



095582

1-44-81

71-206

7

COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

APR 15 1971

B-162804

CI + R



Dear Senator Griffin:

This is in response to your letter of March 22, 1971, enclosing a letter to you from Mrs. Richard M. Upright dated March 10, 1971, and requesting that we review and comment on the Federal Government's involvement in the construction of the Robert F. Kennedy gravesite.

C2

The late Senator Robert F. Kennedy was interred in Arlington National Cemetery on June 8, 1968, in a portion of the 3.2 acres which had been set aside in memory of his brother, President John F. Kennedy. No additional land has been allocated. *p. 1952*

C3

In Public Law 91-144, dated December 11, 1969, Congress appropriated \$15,125,000 for cemeterial expenses. According to the report of the House Committee on Appropriations, this amount included \$181,000 for the Federal portion of the cost of design and construction of a permanent resting place for the late Senator Robert Kennedy in Arlington National Cemetery. The report also stated that this allowance restricted the Government's share of the cost solely to the visitor access approach walks, exit stairway, related landscaping, relocations, and related design cost, and that cost of all work in the immediate area of the grave, estimated at \$496,000, would be paid by the Kennedy family. Currently, the total estimated cost is \$747,000, of which, after allowing for the Government's share of \$181,000, the Kennedy family's portion is \$566,000. *H 300*

C4

A spokesman for the Department of the Army, in requesting this appropriation in May 1969, advised the Public Works Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations that over 5 million people had visited Arlington National Cemetery during a period of a year and that most of them had visited the Kennedy gravesites. He also stated that if a person visits the John F. Kennedy grave, it is almost a foregone conclusion that he will also visit the Robert F. Kennedy grave, primarily due to the proximity of the two. *H 310*

A publication of the Office of the Chief of Support Services, Department of the Army, dated November 1970, regarding the Kennedy graves in Arlington National Cemetery, states in part:

095582

700676

"In the years since the President and Senator were interred, millions of persons from all over the world have visited the graves annually. Just as the Government decided to provide access facilities to accommodate those coming to honor the President, the Army determined that it would be appropriate to pay from public funds the expenses related to the flow of visitors to the Senator's grave. The improvements are essential if responsible officials are to control the crowds during peak-season attendance at Arlington and to insure that cemetery grounds are not damaged."

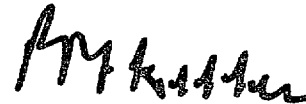
* * *

"Plans for the Robert Kennedy grave are that it will be marked by a simple white wooden cross and will be surrounded by a cluster of informally planted trees. A granite approach-walk will lead south from the President's grave to a semicircular platform and reflecting pool. A low granite wall inscribed with quotations from the Senator will be along the back of the pool. The grave will be landscaped as a natural addition to the Custis-Lee hill and the President's site. There will be a dense planting of trees between the two graves, a grove in the immediate area, and a large American Beech adjacent to the paved area to provide shelter and shade."

Army regulations state that persons who have been honorably discharged from military service and who have also held elective office in the United States Government or served in the Cabinet are among those eligible for burial in Arlington National Cemetery. Senator Kennedy was eligible for interment in Arlington National Cemetery under the above eligibility criteria by virtue of service in the United States Navy during World War II as well as in the United States Senate and in the Cabinet as Attorney General.

We hope that this information will satisfy the purpose of your inquiry.

Sincerely yours,



Assistant Comptroller General
of the United States

The Honorable Robert P. Griffin
United States Senate