

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: October 25, 2012

From: Director, Chicago Audits and Evaluations Operations Division (52CH)

Subj: Close-out Memorandum: Review of Alleged Manipulation of Gravesite Reporting Errors at the National Cemetery Administration (Project No. 2012-03705-R4-0198)

To: Director, Hotline Division (53E)

Thru: Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations (52A)

1. In July 2012, the Chicago Audits and Evaluations Operation Division initiated a review of an allegation that National Cemetery Administration (NCA) executive staff manipulated the reporting errors for NCA's Internal Gravesite Review. According to the complainant, NCA executive staff micro-managed the review by instructing cemetery directors to limit the number of errors identified and reported to the Memorial System Network (MSN). The complainant alleged that a deliberate attempt was made to minimize the number of reported errors for Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, TX. In addition, the complainant stated that NCA executive staff had a major impact on gravesite review results for Golden Gate and Riverside National Cemeteries, located in San Bruno and Riverside, CA, respectively.
2. To address the allegation, we reviewed policies, procedures, and guidelines pertaining to NCA's Internal Gravesite Review. We conducted interviews with the directors and staff who participated in the reviews at each of the three cemeteries cited in the allegation. In addition, we visited and interviewed MSN 5 staff in Oakland, CA because the facility is responsible for two of the three cemeteries named in the allegation. We also reviewed and analyzed the results from NCA's Internal Gravesite Review for the three cemeteries included in the allegation.
3. We found no evidence to support NCA executive leadership instructed cemetery and MSN staff to manipulate the number of discrepancies or errors identified during the gravesite review. Consequently, we did not substantiate the allegation and make no recommendations related to the issue that NCA executive staff manipulated the reporting errors for NCA's Internal Gravesite Review.
4. However, MSN 5 did not adequately report the number of discrepancies identified at the Los Angeles National Cemetery during Phase Two of NCA's Internal Gravesite Review. Once we identified this reporting issue for the Los Angeles National Cemetery, we analyzed and compared the Phase One and Phase Two review results sent to MSN staff from 12 additional cemeteries. We determined the reporting errors identified at Los Angeles National Cemetery were an isolated incident and not considered systemic. NCA has not finalized or reported the Phase Two results but we continue to follow up with MSN 5 and cemetery staff to ensure appropriate action is taken to correct the Phase Two results for the Los Angeles National

Cemetery. In addition, we are conducting a national audit that will address NCA's gravesite reporting errors. Identifying all gravesite errors and taking corrective actions will ensure veterans and their families are properly honored with final resting places that commemorate their service to our Nation.

5. If you have any questions, or would like to discuss the review, please contact Ms. Jennifer Roberts, Audit Manager, at (b) (6), or me at (b) (6).

(Original Signed by)
CHERIE PALMER