

STATEMENT OF MATTHEW T. QUINN,
NOMINEE TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR MEMORIAL
AFFAIRS, NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION,
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Chairman Tester, Senator Moran, distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to once again be before this august body, although today in a much different capacity. When I previously testified, I discussed the ongoing crisis of Veteran suicides and actions we were taking in Montana to address them. Today, however, I ask for your support to serve as the Under Secretary of Memorial Affairs for the National Cemetery Administration in the Department of Veterans Affairs. If confirmed, I will work with Secretary McDonough in ensuring our Veterans are provided a final resting place that is a lasting tribute to their selfless service.

First, I must thank my family, especially my wife Jody, who is here with me today, and as importantly my children, Jon, Braeden, Maddi, Kailyn, and Megan. I truly am blessed with an incredible family who have supported me throughout my military service and continue to support me as I seek to continue my service for our Veterans and their families. As is true of so many military families, they have sacrificed so much so that I could serve in our nation's military.

For nearly 37 years, I have stood shoulder to shoulder with fellow Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen, at home and abroad. I understand the needs of our service members, their sacrifices for our nation, and the debt we owe them.

I cannot and will not forget my service in our National Guard; women and men in all 54 states, territories, and the District of Columbia who stand ready not only as the operational reserve of our US Army and US Air Force, but also respond daily to the needs of their fellow citizens here at home. I have served with them as they performed security missions in Iraq and while they provided comfort to our nursing home residents who were unable to have family visitors during the COVID pandemic. These women and men continue to faithfully serve this nation, their states, territories and the district and it has been my honor to serve alongside each of them. They are why I am able to appear before you today.

If confirmed, I commit not only to this committee, but to our Veterans and their families that the National Cemetery Administration will have as an absolute priority, national, tribal, and state Veteran cemeteries across our land at which our Veterans will be laid to rest in a place befitting their deserved honor. This is our nation's final opportunity to honor our fallen Veterans and to thank their families for their sacrifices.

Some of my most distinct memories from my time as Adjutant General for the Montana National Guard have been interment ceremonies at which I had the honor to present our nations flag to family members of fellow Veterans. The solemnity of that moment, with a family paying final tribute to the service of their loved one, will never be lost on me, and if confirmed, it is precisely that occasion, that final moment of gratitude that will carry me forward as Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs. My grandfather, Virgil Van Fossan, a World War I Veteran is buried in a Veterans cemetery, along with my grandmother, Marie. My father, Daniel John Quinn a WWII and Korean War Veteran is buried in a Montana State Veterans cemetery, along with two of his Veteran brothers, Don and Frank. I walked those grounds the other day to reflect on their service and to once again realize the importance of our nation's Veteran cemeteries.

If confirmed, you have my commitment to ensure our Veteran cemeteries and our Veteran memorial programs will forever honor those who have served. The actions taken today within the National Cemetery Administration lay the foundation for our ability to provide a final resting place and lasting tribute to their service and sacrifice.

I am truly humbled to be considered to serve as the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs and I thank Secretary McDonough and President Biden for this nomination. I ask for your support in allowing me to join with you and all our dedicated VA professionals, especially those within the National Cemetery Administration, in ensuring our Veterans are honored and remembered for their selfless service. Thank you again and I look forward to your questions.