board of Directors at the January 2020 general meeting.

Wes appointed three members for the Audit Committee to review the 2019 Financial Reports after the January meeting or as soon as the books are closed for the year.

One new property was acquired in 2019. Our lot #13 at 920 So. Hill Avenue, the Estate of Arnold and Margaret Christie, was purchased from the family and closed on August 2, 2019.

Membership Data - Year end 2012 - 21 members, Year end 2013 - 30 members, Year end 2014 - 25 members, Year end 2015 - 31 members, Year end 2016 - 31 members, Year end 2017 - 34 members, Year end 2018 - 36 members, Year end 2019 - 40 members  
Attendance at monthly meetings averaged 17

Life Members added this year - Christian Rohrbach, Scott & Susan Rogerson and John & Melee Barnes

## 2020

### 2020 Annual Report for the office of Secretary

**JANUARY** - The RNCIC Annual Meeting was held with the Nominating Committee presenting the name of four members for the Board of Directors. Those elected were: Jake Lamkins, Jerry Quarles, Steve Real, and Grant Siemens for three year terms (2020-21-22). The nominations were approved, and the four above mentioned members were elected and installed.

Skip Solomon, FNC Director, reported that excavation of the FNC property along Hill Avenue has begun in preparation for pouring concrete. Crypts will be arriving soon with estimated completion by the end of 2020.

The maintenance shed will be moved to the SW corner lot. The FNC has expressed their interest in Lot #7 on 11th Street; and also getting access to the north through Lots #6 and #9A.

At the BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING the Board elected the following officers and they were installed for 2020: Steve Real, President; Tim Burnett, Vice President; Lorna Sterrett, Secretary; and Peggy McClain, Treasurer. Peggy had submitted her resignation in September 2019; however, with no nominations or acceptances to fill her vacancy, Peggy consented to remain in the position for up to two months longer until a replacement can be found.

**FEBRUARY** - Harold Crivello, former treasurer and lifetime member of the RNCIC, announced his upcoming move to Texas. A Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Harold in recognition of his 27 years of service to the RNCIC. He will be missed.

The Audit Committee reported that the 2019 financial records were accurate and signed off by the committee members.

The creation of an SOP, Standard Operating Procedure Book, was discussed to give new leaders in the RNCIC the procedures followed in the past. This would include purchasing and closing on land, etc. plus numerous other practices and procedures.

The meeting date of the RNCIC was discussed and changed from the second Saturday of the month to the third Saturday of the month in order to support the American Legion Post 27 Auxiliary's breakfast which is held monthly on the third Saturday. This change will be effective with the March 2020 meeting.

**MARCH** - With the arrival of the Covid 19 pandemic all social



Steve Real (L) and Peggy McClain at the Jan 2020 RNCIC Board meeting.

Steve had just been elected to the Board and was also elected President, an office he still holds in May 2022.

Peggy did not stand for reelection as RNCIC treasurer at this meeting.

She had been our treasurer since succeeding Harold Crivello in Jan 2015 and was the main fundraiser for the 5K Race.

She and her husband are the longest serving members of the Board, having been on it since the late 1980s. They are still on the Board in May 2022.

gatherings and meetings were put to a halt. There were no inperson meetings in order to follow social distancing guidelines for the remainder of 2020.

**OCTOBER** - Zoom meetings via the internet were initiated in October by President Steve Real with four members participating. With there not being a quorum, official business was not conducted.

Peggy emailed monthly Financial Statements and graciously has kept the office of treasurer going during the year, long past her announced resignation in September 2019.

It was not possible to conduct a 5K Race this year in November, so other methods of virtual fund raising were discussed.

The Christie property at 920 So. Hill Ave. (our Lot #13) which we purchased in August 2019, remains to be cleared before we can turn it over to the VA's National Cemetery Association for the Fayetteville National Cemetery.

