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PRESS RELEASE

Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery Receives Operational Excellence Award from National Cemetery Administration

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AUSTIN — Today, the Veterans Land Board (VLB) is proud to announce that the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery in Killeen has been honored with the prestigious Operational Excellence Award by the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Operational Excellence Award is bestowed upon cemeteries that significantly surpass the quality standards set forth by the NCA's Compliance Review Program, which conducts thorough inspections every three years. During the recent inspection held in November 2023, the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery demonstrated unparalleled excellence across 94 standards, ranging from Customer Satisfaction to Grounds Maintenance to Interment Operations.

The award was presented by Mr. James Earp, Director of the Veterans Cemetery Grant Program at the NCA. Mr. Earp is a 20-year veteran of the United States Army.

"The goal will always be for every veteran and every family to visit the Veterans Cemetery and truly feel honored by the level of detail and excellence that goes into those programs," said Director Earp while congratulating on-site personnel Cemetery Director, Ronda Benson, Chief of Cemetery Operations, David Sanchez, Chief of Program Operations, Shane Hernandez, and On-Site Representative Manager, Doug Gault.

Texas State Veterans Cemeteries are administered by the Veterans Land Board. Speaking to the VLB, Dr. John Kelley, director of the program, reported that in 2023, the four veterans cemeteries currently operated by the VLB received a customer satisfaction rate of 99.03%, calling it "absolutely phenomenal." Director Kelley further remarked, "It's the staff at the cemeteries that earn that."

As the Chair of the VLB, Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham also offered her congratulations, saying, "I commend and offer my deepest thanks to the staff of the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery for all they do to support, honor, and love our veterans and their families. I am so proud they are receiving the national recognition they deserve."

For more information about the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery, please visit <https://vlb.texas.gov/cemeteries/locations/killeen/index.html>.