

**Washington, DC** – Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-1), Chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, released the following statement today after a [TIME magazine press report](#) uncovered additional, egregious errors surfacing at Arlington National Cemetery:

“The continuous stream of unconscionable mistakes and cover-ups at Arlington National Cemetery simply cannot stand. This blatant lack of respect to our fallen American heroes and their families flies in the face of this country’s commitment of unconditional respect and honor for those who have fought and died for our freedom. Today, we again read more heart-wrenching stories of families suffering because of the carelessness of those managing our nation’s most solemn burial ground. As recently as the burial of those lost on 9/11, the cemetery failed our nation’s most-honored service members. It is hard to state in words the absolute sadness I feel for these families that have been disrespected by our country’s own military leadership.

TIME magazine today cited records explaining the mistakes: “Urns were sometimes scooped up by backhoes and dumped into a landfill” while Arlington workers reacted, “... *We just screwed up* .”

“This will not stand. After hearing of these additional reports, I am not convinced that the Army is doing everything it must do to resolve issues such as records management and gravesite accountability. During my earlier visit in March to the National Cemetery, we were led to believe that the new leadership at Arlington appeared to be making good progress on tackling existing issues and challenges. These reports today call their leadership into question. I am also angered that those responsible for the systemic failures at Arlington have not been adequately held accountable for their actions, either in a criminal or civil context. We owe it to our brave men and women and their families who have all sacrificed on behalf of our nation to do everything possible to right these wrongs. This will require a full and complete accounting of what happened and an assurance that wrongs will be righted and that this will never happen again. I plan to address these issues during the upcoming hearing and I will not be satisfied until we have restored full faith and confidence in Arlington operations. More significantly, I will do all that I can to ensure their concerns are resolved.”

The House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations will hold a hearing on April 14, 2011, to address record-keeping and mismanagement, the accountability of sites and disciplinary actions taken.

“As Chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, I have directed the execution of an ongoing investigation to examine the framework and decision-making processes that resulted in systemic operational failure at Arlington National Cemetery. The assessment will address all aspects of cemetery operations and management, and proffer recommendations on systemic improvements. It will also consider the pro-bono evaluation of cemetery operations conducted at Senator Warner’s request by the Northern Virginia Technology Council. The investigation will consider if the management changes and structural modifications put in place recently are adequate. It will also determine if current departmental and Congressional oversight mechanisms are adequate to prevent recurrence of past problems. Nothing less than absolute resolution of existing problems and full accountability for all of those involved in the problems and mismanagement will be acceptable,” Wittman added.

Wittman visited Arlington National Cemetery on March 10, 2011, visiting with Kathryn Condon, the new Executive Director of the Army National Cemeteries Program.

In December 2010, the President signed into law legislation passed through Congress to better identify and code remains at Arlington National Cemetery.

*VIDEO:* [Wittman Speaks on Arlington Cemetery Accountability Legislation in December 2010](#)

*RELEASE:* [Wittman Presses for House Action on Arlington Cemetery Accountability](#)

*VIDEO:* [Wittman questions Army Secretary John McHugh in June 2010](#)