

# **After-Death Benefits for Veterans, Spouses and Eligible Dependents**

## **State Veterans Cemeteries Overseen by the Texas General Land Office**

Website: <http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/cemeteries/>

### **Veterans and Spouses of Veterans:**

Complete information about burial benefits for veterans, scheduling, and more at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov), or call 1-800-827-1000.

### **Options**

During burial arrangements the family will work with the funeral home and cemetery staff to determine the type or interment the family wishes. Options to be considered are; a full-casketed burial, in-ground burial of cremated remains, a columbarium niche for cremated remains, or the scattering of ashes in the memorial garden. Please contact the cemetery staff or the Veterans Land Board toll free at 1-800-252-VETS (8387) if you have questions about your options.

No matter which internment option the family chooses, the family may request that a final committal service be performed at the cemetery prior to interment. Military Honors are presented during this committal service. These respectful committal services are held in covered committal shelters, with the burial following at the grave site.

### **Interment Options**

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- A casketed burial. An upright marble or granite headstone is provided.
- Interment of cremated remains and placement in a columbarium. Cremation urns may be no larger than 13 inches tall, by 10 inches wide, by 9 inches deep. A marble or granite niche cover is provided.
- Interment of cremated remains and placement in an in-ground burial section. A marble or granite marker is provided.
- Scattering of cremated remains in the scattering garden. A marble or granite marker is provided in the memorial section.

### **Monuments**

Monuments are provided at no cost. The family may select between an upright headstone, flat grave marker, or a columbarium niche cover. The cemetery staff will assist the family in the creation of the epitaphs to be inscribed. Monuments, headstones, markers, and niche covers may not be removed from the cemetery.

### **Grave Sites**

At the time of need the cemetery staff will assign the burial site based upon the next available grave space for the type burial selected. In most cases the Veteran and all family members will be interred in the same grave space. This is also true if the Veteran's eligible spouse or dependent predeceases the Veteran. In most cases, one grave site is provided for the burial of all eligible

family members and a single headstone or marker is provided. When both spouses are Veterans, two grave sites and two headstones or markers may be provided, if requested.

### **Grave Liners, Lawn Crypts, and Vaults**

External containers (grave liners, lawn crypts, or vaults) are required for all casketed burials. Grave liners for in-ground burial of cremated remains are not required. The cemetery will provide, at their discretion, unsealed vaults or grave liners for casket interments at no charge. However, if the family wishes to use another type of outer container, those arrangements and costs are the responsibility of the family.

### **Military Funeral Honors**

Under normal circumstances the funeral home will coordinate with Department of Defense units or Veterans Service Organizations in nearby communities for military honors at burials. If a family has elected to not use a funeral home, contact the cemetery staff for assistance.

### **Memorial Flags**

A United States flag is provided, at no cost, to drape the casket or accompany the cremation urn. In most cases the funeral home will obtain the U.S. flag on behalf of the next of kin. Only one flag can be provided for the burial.

At the conclusion of the burial service, the flag is given to the family, or if there is no next of kin the flag may be given to a friend who requests it. The family may choose to donate the burial flag to the cemetery to be flown on patriotic holidays in an avenue of flags.

### **Flowers**

Flowers, including those from the funeral service, may be placed in the committal shelter for the committal service. At the conclusion of the committal service the family may elect to take flowers. Those remaining will be moved to the burial site by cemetery staff, where they will remain until they become unsightly. Artificial flowers may be placed at burial sites year-round and flower pick-ups will take place once a month.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

- Veterans and members of armed forces
- Certain Members of Reserve Components & Reserve Officer Training Corps
- Commissioned Officers of the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration and Public Health Services
- World War II Merchant Marines
- Philippine Armed Forces
- Spouses and Dependents (however, burial of dependent children is limited to unmarried children under 21 years old or 23 years old if a full-time student at an approved educational institution.)

Eligibility requirements for a Texas State Cemetery are the same as for United States Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemeteries. Exact eligibility requirements can be seen at the [Veterans Affairs website](#) or by calling the VA's toll-free burial benefits number at **1-800-827-1000**. If you have any questions about eligibility, please call us at the Texas Veterans Land Board toll free at **1-800-252-VETS (8387)**.

## Charges for Interment

Burial at a Texas State Veterans Cemetery is a benefit earned by Veterans, their spouses, and eligible dependents for their dedicated service to our country. There is no charge for the interment of Veterans, their spouses and eligible dependents. The burial benefit includes military honors for Veterans, the grave plot, the opening and closing of the grave, a concrete grave liner for casketed burials, a headstone or marker, presentation of the burial flag to the next of kin, a Presidential certificate, playing of Taps, a gun salute, and perpetual care of the grave. The funeral home will obtain a burial flag to accompany the Veteran's casket or urn and will assist with requesting military honors.

