

Fargo National Veterans Cemetery

On Sept 7, 2019, the Department of Veterans Affairs will dedicate a new Veterans National Cemetery at 8709 40 Ave N, County Road 20, Harwood, ND. Funds were authorized and the VA purchased the land in June 2016 for \$93,445. The land is 4.82 acres and will serve burial needs for more than 30,000 Veterans, spouses and eligible family members. It will be the first Veterans National Cemetery in North Dakota, similar to the Ft Snelling National Cemetery in Minnesota. The cemetery is part of the VA National Cemetery Administration Rural Initiative to provide access to VA burial benefits for Veterans who reside in rural areas and who have not previously had reasonable access to a national Veterans cemetery. Cemetery construction was done by Valiant Construction from Louisville, KY and the design consultant was Anderson Engineering of Plymouth, MN. The cemetery will provide casket burials, in-ground cremation burials, columbarium niches for cremation burials and a memorial wall. This is a National cemetery. The one by Bismarck is a State Veterans Cemetery. National Veterans Cemeteries are open to eligible Veterans, so I expect some MN Veterans will choose to be buried at the Fargo Veterans National Cemetery. The VA, as with all Federal agencies has rules governing the naming of cemeteries which must represent the geographic area of the locale.

The United Patriotic Bodies have taken on the project of providing honor guard services for burials at the cemetery. The United Patriotic Bodies' membership includes a representative from the American Legion, VFW, American Veterans (AMVETS), Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and Vietnam Veterans of American (VVA) of Dilworth, Moorhead, Fargo, West Fargo and Harwood.

The United Patriotic Bodies' members will serve as honor guard for burials. Honor guards will provide bugle service, rifle firing and flag folding for the deceased Veteran. The Patriotic Bodies decided to use a unique uniform for their duties along with head gear of the members' home post or chapter. In order to purchase uniforms, the Patriot Bodies is holding fund raising activities. The first will be a 'Pasta with Patriots' for the Fargo Memorial Honor Guard, sponsored by the Dilworth Lions and held at the Dilworth VFW Post, 1505 Center Ave W in Dilworth. The meal will be served from 5:30pm to 7:30pm. Along with the meal, there will be a silent auction with many wonderful donated items from local members and organizations. The Fargo Memorial Honor Guard organization is in the process on incorporating with the State of North Dakota and applying for IRS 501(c)3 status as a charitable organization.

For more information, contact me by email the United Patriotic Bodies or your local Veterans post or chapter.