

Burial Benefits for Veterans and Their Families

Introduction

Burial benefits are gratefully offered to eligible Veterans, their spouses and dependent children through the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA). A national cemetery burial includes:

- The gravesite
- Opening and closing of the grave
- A headstone or marker
- Perpetual care as part of a national shrine

Funeral home directors usually arrange for the following benefits by request:

- A VA-provided headstone or marker for a Veteran buried in a private cemetery anywhere in the world
- A burial flag to drape the Veteran's casket or urn during the funeral
- A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) honoring the Veteran
- Military Funeral Honors for the Veteran (e.g., burial flag folding and presentation, "Taps" played on a bugle or by recording)

Eligibility

Death certificate and the Veteran's DD Form 214 are required. Those eligible for burial benefits include:

- Active-duty members who die while serving honorably. Veterans who have served some active duty other than as a Reservist for training and were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions.
- Reservists and National Guard members who, at the time of death, were entitled to retired pay, or would have been entitled had they been over the age of 60.
- Certain National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Public Health Service (PHS) officers and WWII Merchant Mariners.
- Spouses and surviving spouses who meet eligibility requirements.
- Dependent children under age 21, under age 23 if still in school, or of any age if disabled while qualifying in one of the former categories.

Presidential Memorial Certificates (PMC)

A PMC is an engraved paper certificate that honors the memory of honorably discharged deceased Veterans who are eligible for burial in a national cemetery. Next of kin, other relatives, and friends may request PMCs and there is no time limit for requesting the certificate(s).

- PMC Request Form is online: <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-0247.pdf>
- For more information go to: www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp

Funeral and Military Honors

A military funeral and honors at national cemeteries include a committal service, reading to accompany the burial if the family chooses, burial flag and military funeral honors requested by funeral directors on behalf of family and provided by DoD (uniformed persons, Taps, rifle detail, color guard). For more information, call the nearest national cemetery or **1-800-535-1117** or visit https://www.cem.va.gov/military_funeral_honors.asp.

- To obtain a flag for a funeral, fill out [VA Form 27-2008](#). Funeral home directors usually obtain the flag (may also be secured at most U.S. Post offices and VA regional offices) and order the headstone or marker.
- If a Veteran is buried in a private cemetery, anywhere in the world, the VA provides a headstone or marker. Complete [VA Form 40-1330](#), to pre-plan headstone text.
- Additional information on headstones, markers, medallions, inscriptions, and VA Form 40-1330 can be found at <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/memorial-items/headstones-markers-medallions/>.

Burial Allowances

VA burial allowances are flat-rate monetary benefits and eligible survivors are paid automatically upon notification of a Veteran's death, without the need to submit a claim.

Benefit	Rate
Service-Connected Burial	\$2,000
Non-Service-Connected Burial (Veterans hospitalized by VA)	\$796
Non-Service-Connected Burial (Veterans not hospitalized by VA or indigent)	\$300
Plot Allowance	\$796
State Cemetery	\$796
Headstone / Marker	\$195
Philippine Half-Rate	\$398

** Rates Effective October 1, 2019*

- Apply online (equal to VA Form 21P-530 Application for Burial Benefits): <https://www.va.gov/burials-andmemorials/application/530/introduction>

Information on VA regional offices, eligibility requirements and allowances for burials:

- VA regional offices <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/?facilityType=benefits>
- Eligibility requirements www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-burial.asp
- Allowance amounts and details <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/veterans-burial-allowance/>

VA National Cemetery Administration

The VA National Cemetery Administration (NCA) maintains 143 national cemeteries in 40 states (and Puerto Rico) as well as 33 soldier's lots and monument sites across the Nation. Visit the NCA website to check for availability, planning a burial, and other valuable resources:

<https://www.cem.va.gov/resources.asp>. **Note that a full list of National Cemeteries can be found within full brochure on the WHV website.*

- **Arlington National Cemetery** is administered by the Department of the Army. Full-casket burial eligibility is much more restrictive than at VA national cemeteries. Eligibility requirements for cremated remains match those for other national cemeteries.
 - Contact: 877-907-8585 or visit <https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Funerals>
- **State Veterans Cemeteries** have similar eligibility requirements to VA national cemeteries. For burials, visit: <https://www.cem.va.gov/cems/listcem.asp> For details on Burial flags to honor Veterans and Reservists, visit www.va.gov/burials-memorials/memorial-items/burial-flags/

FAQs

What can I do now to prepare for burial in a national cemetery?

Advise your family of your wishes and tell them where your discharge papers are kept. You may wish to make pre-need arrangements with a funeral home. **To schedule a burial:** Fax all discharge documentation to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 1-866-900-6417 and follow-up with a phone call to 1-800-535-1117.

Does the VA pay for cremation or burial expenses?

The VA does not pay for cremation directly. Any item or service obtained from a funeral home will be at the families' expense. Some Veterans' families may be entitled to a burial allowance, which may cover some of these expenses.

I do not have my military discharge form (DD Form 214), how can I get a copy?

To obtain a copy of your DD Form 214, contact the National Archives at 1-866-272-6272 or visit www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records.

Important numbers and websites to know:

- U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs: 1-844-698-2311 www.va.gov
- Veterans Benefits Administration: 1-800-827-1000 benefits.va.gov/benefits/#800
- National Cemetery Administration: 1-800-535-1117, option 1 <https://www.cem.va.gov/#800>
- Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 and press 1 <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>
- Office of Survivors Assistance: <https://www.va.gov/survivors/>