The burial benefit for Veterans, their spouses and eligible dependents does not cover funeral home charges such as the cost of a casket, cremation, viewing, flower cars, or transportation of the remains and family. However, if the Veteran dies of a service connected cause of death, the family may be eligible for reimbursement from the VA for some of the funeral home costs up to \$2,000.

## Military Service Documents

- [\*\*Military Service Records\*\*](#)  
Visit the National Archives to request your military service records online, by mail, or by fax. Records include DD214/Separation Documents, Personnel Records and Medical Records.
- [\*\*Military Record Request - Standard Form 180 \(SF-180\)\*\*](#)  
Request your military record using the National Archives Standard Form 180 (SF-180).

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List of **State Veterans Cemeteries in Texas** at  
<http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/cemeteries/locations/index.html>

Call 1-800-252-8387 for information about **any** State Veterans Cemetery.

For information about the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery in **Killeen**, call 254-616-1770.

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List of **National Veterans Cemeteries in Texas** at  
<http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/cemeteries/locations/index.html>

**National** Cemeteries nearest to Austin:

- (1) Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in **San Antonio**, and
- (2) San Antonio National Cemetery (spaces for cremated remains only).

For information about these two cemeteries, call (210) 820-3891.

## Burial Benefits (per U S Dept. of Veterans Affairs)

[http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits\\_book/benefits\\_chap08.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/benefits_chap08.asp)

## Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors

Veterans discharged from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable; Service members who die while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training; and spouses and dependent children of Veterans and active duty service members, may be eligible for VA burial and memorial benefits. (For the purposes of this chapter, the term “Veteran” includes eligible persons who die during active duty service.) The Veteran does not have to die before a spouse or dependent child can be eligible for burial or memorial benefits.

## Burial in VA National Cemeteries

Burial in a VA national cemetery is available for eligible Veterans, spouses and dependents at no cost and includes the gravesite, grave-liner, opening and closing of the grave, a headstone or marker, and perpetual care as part of a national shrine. For Veterans, benefits may also include a burial flag and military funeral honors.

With certain exceptions, active duty service beginning after Sept 7, 1980, as an enlisted person, and after Oct 16, 1981, as an officer, must be for a minimum of 24 consecutive months or the full period of active duty (as in the case of reservists or National Guard members called to active duty for a limited duration). Active duty for training, by itself, while serving in the reserves or National Guard, is not sufficient to confer eligibility. Reservists and National Guard members, as well as their spouses and dependent children, are eligible if they were entitled to retired pay at the time of death, or would have been upon reaching requisite age.

Certain otherwise eligible individuals found to have committed federal or state capital crimes or certain sex offenses are barred from burial in a VA national cemetery and from receipt of a Government-furnished headstone, marker, medallion, burial flag, and Presidential Memorial Certificate. Veterans and other claimants for VA burial benefits have the right to appeal decisions made by VA regarding eligibility for national cemetery burial or other memorial benefits. Chapter 13 discusses the procedures for appealing VA claims.

This chapter contains information on the full range of VA burial and memorial benefits. Readers with questions may contact the nearest national cemetery, listed by state in VA Facilities section of this book, call **1-800-827-1000**, or visit the website at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov).

**Surviving spouses of Veterans who died on or after Jan. 1, 2000, do not lose eligibility for burial in a national cemetery if they remarry.** Unmarried dependent children of Veterans who are under 21 years of age, or under 23 years of age if a full-time student at an approved educational institution, are eligible for burial. Unmarried adult children who become physically or mentally disabled and incapable of self-support before age 21, or age 23 if a full-time student may also be eligible.

Certain parents of Servicemembers who die as a result of hostile activity or from combat training-related injuries may be eligible for burial in a national cemetery with their child. The

biological or adopted parents of a servicemember who died in combat or while performing training in preparation for a combat mission, who leaves no surviving spouse or dependent child, may be buried with the deceased servicemember if there is available space. Eligibility is limited to servicemembers who died on or after Oct. 7, 2001, and biological or adoptive parents who died on or after Oct. 13, 2010.

The next of kin or authorized representative (e.g., funeral director) makes interment arrangements at time of need by contacting the National Cemetery Scheduling Office (see information available at [www.cem.va.gov/bbene/need.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/bbene/need.asp)) or, in some cases, the national cemetery in which burial is desired. VA normally does not conduct burials on weekends. Gravesites cannot be reserved; however, VA will honor reservations made before 1973 by the Department of the Army.

VA's National Cemetery Scheduling Office or local national cemetery directors verify eligibility for burial. A copy of the Veteran's discharge document that specifies the period(s) of active duty and character of service is usually sufficient to determine eligibility. A copy of the deceased's death certificate and proof of relationship to the Veteran (for eligible family members) may be required.

