

By Representative Jordan

House Resolution

1
2 A resolution urging the President and Congress
3 of the United States to direct the Secretary of
4 Veterans Affairs to establish a national
5 cemetery in Duval County, Florida, to serve the
6 needs of veterans and their families in
7 northeast Florida and southeast Georgia.

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9 WHEREAS, veteran deaths are increasing each year,
10 especially as World War II and Korean War era veterans
11 continue to advance in age, resulting in a corresponding
12 increase in the demand of burial services in national
13 cemeteries, and

14 WHEREAS, based on 1990 national census data, annual
15 veteran deaths are not expected to peak until the year 2008
16 before beginning a possible decline; during the next decade,
17 annual deaths are expected to increase 10.5 percent from a
18 total of 561,000 in 1999 to 620,000 in 2008, notwithstanding
19 any future national emergencies, and

20 WHEREAS, according to the Florida Department of
21 Veterans' Affairs, one out of every ten veteran deaths
22 nationally is a resident of Florida at time of interment, and

23 WHEREAS, Florida has the second largest population of
24 veterans, totaling 1.7 million, with more than 6,500 veterans
25 and family members being laid to rest at Bushnell and Bay
26 Pines national cemeteries in the year 2000, and

27 WHEREAS, Florida's two smaller national cemeteries at
28 Pensacola and St. Augustine have reached capacity and are
29 already closed, and

30 WHEREAS, South Florida was recently awarded a national
31 cemetery following nearly 14 years of being identified as a

1 geographic area in which the need for burial space for
2 veterans was greatest, and
3 WHEREAS, Governor Jeb Bush praised the efforts of the
4 Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs in helping secure
5 federal funding and raising the awareness of the need for a
6 national cemetery in South Florida, and
7 WHEREAS, the National Cemetery Administration considers
8 the burial needs of veterans to be met for those veterans that
9 have reasonable access to a burial option, meaning that a
10 first interment option in a national or state veterans'
11 cemetery is available within 75 miles of the veteran's place
12 of residence, and
13 WHEREAS, the nearest open national cemeteries serving
14 northeast Florida and southeast Georgia veterans are located
15 in Bushnell, Florida, a distance of 150 miles, and Marietta,
16 Georgia, a distance of 365 miles, and
17 WHEREAS, according to the National Cemetery
18 Administration, the development of new national cemeteries
19 generally takes five to seven years for establishment, and
20 WHEREAS, according to the Florida Department of
21 Veterans' Affairs, in 2000 there were more than 325,000
22 veterans from Florida and Georgia living within 75 miles of
23 Duval County, and
24 WHEREAS, the Jacksonville City Council recently adopted
25 a resolution in support of building a new national cemetery in
26 Duval County and urging federal legislation to accomplish this
27 goal, NOW, THEREFORE,
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29 Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
30 Florida:
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1 That the President and Congress of the United States be
2 urged to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish
3 a national cemetery in Duval County, Florida, to serve the
4 needs of veterans and their families in northeast Florida and
5 southeast Georgia.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution
7 be transmitted to the President of the United States, the
8 President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the
9 United States House of Representatives, and to each member of
10 the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.

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