



### **For Burial in a National Cemetery**

Burial benefits available include a gravesite in any of our [131 national cemeteries](#) with available space, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a [Government headstone or marker](#), a [burial flag](#), and a [Presidential Memorial Certificate](#), at no cost to the family. Some Veterans may also be eligible for [Burial Allowances](#). Cremated remains are buried or inurned in national cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains.

Burial benefits available for spouses and dependents buried in a national cemetery include burial with the Veteran, perpetual care, and the spouse or dependents name and date of birth and death will be inscribed on the Veteran's headstone, at no cost to the family. Eligible spouses and dependents may be buried, even if they predecease the Veteran. The Veterans family should make funeral or cremation arrangements with a funeral provider or cremation office. Any item or service obtained from a funeral home or cremation office will be at the family's expense.

### **Preparing in Advance**

Gravesites in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries cannot be reserved in advance.

You should advise your family of your wishes and where your [discharge papers](#)\* are kept. These papers are very important in establishing your eligibility.

At the time of need your family would contact a funeral home who will assist them with making burial arrangements at the national cemetery. You may wish to make pre-need arrangements with a funeral home.

To schedule a burial: Fax all discharge documentation to the [National Cemetery Scheduling Office](#) at 1-866-900-6417 and follow-up with a phone call to 1-800-535-1117.

### **Donating Burial Flags in National Cemeteries**

Most of the Department of Veterans Affairs national cemeteries display an Avenue of Flags on patriotic holidays and during special events. The Avenues consist of burial flags donated by the families of deceased Veterans and provide a unique visible tribute to all of our Nation's Veterans.

A Certificate of Appreciation is presented to the donor for providing their loved ones' burial flag to a national cemetery.

Please contact the [cemetery](#) of your choice for information on how to donate a Veteran's burial flag.

### **For Burial in a Private Cemetery**

Burial benefits available for Veterans buried in a private cemetery may include a [Government headstone, marker or medallion](#), a [burial flag](#), and a [Presidential Memorial Certificate](#), at no cost to the family. Some Veterans may also be eligible for [Burial Allowances](#). There are not any VA benefits available to spouses and dependents buried in a private cemetery.

#### [Potential Questions to Ask Regarding Burial in a Private Cemetery](#)

[VA-NCA-IS-1 Interments in VA National Cemeteries](#) — provides information on the National Cemetery Administration's history, arranging a burial in a national cemetery, military honors, burial eligibility and locations of national and state Veterans cemeteries.

# Burial Flags

## Why Does VA Provide a Burial Flag?

A United States flag is provided, at no cost, to drape the casket or accompany the urn of a deceased Veteran who served honorably in the U. S. Armed Forces. It is furnished to honor the memory of a Veteran's military service to his or her country. VA will furnish a burial flag for memorialization for each other than dishonorable discharged



- Veteran who served during wartime
- Veteran who died on active duty after May 27, 1941
- Veteran who served after January 31, 1955
- peacetime Veteran who was discharged or released before June 27, 1950
- certain persons who served in the organized military forces of the Commonwealth of the Philippines while in service of the U.S. Armed Forces and who died on or after April 25, 1951
- certain former members of the Selected Reserves

## Who Is Eligible to Receive the Burial Flag?

Generally, the flag is given to the next-of-kin, as a keepsake, after its use during the funeral service. When there is no next-of-kin, VA will furnish the flag to a friend making request for it. For those VA national cemeteries with an Avenue of Flags, families of Veterans buried in these national cemeteries may donate the burial flags of their loved ones to be flown on patriotic holidays.

### **How Can You Apply?**

You may apply for the flag by completing [VA Form 27-2008, Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes](#). U.S. Post Offices are the primary issuing point for burial flags. Generally, the funeral director can help you obtain a flag. Call and confirm with the post office in advance. Not all local post offices have burial flags on hand but they should be able to direct you to the closest issuing post office. Regional VA Offices can also help identify local issuing points.

