

# BURIAL FLAGS

Burial flags are provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs at no cost. Most veterans are entitled to burial flags. Reservists entitled to retired pay, but not yet receiving it, are also eligible. Only one burial flag may be provided per veteran. They are provided as a matter of course at Arlington National Cemetery and at National, state or post cemeteries. For private funerals, flags may be obtained from any VA regional office and most U.S. Post Offices by completing VA Form 2008, Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes, and submitting it with a copy of the veteran's discharge papers at any of those locations.

A United States flag drapes the casket of deceased veterans to honor the memory of their service to America. This **custom** began during the Napoleonic Wars (1796-1815). The flag is placed so that the blue field with stars is at the head and over the left shoulder of the deceased. After Taps has been played, the flag is carefully **folded** into the symbolic tri-cornered shape.

This custom of special folding is reserved for the United States Flag alone.

The flag is presented to the next of kin at the end of the funeral, usually by the military chaplain. If there is no next of kin present, the flag may be presented to the veteran's close friend or associate if requested. Each branch of the Armed Forces uses its own wording for the presentation:

U.S. Air Force: "On behalf of the President of the United States, the Department of the Air Force, and a grateful nation, we offer this flag for the faithful and dedicated service of (Service Member's rank and name)."

U.S. Army: "As a representative of the United States Army, it is my high privilege to present to you this flag. Let it be a symbol of the grateful appreciation our nation feels for the distinguished service rendered to our country and our flag by your loved one."

U.S. Coast Guard: "On behalf of the President of the United States, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, and a grateful nation, please accept this flag as a symbol of our appreciation for your loved one's service to Country and the Coast Guard."

U.S. Marine Corps: "On behalf of the President of the United States, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and a grateful nation, please accept this flag as a symbol of our appreciation for your loved one's service to Country and Corps."

U.S. Navy: "On behalf of the President of the United States and the Chief of Naval Operations, please accept this flag as a symbol of our appreciation for your loved one's service to this Country and a grateful Navy."

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## Folding the United States Flag



To properly fold the Flag, begin by holding it waist-high with another person so that its surface is parallel to the ground.



Fold the lower half of the stripe section lengthwise over the field of stars, holding the bottom and top edges securely.



Fold the flag again lengthwise with the blue field on the outside.



Make a triangular fold by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to meet the open (top) edge of the flag.



Turn the outer (end) point inward, parallel to the open edge, to form a second triangle.



The triangular folding is continued until the entire length of the flag is folded in this manner.



When the flag is completely folded, only a triangular blue field of stars should be visible.

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