The Gallup State Veterans Cemetery had its first burial July 10. It was a Columbarium interment.

The cemetery, which was opened on Memorial Day, will have 448 gravesites, 140 in-ground cremains burial sites, and 400 columbarium wall crypts. The 2.5-acre site, was funded by a $5.7 million VA Cemetery Program Grant.

It is the second of what will eventually be four state veterans cemeteries built using a State Veterans Cemetery Initiative launched by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services in 2013 to build cemeteries for rural-area veterans in New Mexico.

The first-the Ft. Stanton State Veterans Cemetery-opened in the fall of 2017. Ground was broken last October for a third cemetery in Angel Fire next to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, with completion scheduled for next spring. The fourth cemetery, currently in the pre-construction planning phase, will be built in Carlsbad.

The four cemeteries will be managed by the DVS State Benefits Division’s Cemeteries and Monuments Program.