

Burial and Memorial Benefits for Veterans



Our nation honors its veterans, both in life and in death. Often though, spouses and/or children of veterans are not aware of the burial benefits that may be available to their relatives. Survivors should work with a Veterans Service Organization (VSO) to determine the benefits to which they may be entitled.

What are some burial benefits for veterans?

Eligible survivors of veterans may receive monetary burial benefits from the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). Memorial products such as headstones, markers, and niche covers can be applied for via the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). Military funeral honors are provided by the veteran's service. Survivors should work with a funeral director to arrange for these burial benefits. If the veteran's death is non-service connected and they were receiving disability compensation, their survivors may receive \$300 to help defray the cost of a funeral. If the veteran's death is service connected, however, the survivor would receive \$2,000. Veteran burial benefits are available to all eligible veterans at no cost. These include:

- A gravesite in any of VA's 153 national cemeteries with available space
- Opening and closing of the grave
- A government-furnished grave liner
- A government-furnished upright headstone, flat marker, or niche cover
- A burial flag
- A Presidential Memorial Certificate
- Perpetual care of the grave



Cremated remains are buried or inurned in national cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains. [Burial at sea](#) and green burials are also available. For veterans buried in a private cemetery, many of the same burial products are available and there may be an additional plot or internment allowance.

Family members should note that the cost of funeral services, cremation services, and other funeral or burial products aside from the veteran funeral benefits listed are not provided by NCA or reimbursed by VA.

[Read more: Don't Let Your Benefits Go Unclaimed](#)

Are there any military burial benefits for family members?

Yes, burial options are often available to family members of veterans. Veterans who are eligible to be buried in VA cemeteries may be able to have their spouses or other dependents buried alongside them provided the family members and the servicemember meet certain [eligibility criteria](#).

When buried in VA cemeteries, family members' gravesites receive the same perpetual care as the servicemember's and may have their name and birth and death dates inscribed on a headstone without charge. This benefit can be applied even if the family member passes before the veteran.

Who is eligible for military burial benefits?

There are varying eligibility requirements for military funeral honors, burial in national and state veterans' cemeteries, and burial in Arlington National Cemetery.

To be buried in a VA national or state cemetery, veterans must have met their active duty requirements and not have been dishonorably discharged. To be buried in ground at Arlington National Cemetery, you must meet [strict requirements](#). Only those that meet the following criteria are allowed to be buried there:

- Members who died on active duty and their spouses or dependent children
- Retirees (with at least one day of active duty, not for training) and their spouses or dependent children
- Recipients of the Purple Heart or Silver Star and above
- Any honorably discharged POW who died after November 30, 1993

There is increased availability for veterans to have their cremains placed in Arlington's columbarium or niche wall.

[Read more: Preparing Important Files and Life Insurance Documents for Emergencies](#)

What documents do I need to prove eligibility?

It is critical for relatives to have access to the veteran's Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, also known as DD Form 214. Another helpful form — that you can fill out now — is the VA Form 40-10007, or the Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery.



If you do not have your loved one's discharge papers, you may request them from the [National Personnel Records Center](#) of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

If all you would like is a headstone or marker for a private or state cemetery, you only need to fill out [VA Form 40-1330](#). If you would like a government medallion to be placed in a private cemetery, fill out [VA Form 40-1330M](#).

To receive monetary burial benefits, surviving beneficiaries must file a claim within two years of the burial or cremation of the veteran. You may do so by applying at [vets.gov](#). You will need the following forms and documents to support your claim:

- DD Form 214
- The veteran's death certificate
- Receipted bills of payment for the costs incurred for the veteran's funeral and transportation of the veteran's remains to the burial site.

If the veteran's death is service connected, there is no time limit to apply for these benefits.

Find more information here:

- [National Cemetery Administration](#)
- [Planning Your Legacy: VA Survivors and Burial Benefits Kit](#)
- [VA: Burials and Memorials](#)
- [com: Memorial Benefits](#)

Navy Mutual Can Help

Navy Mutual is the oldest federally recognized Veterans Service Organization (VSO). As a VSO, we are authorized to assist veterans and their beneficiaries in navigating the sometimes-complicated details around veteran funeral benefits and burial benefits for veterans.

To schedule a benefits counseling session, email us at vso@navymutual.org, or call us at **888-298-4442** whenever you need assistance.