

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO DETERMINE APPROPRIATE PROCEDURES TO ACCOMMODATE THE BURIAL OF VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE FAMILY MEMBERS AT THE FORT STANTON CEMETERY.

WHEREAS, on November 10, 2010, the board of regents of the museum of New Mexico voted to close the Fort Stanton cemetery to future burials of all but deceased merchant marines, spouses of merchant marines or individuals associated with the Fort Stanton hospital prior to its closure in 1954; and

WHEREAS, this decision effectively precludes interment in the cemetery of honorably discharged veterans and their eligible family members; and

WHEREAS, this decision closes the Fort Stanton cemetery to dependents and veterans who have a spouse already interred in the cemetery and who have a burial plot reserved for future use by the living spouse or veteran; and

WHEREAS, out of respect for those veterans already buried at the Fort Stanton cemetery and in consideration of the growing shortage of burial sites for veterans in the state and nation, volunteers who maintain the cemetery have coordinated the burial of veterans and eligible family members with several state agencies for the past several years, with

very little cost to the state; and

WHEREAS, the Fort Stanton cemetery has been under the authority of a number of state agencies, including the corrections department and the veterans' services department, since the federal government deeded the property to the state in 1953; and

WHEREAS, the first military burial at the cemetery was in 1918, and veterans and their dependents have continuously been buried in the cemetery since it has been owned by the state of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the cemetery is included in the national register of historic places; and

WHEREAS, the cemetery is currently the responsibility of the state monuments division of the cultural affairs department;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the cultural affairs department be requested to conduct a study to determine appropriate procedures to accommodate the burial of veterans and eligible family members at the Fort Stanton cemetery; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the cultural affairs department consult with the veterans' services department to identify and consider special needs and desires regarding burial of veterans in New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study explore the potential for federally assisted expansion of the Fort Stanton cemetery to accommodate burial of veterans and their eligible family members other than merchant marines, family members of merchant marines and individuals associated with the Fort Stanton hospital prior to its closure in 1954; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the name of the cemetery be officially changed to "Fort Stanton State Veteran's Cemetery"; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of cultural affairs and the secretary of veterans' services.