**NOVEMBER** - A Zoom meeting via the internet was held with seven Board member and two RNCIC members participating. Since there was a quorum of seven Board members, business was conducted.

Steve will be working on a Virtual Fund Raising letter going out to all past race participants, race sponsors, RNCIC members, and other groups asking for their consideration of financial support in lieu of the 5K race this year.

There was a unanimous vote to secure the four storage boxes which were turned over to the U of A Special Collections Library in February 2019. All data storage boxes will be retained by the Secretary so as to be useful for future reference when needed.

**DECEMBER** - A Zoom meeting was held on the regular meeting date in December, but since there was not a quorum, a special Zoom meeting was set up for December 30.

Skip Solomon, the Fayetteville National Cemetery director, reported that work on the Hill Ave. properties (our previously donated lots #14-18) is now complete. After release from the VA to the FNC the area will be ready for burials by summer 2021. It will include burial spaces in the form of 936 crypts, 104 traditional, 450 in-ground cremations, and 600 columbarium.

A Nominating Committee was appointed to secure the names of members to be submitted for the RNCIC Board of Directors at the January 2021 general meeting.

An Audit Committee was appointed to review the 2020 financial reports after the January meeting or as soon as the books are closed for the year.

Ideas for a new revised RNCIC brochure were discussed for completion in the year 2021.

No new properties acquired in the year 2020

42 memberships at year end 2020. Life Members added this year: J. J. Lamkins and Jannie Layne

## 2021

### 2021 Annual Report for the office of Secretary

**JANUARY** - The RNCIC Annual Meeting was held with the Nominating Committee presenting the names of four members for the Board of Directors for three year terms (21-22-23). Those elected were: Jannie Layne, Roger McClain, Jay Stout and Merle Williams.

Skip Solomon, FNC Director, reported that he has accepted a position with the NCA Memorial Program Support. A new Cemetery director will be appointed in the future, and will join us as ex-officio member of the Board of the RNCIC.

At the BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING the Board elected the following officers and they were installed for 2020: Steve Real, President; Jay Stout, Vice President; Lorna Sterrett,

Secretary-Treasurer. The office of Vice President was assigned a new role for Membership Recruitment.

**FEBRUARY** - Jay reported on work he has done to get RNCIC's name listed for "NWA Gives Day" event called "Pure Charity." It is a virtual fundraising event on April 8 to provide all NWA nonprofits help in funding.

**MARCH** - Jay secured three bids for final clearing services of the property at 920 So. Hill. The bid was awarded to Sizemore Bros. Excavating for \$1,800 upon unanimous vote from the Board. The Christie property at 920 So. Hill Ave. (our Lot #13) which we purchased in August 2019, remains to be cleared before we can turn it over to the VA's National Cemetery Association for the Fayetteville National Cemetery.

Annual Reports were sent out on February 22 with reports from the Secretary, Treasurer, and the Webmaster.

Jay presented a final draft brochure to update the RNCIC brochure. A revised map of the Cemetery was presented. An email account RNCICorg@gmail.com was established. The City of Fayetteville's future name change from Government Ave. to LTC Leroy Pond Ave was included. The Board voted to accept the brochure as final and awarded the printing to Data Forms. The cost of the brochures was covered by a donation from a Board member.

Upon great discussion the Board voted unanimously to permanently cancel the annual 5K Race for the future. It was considered to be too much volunteer effort for the financial return.

The subject of Board members not actively participating in the monthly Board meeting was discussed. The RNCIC By-Laws state that a Board member can be removed by vote of the Board if he/she has not attended four (4) consecutive Board meetings. With there being four such members, Steve will contact them.

A new FNC Director, Anton McBride, will begin service on April 11, 2021.

**APRIL** - Difficulty in reaching a quorum for Board meetings has led to the following contacts being made by Steve: Jerry Quarles, Tim Burnett, Grant Siemens, and Wes Stites.