VA operates 131 national cemeteries, of which 72 are currently open for both new casket and cremation interments and 18 may accept new interment of cremated remains only. Burial options are limited to those available at a specific cemetery and may include in ground casket, or interment of cremated remains in a columbarium, in-ground, or in a scattering area. Contact the national cemetery directly, or visit our website at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov) to determine if a particular cemetery is open for new burials, and what other options are available.

## **Headstones, Markers and Medallions**

Veterans, active duty service members, and retired Reservists and National Guard service members, are eligible for an inscribed headstone or marker for their unmarked grave at any cemetery — national, state veterans, tribal, or private. VA will deliver a headstone or marker at no cost, anywhere in the world.

For eligible Veterans or service members buried in a private cemetery whose deaths occurred on or after Nov. 1, 1990, VA may furnish a government headstone or marker (even if the grave is already marked with a private one); or VA may furnish a medallion to affix to an already existing privately-purchased headstone or marker.

Spouses and dependent children are eligible for a government head stone or marker only if they are buried in a national or State Veterans cemetery.

Flat markers are available in bronze, granite or marble. Upright headstones come in granite or marble. The style provided will be consistent with existing monuments at the place of burial. Niche markers are available to mark columbaria used for inurnment of cremated remains. Medallions are made of bronze and are available in three sizes: 5-inch, 3-inch, and 1 1/2 inches. Headstones, markers and medallions previously furnished by the government may be replaced at the government's expense if badly deteriorated, illegible, vandalized or stolen.

Headstones or markers for VA national cemeteries will be ordered by the cemetery director using information provided by the next of kin or authorized representative. Headstones or Markers for private cemeteries: Before ordering, the next of kin or authorized representative should check with the cemetery to ensure that the Government-furnished headstone or marker will be accepted. All installation fees at private cemeteries are the responsibility of the applicant.

To submit a claim for a head stone or marker for a gravesite in a private cemetery, use VA Form 40-1330, Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker (available at [www.va.gov/vaforms](http://www.va.gov/vaforms)). A copy of the Veteran's military discharge document is required. Mail forms to Memorial Programs Service, Department of Veterans Affairs, 5109 Russell Road, Quantico, VA 22134-3903. The form and supporting documents may also be faxed toll free to **1-800-455-7143**.

**“In Memory Of” Markers:** VA provides memorial headstones and markers with “In Memory Of” as the first line of inscription for those whose remains have not been recovered or identified, were buried at sea, donated to science or cremated and scattered. Eligibility is the same as for regular headstones and markers. There is no fee when the “In Memory Of” marker is placed in a national cemetery. All installation fees at private cemeteries are the responsibility of the applicant. Memorial headstones/markers for spouses and dependents can be provided only for placement in a national or state Veterans cemetery.

**Inscriptions:** Headstones and markers must be inscribed with the name of the deceased, branch of service, and year of birth and death. They also may be inscribed with other optional information, including an emblem of belief and, space permitting, additional text including military rank; war service such as “World War II;” complete dates of birth and death; military awards; military organizations; civilian or Veteran affiliations; and personalized words of endearment.

Medallion in lieu of government headstone or marker for private cemeteries: For Veterans or service members whose death occurred on or after Nov. 1, 1990, VA is authorized to provide a medallion instead of a headstone or marker if the grave is in a private cemetery and already marked with a privately-purchased headstone or marker.

To submit a claim for a medallion to be affixed to a private headstone/marker in a private cemetery, use VA Form 40-1330M, Claim for Government Medallion (available at [www.va.gov/vaforms](http://www.va.gov/vaforms)). A copy of the Veteran's military discharge document is required.

**Mail forms to:**

Memorial Programs Service, Department of Veterans Affairs,  
5109 Russell Road, Quantico, VA 22134-3903.

The form and supporting documents may also be faxed toll free to **1-800- 455-7143**.

To check the status of a claim for a headstone or marker for placement in a national, state, or tribal Veterans cemetery, please call the cemetery. To check the status of one being placed in a private cemetery, please contact the Applicant Assistance Unit at **1-800-697-6947** or via email at [mps.headstones@va.gov](mailto:mps.headstones@va.gov).

## Other Memorialization

Presidential Memorial Certificates are issued to recognize the military service of honorably discharged deceased Veterans and persons who died in the active military, naval, or air service. Next of kin, relatives and other loved ones may apply for a certificate by mailing, or faxing a completed and signed VA Form 40-0247, Presidential Memorial Certificate Request Form (available at [www.va.gov/vaforms/](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/)), along with a copy of the Veteran's military discharge documents or proof of honorable military service. The processing of requests sent without supporting documents will be delayed until eligibility can be determined. Eligibility requirements can be found at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov).

