

By Representative Jordan

## 1 House Memorial

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

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

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

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

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

28 WHEREAS, Florida has two smaller national cemeteries at  
29 Pensacola and St. Augustine; Pensacola is nearing capacity and  
30 St. Augustine is already closed, and

31

1           WHEREAS, South Florida was recently awarded a national  
2 cemetery following nearly 14 years of being identified as a  
3 geographic area in which the need for burial space for  
4 veterans was greatest, and

5           WHEREAS, Governor Jeb Bush praised the efforts of the  
6 Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs in helping secure  
7 federal funding and raising the awareness of the need for a  
8 national cemetery in South Florida, and

9           WHEREAS, the National Cemetery Administration considers  
10 the burial needs of veterans to be met for those veterans that  
11 have reasonable access to a burial option, meaning that a  
12 first interment option in a national or state veterans'  
13 cemetery is available within 75 miles of the veteran's place  
14 of residence, and

15           WHEREAS, the nearest open national cemeteries serving  
16 northeast Florida and southeast Georgia veterans are located  
17 in Bushnell, Florida, a distance of 150 miles, and Marietta,  
18 Georgia, a distance of 365 miles, and

19           WHEREAS, according to the National Cemetery  
20 Administration, the development of new national cemeteries  
21 generally takes five to seven years for establishment, and

22           WHEREAS, according to the Florida Department of  
23 Veterans' Affairs, there are more than 325,000 veterans from  
24 Florida and Georgia living within 75 miles of Duval County,  
25 and

26           WHEREAS, the Jacksonville City Council recently adopted  
27 a resolution in support of building a new national cemetery in  
28 Duval County and urging federal legislation to accomplish this  
29 goal, NOW, THEREFORE,

30

31 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 memorial be  
7 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.

11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31