

FROM THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR DUKAKIS

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BOURNE-Governor Michael Dukakis announced Friday that a portion of Otis Air Force Base will become a National Cemetery and signed a document which will allow the state to transfer the 750-acre site to the National Cemetery Service.

During ceremonies at Otis Air Force Base the Governor said, "I'm very pleased to announce that a group of federal, state and local officials have agreed to transform a vacant field into a national cemetery to commemorate the patriotism and courage of New England's 1,900,000 veterans."

The cemetery, the first military cemetery ever established in New England, will eventually comprise some 360,000 gravesites, a \$2.5 million visitor center, and a shrine.

"A group of community leaders really provided the impetus for this whole project," said the Governor. "Representative Richard Kendall of Falmouth, and the Task Force on Otis Air Force Base, chaired by Jeremiah Cahir, spent hundreds of hours with us and the Veterans Administration to put surplus land at Otis to what everyone agrees is the best possible use.

"This project should significantly improve the economy of the Upper Cape. The Federal Government will pay its entire cost, which is estimated at \$16 million. And the cemetery will eventually employ 150 full-time workers, attract millions of tourists, and provide jobs for the construction industry over the next four years," Dukakis added.

The Otis site, which is about the size of Arlington National Cemetery, will be developed in stages. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the first stage of the cemetery, which will include 20 acres of gravesites and the administration buildings, are scheduled for the summer of 1976.

According to the National Cemetery Service's proposed timetable, the second stage, including the visitor center and the shrine, should be completed by the fall of 1977. The first 250 acres will be completely developed by June, 1979.

The National Cemetery Service will begin design work on the project as soon as it receives the deed to the area from the Military Reservations Commission of Massachusetts. The MRC, which has already stated that the land is not needed for military purposes, is expected to transfer the deed sometime next week.

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