Jay reported on an event called Heroes & Hot Rods of the Ozarks to be held June 26-27 at the Holland Barn Venue in Highfill, AR. It will be a free event for our participation with a booth.

**MAY** - Upon research of interest rates on our checking account the Board approved moving the checking account to a Money

Market account for a better interest return. It was also approved to move some funds into a short-term Certificate of Deposit when the rates move upward.

With consent from Jerry Quarles, Wes Stites, and Tim Burnett to relinquish their seats on the RNCIC Board of Directors, their resignations were accepted. The following were elected to serve the remaining terms on the Board: Steven Long, Erin Mize, and John Barnes.

Discussion began on a new Website for development.

**JUNE** - Grant Siemens resigned his seat on the RNCIC Board of Directors. Dan Webb was nominated and elected to fill this term.

The RNCIC Board meetings were moved back to the second Saturday of each month instead of the third Saturday of the month. The noise level from the AL Legion breakfast proved to be too great and distracting to conduct business.

**JULY** - Anton McBride, FNC Director, has submitted the RNCIC's letter to offer the property at 920 So. Hill Ave. to the VA in Washington D.C.

**AUGUST** - Jake has posted a Second Edition of the RNCIC History Book on the web site for review by the Board.

Anton reported that the NCA has acknowledged our offer to donate land and the offer has been passed on to Washington D.C. Our district engineer will be here in October to view the property.

With work progressing on the new website, and motion was made and passed by the Board to allocate up to \$800.00 for a three-year contract for host and domain services plus the email change for converting RNCIC.com to RNCIC.org.

**SEPTEMBER** - Discussion was held by the Board on IRS regulations for acknowledging In-Kind Donations. Letters from those wishing an In-Kind Donation letter from the RNCIC must be submitted to the treasurer by the end of the calendar year in order for a letter to be issued by the RNCIC Treasurer by January 31 of the following calendar year.

**OCTOBER** - The second edition of the History Book has been printed. Distribution will take place at the November meeting. With 200 copies being ordered the extra copies may be used for publicity at promotional events with a donation being suggested. The printing of the books was paid for by two RNCIC Board members, (*Jake Lamkins and Lorna Sterrett*) and any remaining receipts/donations for books will be deposited in the RNCIC bank account.

The new Website is mostly complete. Board members will be able to view the contents and make their recommendation or comments for the committee before final submission.

The Standard Operation Procedure SOP is still under consideration pending review and comments by the Board on the draft.

**NOVEMBER** - A letter of resignation was received in October from Jay Stout indicating his resignation from Board and therefore from the office of Vice President.

A Nominating Committee was appointed to secure the names of members to be submitted for the RNCIC Board of Directors at the January 2022 annual meeting.

An Audit Committee was appointed to review the 2021 financial records after the close of the calendar/fiscal year. The audit will take place after the January meeting.

The president would like to develop a new position for a Social Media Coordinator, and establish a committee for the purpose of developing Fund Raising Events in 2022.

**DECEMBER** - Anton McBride, FNC Director, reported that the NCA has our donation papers for our lot #13 and it is in process.

A new RNCIC website developed with the expertise of Kim Norris is being finalized and hopefully will be activated in January 2022.

The Standard Operating Procedures will be reviewed by the Board and finalized in February 2022.

A revised RNCIC brochure replacing the 3/2021 brochure will be available for approval by the Board in January 2022.

Fund raising events will receive a concentrated effort in 2022.

One new property acquired in the year 2021 at 920 So. Hill Avenue, formerly owned by Arnold and Margaret Christie.

