

September 9, 2013

National Cemetery Administration
OMB Generic Clearance No.: 2900-0571

Re: Response to OMB – NCA Surveys of Satisfaction

The Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration (NCA) is seeking approval of its Customer Satisfaction Survey plan for years 2014 – 2016. On August 26, 2013, Faith Walden, NCA Program Analyst, participated in a conference call with the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Desk Officers, Bridget Dooling and Brian Harris-Kojetin to discuss the survey collection(s). During the discussion, the OMB team clarified the Generic Clearance process and reviewed the NCA survey instruments posted in the Regulatory Information Service Center and Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs Combined Information System. There were two issues identified and listed below that emerged from the discussion about the survey and requires further clarification from NCA representatives:

- Provide NCA past benefits and use of the survey reports, results and metrics.
- Clarify the design of the NCA National Survey of Satisfaction whereby the Next of Kin and Funeral Directors questions are combined as one instrument. OMB staff inquired about NCA's willingness to separate the survey into two independent surveys for future iterations.

NCA survey results and metrics provide feedback for the purpose of maintaining standards of excellence. Monitoring the perceptions and satisfaction of Veterans, their families and the funeral directors who act as their agents allows NCA to make the changes necessary to provide the best possible benefits and services. Since its inception in 2001, NCA has used the results from the surveys to develop action plans for continuous improvement efforts and to establish bench marks of excellence to establish best practices for use throughout the NCA network. Further, several NCA key strategic performance measures are derived from the survey's results that support the mission and vision of the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs.

To the extent that NCA has to modify the design of the survey as we believe that the current format has not negatively impacted participant response. Additionally, separating the surveys would incur additional costs in postage, printing, employee and contractor support. Currently, NCA is considering methods to decrease survey costs by offering an online option which should decrease postage and contractor support time.

It is imperative that NCA continues to assess customer satisfaction with future iterations of the survey as a way to maintain consistency with the overall mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs.