

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VETERANS SERVICES DIVISION
POST OFFICE BOX 942895
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 94295-0001
Telephone: (916) 653-2573
Fax: (916) 653-2563



California Veteran Reintegration Program Fact Sheet Cemeteries and Burials

CEMETERY AND BURIAL BENEFITS

Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces residing in California are eligible to receive certain end of life privileges. For information about entitlements, contact the County Veterans Service Office www.cacvso.org/ or call CalVet's Veterans Services Division at (877) 741-8532.

STATE CEMETERIES

Northern California Veterans Cemetery's

The Northern California Veterans Cemetery (NCVC) is the first California Veterans Cemetery constructed with the cooperation of the US Department of Veterans Affairs, and is operated by the state. State Veterans Cemeteries are intended to serve areas that are not adequately served by a National Cemetery. NCVC, located near Redding, California, primarily serves the veteran population in the eighteen Northern-most California counties. The currently developed area of the cemetery provides sufficient burial space for more than thirty years. Beyond that, the cemetery has the capacity for expansion of space for well beyond 100 years. Any eligible veteran, along with their spouse and eligible dependents, may be interred at the cemetery.

The Yountville Veterans Cemetery is located on 11 acres of oak-covered hills in the northwest corner of the Yountville Veterans Home; this historic cemetery marks the resting place of over 5,700 veterans and dependents. The cemetery currently accepts only the interment of the Veteran Home's residents and their eligible dependents. Eligibility for interment is equivalent to the requirements for burial in a National Cemetery.

The VA has adopted regulations that establish the eligibility requirements for interment in a state veterans' cemetery. The regulations make the state eligibility requirements equivalent to the requirements for burial in a National Cemetery and provide for CalVet collection of information needed to determine eligibility. For eligibility requirements, go to www.cem.va.gov.

The Eligibility Determination/Pre-need Form is designed to assist in determining eligibility for burial in the NCVC on a pre-need basis. Pre-need determination allows a veteran to establish in advance, his/her eligibility for interment at the NCVC. There is no cost for pre-need determination, and it does not obligate the veteran to be interred at the cemetery.

Pre-need determination is intended to simplify and assist the veteran's next-of-kin at the time of death. There will be a \$500 interment fee for eligible spouses and dependent children at the

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time of need. Associated funeral expenses are incurred by the veteran and/or family.

The Eligibility Determination Form can be downloaded at www.calvet.ca.gov/cemetery or is available from the local County Veterans Service Office www.cacvso.org/.

NATIONAL CEMETERIES

The VA's National Cemetery Administration maintains 131 national cemeteries in 39 states (and Puerto Rico) as well as 33 Soldier's lots and monument sites. There are nine national cemeteries in California, of which five (Riverside National Cemetery, Sacramento Valley VA National Cemetery, San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery, Miramar National Cemetery and Bakersfield National Cemetery) are presently accepting new interments. The other national cemeteries in California are only accepting burials of family members of persons already interred, although Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery (near San Diego) still offers burial of cremated remains.

Persons eligible for burial in a national cemetery include:

- Veterans;
- Service members who die on active duty;
- Certain Reservists and National Guard members;
- World War II Merchant Mariners;
- U.S. citizens who served honorably in the Armed Forces of an Allied government during a war
- Such other persons or classes of persons as may be designated by either the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Secretary of the Air Force.

Additionally, the spouse and the children (as defined) of eligible persons are also eligible for burial in a national cemetery. In some cases, parents of active duty military killed in action may also be eligible.

Burial benefits may include the following: gravesites for casket or cremation remains, headstones or markers, opening and closing of the graves, and continued perpetual care. Burial of eligible veterans and dependents is at no cost when interred at a national cemetery.

Associated funeral expenses are the responsibility of the veteran and/or family. For assistance in completing applications for cemetery and burial benefits, please contact the local County Veterans Service Office www.cacvso.org/.

MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS PROGRAM

Military funeral honors are available within the State of California for honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces.

At minimum, two service representatives will render honors, sound taps, fold the flag and present it to the next of kin. Additionally, a detail to fire volleys, a chaplain, and/or a detail to serve as pall-bearers may be provided depending on the desires of the surviving family and resources available. Frequently, funeral honors are rendered in concert with a local Veteran Service Organization (VSO).

Note: The VSOs that may perform one or more of the above functions might include the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Marine Corps League, etc.

Family members of the deceased veteran should first notify their funeral director of their desire to have military funeral honors rendered at the service. The family should provide the funeral director with as much of the following as possible:

- Name of Deceased;
- Date of Birth;
- Social Security Number;
- DD Form 214 (Discharge Papers);
- Other Proof of Veteran Status or Eligibility for Burial Honors.

Veterans are eligible for military funeral honors if they meet one of the following requirements:

- Discharged from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable;
- Completed at least one term of obligated service in the Selected Reserve under conditions other than dishonorable;
- Enlisted on active duty at the time of death or in the Selected Reserve (drilling with a unit);
- Discharged from the Selected Reserve due to disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty. The funeral director should contact one of the following Casualty Area Commands depending on the veteran's branch of service:

- **Army**
(North of Fresno)
Fort Lewis, WA
(888) 634-7496

(Fresno & South of Fresno)
Fort Huachuca, AZ
(800) 248-0759
- **Air Force**
Travis AFB Mortuary Affairs Military Honors
(800) 586-8402

Casualty Assistance/ Benefits
(866) 819-7250
- **Marine Corps**
(866) 826-3628
- **Navy**
(800) 326-9631

- **Coast Guard**
(510) 437-5922

In the event the funeral director cannot make contact with one of the centers listed above, please contact:

Office of the Adjutant General

ATTN: Military Funeral
Honors Program
P.O. Box 269101
Sacramento, CA 95826-9101
(916) 854-3821

BURIAL AND PLOT-INTERMENT ALLOWANCES

VA burial allowances are partial reimbursements of an eligible veteran’s burial and funeral costs. When the cause of death is non-service related, the reimbursements are generally described as two payments: (1) a burial and funeral expense allowance, and (2) a plot or interment allowance.