48 memberships at year end 2021

3 Life Members added this year:

Roman Green  
MOPH 460 Prairie Grove, AR  
Dan Webb

Respectfully submitted,  
Lorna Sterrett, Secretary

\* \* \*

## NOTES ON THE RNCIC HISTORY, THIRD EDITION

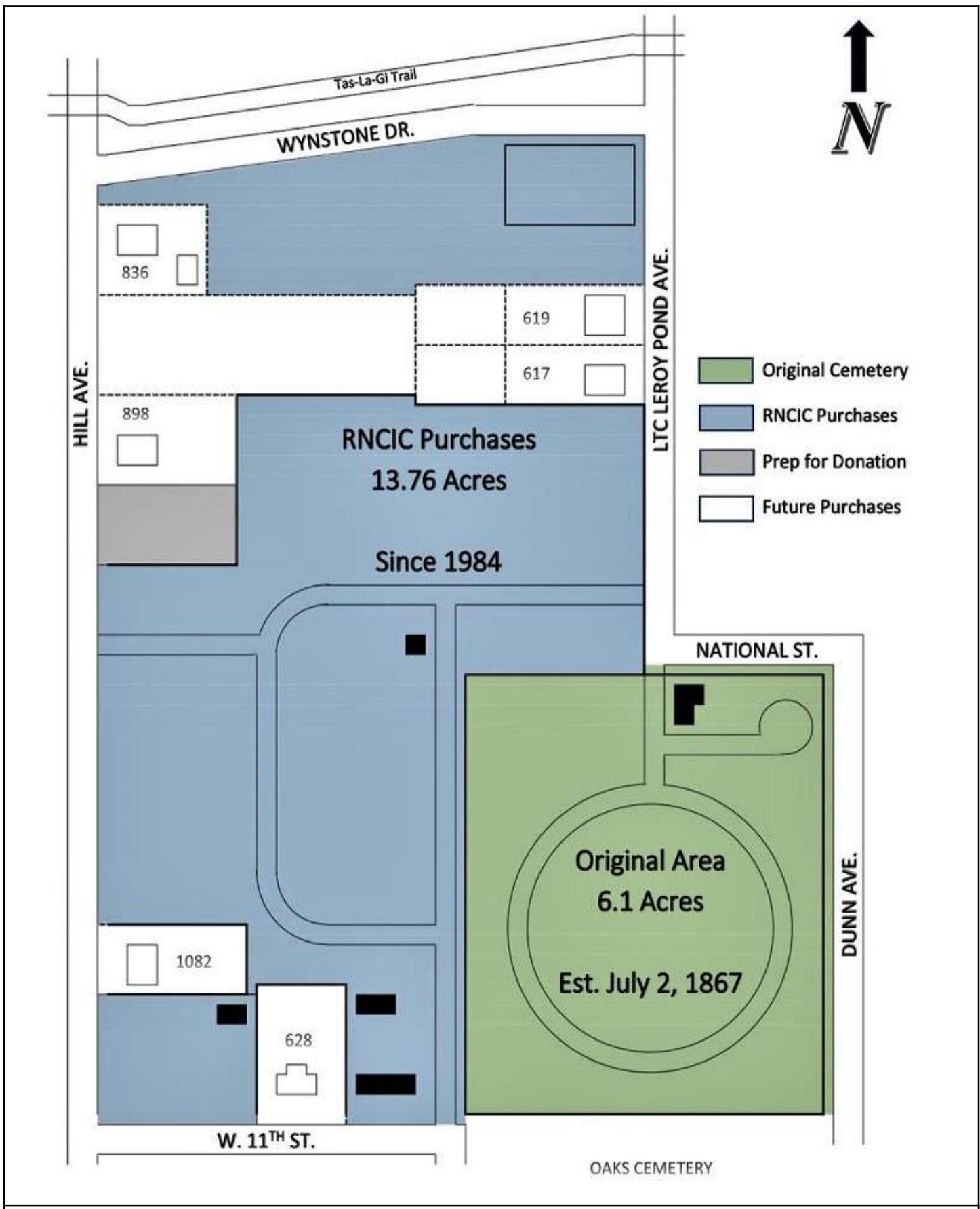
Long time secretary and lifetime member Lorna Sterrett left the RNCIC Board at the January 2022 Board of Directors meeting. She did not seek re-election to the Board or to any office. She is moving out of our area to be closer to her daughter. We wish her the best in her move and salute her with a huge THANK YOU for all her support and efforts while active in the RNCIC. Her photo is on page 36. The second edition was dedicated to her

This Third Edition of the RNCIC history is dedicated to Ron Butler whose tireless efforts as our president were an inspiration to all of us. He oversaw our substantial additions to the cemetery during his terms of office.



