



QUICK INFORMATION SHEET

Veterans Death Benefits

All veterans honorably discharged from the military are entitled to certain death benefits. Burial is a sensitive subject; however veterans and their families should be aware of the burial benefits before they are needed. Families should prepare in advance by discussing cemetery options, collecting the veteran's military information, most importantly the proof of military service (DD 214), and discussing preferences.

Burial benefits

Any veteran, except for those dishonorably discharged, are eligible for burial in a Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery.

- Veterans are entitled to burial in a veteran's cemetery where space is available (it is important to discuss preference with the veteran, so their wishes can be honored)
- Veterans may be entitled to a one-time death benefit that goes toward the cost of burial. The VA will pay up to \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses, and \$300 plot-interment allowance
- A government head stone or marker will be issued for burial in a veteran's or private cemetery
- Veterans may select a "burial at sea," through the U.S. Navy Mortuary Affairs
- The VA provides an American flag for services to be given to the next of kin or close associate, at no cost, to drape the casket or accompany the urn of the veteran. If an extra flag is needed, some service groups such as the VFW may provide one
- A Presidential Memorial Certificate honoring the veteran's service (signed by the current president) is provided to the family

Burial with military honors

The rendering of Military Funeral Honors for a veteran is free of charge and mandated by law. The honor detail will perform a ceremony which includes folding and presenting of the flag to the next of kin and the playing of Taps.

The funeral director will contact the appropriate military service to arrange for a funeral honors detail.

Spouses of veterans

- Can be buried next to the veteran
- Dependents may also be eligible

How do I access the benefits?

- American Flag (VA form 40-1003) <http://www.cem.va.gov/bbene/bflags.asp> (A flag may be obtained at any VA Regional Office or U.S. Post Office, generally the funeral director will help or call 1-800-827-1000)
- Veterans Cemetery locations http://www.cem.va.gov/cems_nmc.asp and to schedule a burial <http://www.cem.va.gov/bbene/need.asp>
- Monetary death allowance (VA form 21-530) <http://www.cem.va.gov/bbene/benvba.asp>
- Government headstone or marker (VA form 40-1330) http://www.cem.va.gov/hm_hm.asp
- Burial at sea information <http://www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/CasualtyAssistance/MortuaryServices/Burial+At+Sea.htm> or call 1-866-787-0081
- Presidential Memorial Certificate (VA form 40-0247) <http://www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp> or call 1-202-565-4964
- Military honors at funeral <http://www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil/intro.html>
- Spouse burial information <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/dependents/spouse.htm>
- DD 214 (proof of military service) should be kept with all of the Veteran's important papers. Copies may be obtained at. <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records>

VA forms listed above can be found at <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/>

Other HPNA Teaching Sheets are available at www.HPNA.org

Reference

Department of Veterans Affairs, Burial and Memorial Benefits. Available at www.cem.va.gov
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