

Burial and Memorial Benefits

Veteran Program called Pre-Need Eligibility

Waiting until the time of need can result in a non-eligible decision with little or no time to provide additional information.

This program establishes your VA burial and memorial benefits eligibility in advance of need, so family members do not have to go searching for documentation at the time of death. Simply fill out VA Form 40-10007 and fax it along with a certified copy of your DD-214 or other discharge/military paperwork to: 866-900-6417. You can also fill out an online form, print and mail your information.

You can find more information online at <https://www.cem.va.gov/pre-need>

A case file will be established and within a few months you will receive a letter confirming or denying eligibility. If denied, you can submit additional information. If approved, place the letter in a safe location such as a safety-deposit box, and inform the family.

At the time of death, your next of kin, funeral home or representative for making funeral arrangements should contact the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117 to request burial.

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If a VA National, State, or Tribal Veteran Cemetery is selected as the final resting place, a veteran will receive the following, a grave site, the opening and closing of the grave, a grave liner and perpetual care of the grave site. Memorial benefits including a headstone, a marker or niche cove for the columbarium niche, where applicable.

If the veteran chooses to be buried in a private cemetery with a commercially-purchased headstone, marker or niche cover, the family may request to have a free bronze medallion with word "Veteran" and the appropriate branch of service affixed to the private headstone. All veterans' families also receive a burial flag. At many VA national cemeteries, National Cemetery Administration partners with local military units or volunteers service organizations to provide deceased veterans with military funeral honors, including the playing of taps the presentation of the burial flag. Also, on request the veteran's family will receive a Presidential Memorial Certificate signed by the current U.S. President. Multiple copies may be requested.

Day of the Burial

Upon arrival at the cemetery, a cemetery representative will meet the family and help guide them through the process. Families will receive 30 minutes at the committal shelter located on site. After the committal ceremony, the casket or urn is turned over to cemetery personnel for internment into the ground or columbarium later that same day. Each cemetery director may allow families to view the burial process.

The VA encourages all veterans to take advantage of Pre-Need Eligibility to ensure they, and their families, know their eligibility status. For more information about VA burial and memorial benefits, please visit www.cem.va.gov.