

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

National Cemetery Administration

Arranging for Burial in a VA National Cemetery

- Burial in a VA national cemetery is open to all members of the armed forces and Veterans who have met minimum active duty service requirements, as applicable, and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Members of the reserve components of the armed forces who die while on active duty or who die while on training duty under certain circumstances are also eligible for burial, as are service members and former service members who were eligible for retired pay at the time of their death. A Veteran's spouse, widow or widower, minor children, and, under certain conditions, unmarried adult children with disabilities, may also be eligible for burial. Eligible spouses and children may be buried even if they predecease the Veteran.
- VA provides determinations of eligibility for burial in a national cemetery prior to the time of need to assist Veterans and their families with end-of-life planning. Interested individuals may submit VA Form 40-10007, Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery, along with a copy of supporting documentation of military service such as a DD 214, if readily available, by: toll-free fax at 1-855-840-8299; email to eligibility.preneed@va.gov; or mail to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office, P.O. Box 510543, St. Louis, MO 63151.
- If the discharge document is not available, a copy may be obtained from the National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records Office, 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, MO 63138. Additional information about requesting military personnel records is available at the National Archives website, www.archives.gov.
- Gravesites in VA national cemeteries cannot be reserved in advance of need. At the time of need, a funeral director or the next of kin should contact the National Cemetery Scheduling Office. 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. It is important to have all eligibility documentation available prior to calling.
- At the time of need, VA will provide – at no cost to the Veteran's family – a gravesite, headstone or marker, Presidential Memorial Certificate, U.S. flag, perpetual care of the gravesite and will open and close the grave. Fees for services provided by funeral directors and other related costs must be paid for by the Veteran's family.
- The Veterans Benefits Administration pays a burial and plot allowance for those Veterans who are eligible by law. For information, please contact the nearest VA regional office at 1-800-827-1000. <http://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/burials/Burial.pdf>.

- The Department of Defense (DOD) is responsible for providing military funeral honors (playing TAPS and folding Flag). The DOD program “Honoring Those Who Served” calls for funeral directors to request military funeral honors on behalf of the Veteran’s family. Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) may assist in providing military funeral honors. Additional information is available on the Internet by visiting www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil.
- Formal funeral services are not held at national cemeteries, but a final committal service may be performed at the cemetery. For safety reasons, these services are held in committal shelters located away from the gravesite. Burial will take place following the committal service. Immediate family members may be allowed to witness the interment only if arrangements have been made in advance with the cemetery director.
- National cemeteries do not normally conduct burials on weekends or federal holidays. However, weekend callers may schedule burials for the upcoming week.
- A limited number of floral arrangements may accompany the casket or urn and will be placed on the grave after burial. Floral arrangements are removed at a later date in accordance with VA’s Floral/Grounds Policy.

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