

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Waiting on the Feds: Despite Approval, Money for New Va State Cemetery on St. Croix Won't Come This Year

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The bulk of the funding needed to construct a cemetery on St Croix solely dedicated to veterans from the U.S. Virgin Islands will not materialize this year.

The federal government [approved the money](#) for construction in February, but as Virgin Islands Office of Veterans Affairs Director Patrick Farrell told lawmakers earlier this week, “we won’t be getting those funds within the upcoming fiscal year.”

“We have the legislation, we have the land, we also have the 10 percent match — all of which is already placed in legislation ...we’re just now in the waiting stages of getting the 90 percent match from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs,” Mr. Farrell

indicated.

Speaking to members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs and Consumer Protection on Monday, the VA director said that while the state-side grant program has been allotted \$50 million this year, none of that money will go towards building new cemeteries. Instead, the federal office has decided to repair and upgrade existing veteran facilities.

“That money is going to be put towards cemeteries that are already established. They are not putting it towards any new cemeteries because there are so many cemeteries across the nation that need adjustments or renewals,” Mr. Farrell explained.

Portions of the Kings Hill Cemetery on St. Croix and the East End Cemetery on St. Thomas are crafted out for veteran burials, however there is no dedicated site locally for the men and women who serve in the U.S. military. The planned new cemetery would serve veterans for the next three decades.