After he was elected RNCIC President in January 2011, Ron later started issuing an annual President's Report which covered all his presidential activities for the year. His first report was given in January 2013 and he continued until January 2018 when he did not seek re-election. He asked the other officers to do the same and they did. Those reports included the Secretary's Reports by Lorna Sterrett which were added to this history last year in the second edition. In this third edition I have added all six of Ron's President's Reports and the last reports by Lorna Sterrett. Subsequent RNCIC Presidents did not continue the practice of giving annual reports.

-Jake LAMKINS  
May 2022



This graphic shows the cemetery status as of May 2022. The lot in gray on the left has been tendered to the Veterans Administration and they are now processing the paperwork to include it in the cemetery. Fayetteville re-named Government Avenue to LTC Leroy Pond Avenue on April 16, 2022 to honor a local hero slain in World War II.

# RNCIC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Steve Real, President**

Elected to the Board Jan 18, 2020  
Term ends Jan 2023

**Peggy McClain**

Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012  
Re-elected Jan 15, 2022  
Term ends Jan 2024

**John Barnes, Vice President**

Elected to the Board May 15, 2021  
Term ends Jan 2023

**Roger McClain**

Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012  
Re-elected Jan 16, 2021  
Term ends Jan 2024

**Christine Thompson, Secretary**

Elected to the Board Jan 15, 2022  
Term ends Jan 2025

**Dan Webb**

Elected to the Board Jun 18, 2021  
Term ends Jan 2023

**Steve Long, Treasurer**

Elected to the Board May 15, 2021  
Re-elected Jan 15, 2022  
Term ends Jan 2025

**Merle Williams**

Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012  
Re-elected Jan 16, 2021  
Term ends Jan 2024

**Jake Lamkins**

Elected to the Board Jan 14, 2012  
Re-elected Jan 18, 2020  
Term ends Jan 2023

**Anton McBride, *ex officio***

Director -  
Fayetteville National Cemetery

**Cliff Madewell**

Elected to the Board Jan 15, 2022  
Term ends Jan 2025

*Two Board vacancies:*

*One with term ending Jan 2024 and  
one with term ending Jan 2025.*

May 2022

# RNCIC LIFE MEMBERS

JAKE LAMKINS	HAROLD CRIVELLO
LORNA STERRETT	GRANT & KIMBERLEE SIEMENS
LYNN & RON BUTLER	ROBERT HALVORON
MERLE WILLIAMS	STEVE LONG
ELMER OMOHUNDRO*	CAROL BISHOP
CHARLES & MARY COTTON	SCOTT & SUSAN ROGERSON
GARY CULP	CHRISTIAN ROHRBACH
JEAN & LUVERNE INDORF	JOHN & MELEE BARNES
AMERICAN LEGION POST 36	CATHLEEN LOWE
JIM GLOVER	STEVE REAL
WILLIS COOPER*	WYATT GREEN
RENEE & TERRY HUNT	MARILYN HENDRICKS
BELLA VISTA MOAA	JAMES & PAMELA KNIPPEL
RICHARD CHRISTIE	J J LAMKINS
LINDA & ROBERT OSBURN	JANNIE LAYNE
WILLIAM & KAREN CRAWLEY	ROMAN GREEN
PAULA MARTUCCI	PRAIRIE GROVE MOPH 460
BO'S BLESSING	DAN WEBB
RICHARD GRUNWALD	* Deceased