**Burial Flags:** Generally, VA will furnish a U.S. burial flag to memorialize Veterans who received other than dishonorable discharge. This includes certain persons who served in the organized military forces of the Commonwealth of the Philippines while in service of the U.S. armed forces and who died on or after April 25, 1951. Also eligible for a burial flag are Veterans who were entitled to retired pay for service in the Reserve or National Guard, or would have been entitled if over age 60; and members or former members of the Selected Reserve who served their initial obligation, or were discharged for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, or died while a member of the Selected Reserve. The next of kin may apply for the flag at any VA Regional Office or U.S. Post Office by completing VA Form 21-2008, Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes (available at [www.va.gov/vaforms/](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/)). In most cases, a funeral director will help the family obtain the flag.

**Reimbursement of Burial Expenses:** VA will pay a burial allowance up to \$2,000 if the Veteran's death is service-connected. In such cases, the person who bore the Veteran's burial expenses may claim reimbursement from VA.

In some cases, VA will pay the cost of transporting the remains of a Veteran whose death was service-connected to the nearest national cemetery with available gravesites. There is no time limit for filing reimbursement claims in service-connected death cases.

**Burial Allowance:** VA will pay a burial and funeral allowance of up to \$2,000 for Veterans who die from service-connected injuries. VA will pay a burial and funeral allowance of up to \$300 for Veterans who, at the time of death from nonservice-connected injuries were entitled to receive pension or compensation or would have been entitled if they were not receiving military retirement pay. VA will pay a burial and funeral allowance of up to \$734 when the Veteran's death occurs in a VA facility, a VA-contracted nursing home or a state Veterans nursing home. In cases in which the Veteran's death was not service connected, claims must be filed within two years after burial or cremation.

**Plot Allowance:** VA will pay a plot allowance of up to \$734 when a Veteran is buried in a cemetery not under U.S. government jurisdiction if: the Veteran was discharged from active duty because of disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty; the Veteran was receiving compensation or pension or would have been if the Veteran was not receiving military retired pay; or the Veteran died in a VA facility. The plot allowance may be paid to the state for the cost of a plot or interment in a state-owned cemetery reserved solely for Veteran burials if the Veteran is buried without charge. Burial expenses paid by the deceased's employer or a state agency will not be reimbursed.

## Veterans Cemeteries Administered by Other Agencies

Department of the Army: Administers Arlington National Cemetery and other Army installation cemeteries. Eligibility is generally more restrictive than at VA national cemeteries.

**For information, call: (703) 607-8000,**  
write Superintendent, Arlington National Cemetery,  
Arlington, VA 22211,  
or visit [www.arlingtoncemetery.mil](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil).

Department of the Interior: Administers two active national cemeteries- Andersonville National Cemetery in Georgia and Andrew Johnson National Cemetery in Tennessee. Eligibility is similar to VA national cemeteries. For information, call **(202) 208-4747**, write Department of Interior, National Park Service 1849 C. St. NW, Washington, D. C. 20240.

**State and Tribal Veterans Cemeteries:** There are currently 90 VA grant-funded Veterans cemeteries operating in 45 states and U.S. Territories that offer burial options for Veterans and their families. Two of these cemeteries are operated by federally recognized tribal organizations. VA grant-funded cemeteries have similar eligibility requirements and certain states/tribal organizations may require state or tribal residency/membership. Some services, particularly for family members, may require a fee. Contact the state or tribal Veterans cemetery or the state Veterans Affairs office for information. To locate a state or tribal Veterans cemetery, visit [www.cem.va.gov/grants/veterans\\_cemeteries.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/grants/veterans_cemeteries.asp)

**Military Funeral Honors:** Upon request, DoD will provide military funeral honors consisting of folding and the presentation of the United States flag and the playing of “Taps.” A funeral honors detail consists of two or more uniformed members of the armed forces, with at least one member from the deceased’s branch of service.

Family members should inform their funeral director if they want military funeral honors. DoD maintains a toll-free number **(1-877-MIL-HONR)** for use by funeral directors only to request honors. VA can help arrange honors for burials at VA national cemeteries. Veteran’s service organizations or volunteer groups may help provide honors. For more information, visit [www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil](http://www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil).

### Phone Numbers

Bereavement Counseling .....	1-202-461-6530
Caregiver .....	1-855-260-3274
Headstones and Markers .....	1-800-697-6947
National Cemetery Scheduling Office .....	1-800-535-1117
Presidential Memorial Certificate Program .....	1-202-565-4964

### Web Sites

Burial and Memorial Benefits .....	<a href="http://www.cem.va.gov">www.cem.va.gov</a>
Caregiver Support .....	<a href="http://www.caregiver.va.gov">www.caregiver.va.gov</a>
Memorial Certificate Program. ....	<a href="http://www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp">www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp</a>
Records .....	<a href="http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel">www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel</a>
VA Forms.....	<a href="http://www.va.gov/vaforms">www.va.gov/vaforms</a>