### **Can a Burial Flag Be Replaced?**

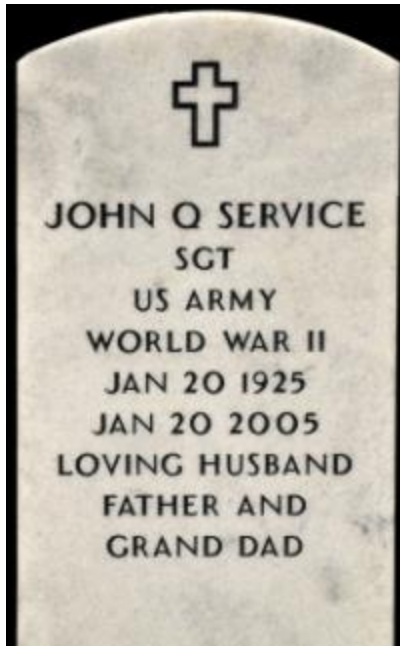
The law allows us to issue one flag for a Veteran's funeral. We cannot replace it if it is lost, destroyed, or stolen. However, some Veterans' organizations or other community groups may be able to help you get another flag.

### **How Should the Burial Flag Be Displayed?**

The proper way to display the flag depends upon whether the casket is open or closed. VA Form 27-2008 provides the correct method for displaying and folding the flag. The burial flag is not suitable for outside display because of its size and fabric. It is made of cotton and can easily be damaged by weather.

**For More Information Call Toll-Free at 1-800-827-1000**

## General Information Headstones, Markers and Medallions



The Department of Veterans Affairs (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 Nov. 1, 1990 and whose grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone, VA may also furnish a headstone or marker to supplement the graves or a Medallion to be affixed to a privately purchased headstone.

Flat markers in granite, marble, and bronze and upright headstones in granite and marble are available. Bronze niche markers are also available to mark columbaria used for inurnment of cremated remains. The style chosen must

be permitted by the officials in charge of the private cemetery where it will be placed. 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 Veteran's cemetery, or military post/base cemetery.

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.

### Setting Government Headstones and Markers

Cemetery staff in national, military post, and military base cemeteries are responsible for setting the headstone or marker at no cost to the applicant. Some state Veterans' cemeteries may charge the applicant a nominal fee for setting a Government-furnished headstone or marker.

Arrangements for setting a Government-furnished headstone or marker in a private cemetery are the applicant's responsibility and all placement costs are at private expense.

### Cleaning and Caring for Government Headstones and Markers

The National Park Service's National Center for Preservation Technology and Training completed a study in 2011 to evaluate general cleaning needs of marble government-issued headstones. The findings are found in *Best Practice Recommendations for Cleaning Government-Issued Headstones*.\*

### Checking Status of a Headstone, Marker or Medallion Request

To obtain the status of headstones or markers ordered for national or state cemeteries, please contact the cemetery directly.

To obtain the status of headstones or markers ordered for private cemeteries, please use the following instructions: If more than 30 days have passed since your claim was submitted to the VA in Washington, D.C. by you, or someone assisting you, please call our Applicant Assistance Unit to verify we are in receipt of your claim.

If more than 60 days have passed since submitting your claim and the grave is still not marked, you should contact the cemetery, funeral home, or other party responsible for accepting delivery of the headstone, marker or medallion to see if they have received it. If they have not received it, you may call our Applicant Assistance Unit between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (ET), Monday through Friday, at **1-800-697-6947**.

You may also click on the "Contact Us" link to check the status of your order.

**Please Note:** The above telephone number is for questions related to headstones, markers and medallions only ordered for private cemeteries.

For assistance in obtaining veterans' records or for information on other VA benefits, please call your local Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office at **1-800-827-1000** or click on "Contact Us" above.

## Memorial Headstones and Markers

Memorial headstones and markers, for individuals or groups, are furnished for eligible deceased active duty service members and Veterans whose remains are not recovered or identified, are [buried at sea](#), donated to science or whose cremated remains have been scattered.

Memorial headstones and markers may also be furnished in national, military post/base or state Veterans cemeteries to eligible spouses whose remains are unavailable for interment, whether or not they predecease the eligible Veteran.

These headstones and markers bear an *"In Memory of"* inscription as their first line and must be placed in a recognized cemetery.

Memorial headstones and markers for spouses and other dependents are not available for placement in private cemeteries.

[VA Form 40-1330, Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker](#), must be submitted to request a memorial marker.

\* **NOTE:** Link will take you outside the Department of Veterans Affairs web site