A veteran may be eligible for a VA burial allowance if:

- the veteran paid for a veteran’s burial or funeral; and
- the veteran has not been reimbursed by another government agency or some other source, such as the deceased veteran’s employer; and
- the veteran was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

In addition, at least one of the following conditions must be met:

- the veteran died because of a service-related disability; or
- the veteran was receiving VA pension or compensation at the time of death; or
- the veteran was entitled to receive VA pension or compensation, but decided not to reduce his/her military retirement or disability pay; or
- the veteran died while hospitalized by VA, or while receiving care under VA contract at a non-VA facility; or
- the veteran died while traveling under proper authorization and at VA expense to or from a specified place for the purpose of examination, treatment, or care; or
- the veteran had an original or reopened claim pending at the time of death and has been found entitled to compensation or pension from a date prior to the date of death; or
- the veteran died on or after October 9, 1996, while a patient at a VA-approved state nursing home.

How Much Does the VA Pay?

- **Service-Related Death:** The VA will pay up to \$2,000 toward burial expenses for deaths on or after September 11, 2001. If the veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some or all of the cost of transporting the deceased maybe reimbursed.
- **Non-Service-Related Death:** The VA will pay up to \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses and a \$300 plot-interment allowance for deaths on or after December 1,

2001. As of October 2011, the burial and funeral expenses and the plot allowance increase to \$722. If the death happened while the veteran was in a VA hospital or under VA contracted nursing home care, some or all of the costs for transporting the veteran's remains may be reimbursed. No plot allowance is paid to the family when the burial occurs in a national or state veteran's cemetery.

- To obtain information regarding associated funeral expenses are incurred by the veteran and/or family, contact the local County Veterans Service Office www.cacvso.org/.

To apply for burial benefits, complete VA Form 21-530, Application for Burial Benefits. Attach a copy of the veteran's military discharge document (DD Form 214 or equivalent), death certificate, and funeral and burial bills. The bills should indicate they have paid them in full. The form can be downloaded at www.va.gov/vaforms or obtained from the local County Veterans Service Office www.cacvso.org/.

PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATES

A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the current President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans.

The VA administers the PMC program by preparing the certificates which bear the current President's signature expressing the country's grateful recognition of the veteran's service in the U.S. Armed Forces. Eligible recipients include the next of kin and loved ones of honorably discharged deceased veterans. More than one certificate may be provided.

Eligible recipients, or someone acting on their behalf, may apply for a PMC in person at any VA regional office or by U.S. mail or toll-free fax. Requests cannot be sent via email. Enclose a copy of the veteran's discharge and death certificate to verify eligibility, as requests cannot be processed without proof of honorable military service. Submit copies only, as original documents will not be returned. To apply for a Presidential Memorial Certificate, or if a request was submitted more than eight (8) weeks ago and was not fulfilled, complete the application and submit again:

Download VA Form 40-0247, Presidential Memorial Certificate Request Form, at www.va.gov/vaforms. Instructions on the PMC can be found at <http://www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp>.

Mail applications to:

Presidential Memorial Certificates (41A1C)

5109 Russell Road
Quantico, VA 22134-3903
(800) 455-7143 (F)

Note: Presidential Memorial Certificates are automatically ordered for the families of veterans buried at national or state veteran's cemeteries.

HEADSTONES AND MARKERS

The VA furnishes upon request, at no charge to the applicant, a government headstone or marker for the unmarked grave of any deceased eligible veteran in any cemetery around the

world, regardless of their date of death.

For eligible veterans that died on or after November 1, 1990, the VA may also provide a headstone or marker for graves that are already marked with a private headstone or marker. When the grave is already marked, applicants will have the option to apply for either a traditional headstone or marker, or the new medallion. Eligible veterans are entitled to either a government-furnished headstone or marker, or the new medallion, but not both.

Flat markers in granite, marble, and bronze and upright headstones in granite and marble are available. The style chosen must be consistent with existing monuments at the place of burial. Niche markers are also available to mark columbaria used for inurnment of cremated remains.

When burial or memorialization is in a national cemetery, state veterans cemetery, or military post/base cemetery, a headstone or marker will be ordered by the cemetery officials based on inscription information provided by the next-of-kin or authorized representative.

Spouses and dependents are not eligible for a government-furnished headstone or marker unless they are buried in a national cemetery, state veterans cemetery, or military post/base cemetery.

Placement of headstones in a private cemetery may be ordered by completing VA Form 40-1330, Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker. The application must be submitted by the next of kin or a representative, such as funeral director, cemetery official or veterans counselor, along with copies of veterans military discharge documents. Do not send original documents, as they will not be returned.

Types of Headstones and Markers Available:

- Upright Marble or Upright Granite
- Flat Granite or Flat Marble
- Bronze
- Niche Bronze
- Veterans' Medallion (Each Service has own medallion)

Applications can be mailed to:

Memorial Programs Services (41A1)

Department of Veterans Affairs

5109 Russell Road

Quantico, VA 22134-3903

Applications can also be sent by fax to (800) 455-7143.

When using the toll free fax number, do not send a paper copy of the application through the mail.

Note: There is no charge for the headstone or marker itself; however, arrangements for placing it in a private cemetery are the applicant's responsibility and all setting fees are at private expense.