

Federal & State of Texas

# BURIAL BENEFITS

for Veterans,  
Dependents & Survivors



Compiled by the

## TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

P.O. Box 12277  
Austin, Texas 78711-2277

512/ 463-5538  
(FAX) 512/475-2395  
[www.tvc.state.tx.us](http://www.tvc.state.tx.us)  
[info@tvc.state.tx.us](mailto:info@tvc.state.tx.us)

Rev. June 2009



*The Texas Veterans Commission does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or providing services.*

*Comments concerning veterans' programs or delivery of services may be addressed to:*

Texas Veterans Commission  
P.O. Box 12277  
Austin, Texas 78711-2277



**Contact a Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Counselor near you  
for assistance. Office Locations are listed below. You can also contact  
your local veterans county service office for assistance.**

TVC Waco Regional Office  
VA Regional Office  
6900 Almeda Road  
● **Houston, TX 77030-4200**  
713/383-2756  
[HOUSTON@tvc.state.tx.us](mailto:HOUSTON@tvc.state.tx.us)

TVC Waco Regional Office  
VA Regional Office  
701 Clay Avenue  
**Waco, TX 76799**  
254/299-9950  
[WACO@tvc.state.tx.us](mailto:WACO@tvc.state.tx.us)

Thomas E. Creek VA Medical Center  
**Amarillo, TX 79106**  
806/468-1883

Brooke Army Medical Center  
Soldier & Family Asst. (SFAC)  
**Ft. Sam Houston, TX 78234**  
210/916-9397

Charles Wilson VA Outpatient Clinic  
**Lufkin, TX 75904**  
936/633-2780

VA Outpatient Clinic  
**Austin, TX 78741**  
512/389-6543

VA Outpatient Clinic  
● **Fort Worth, TX 76104**  
817/347-7348

Harrison County  
Veterans Service Office  
102 W. Houston Street  
**Marshall, TX 75670**  
903/935-8415

VA Outpatient Clinic  
**Beaumont, TX 77707**  
409/981-8550  
Toll-free: 1-800-833-7734

VA Outpatient Clinic  
**Galveston, TX 77550**  
409/761-3200

VA Outpatient Clinic  
**McAllen, TX 78503**  
956/618-7106

VA Medical Center  
■ **Big Spring, TX 79720**  
432/264-4819

VA Vet Center  
■ **Harker Heights, TX 76548**  
254/953-7100

Midland Co. Courthouse Annex  
**Midland, TX 79705**  
432/688-4879

Cedar Park Community Based  
Outpatient Clinic  
**Cedar Park, TX 78613**  
512/260-1368, Ext. 58022

VA Health Care Center  
**Harlingen, TX 78550**  
956/752-0681

Frank M. Tejada  
VA Outpatient Clinic  
**San Antonio, TX 78240**  
210/699-5076

VA Outpatient Clinic  
**College Station, Texas 77845**  
979/ 680-0361, Ext. 58417

Michael E. DeBakey  
Veterans Affairs Medical Center  
**Houston, TX 77030**  
713/794-7785  
Toll-free: 1-800-553-2278, Ext. 7785

South Texas Veterans  
Health Care System  
Audie L. Murphy  
Memorial VA Medical Center  
**San Antonio, TX 78229**  
210/617-5175

Conroe Community-Based  
Outpatient Clinic  
**Conroe, TX 77304**  
936/633-4000

South Texas Veterans  
Health Care System  
Kerrville Division  
**Kerrville, TX 78028**  
830/792-2553

Bldg. 402, Rm 234  
426 5th Avenue  
**Sheppard AFB, TX 76311**  
940/676-4140

VA Outpatient Clinic  
**Corpus Christi, TX 78405**  
361/806-5610, Ext. 274

Wilford Hall USAF  
Medical Center  
**Lackland AFB, TX 78236**  
210/292-7401

Central Texas Veterans  
Health Care System  
Olin E. Teague Veterans' Center  
● **Temple, TX 76504**  
254/743-0549

North Texas Veterans  
Health Care System  
**Dallas, TX 75216**  
214/857-0444

VA Outpatient Clinic  
**Laredo, TX 78041**  
956/523-7860

Toll Free: 1-800-423-2111, Ext. 40549

VA Health Care Center  
**El Paso, TX 79930**  
915/564-7852  
Toll-free: 1-800-672-3782, Ext. 7852

VA Outpatient Clinic  
**Lubbock, TX 79412**  
806/472-3490

VA Outpatient Clinic  
**Victoria, TX 77901**  
361/582-7710

Building 18010  
**Fort Hood, TX 76544**  
254/287-3341

VA Medical Center  
■ **Waco, TX 76711**  
254/297-3032

Bldg. 2263  
1706 Stanley Rd., Suite 18  
**Ft. Sam Houston, TX 78234**  
210/221-2044

■ - Part Time office - call for hours  
● - Women Veterans Coordinator

County Courthouse Annex  
**Wichita Falls, TX 76301**  
940/ 716-8599

# FOREWORD

*Federal & State of Texas*  
**BURIAL BENEFITS**  
*for Veterans, Dependents & Survivors*

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) is aware that one of the most difficult responsibilities a survivor faces after the death of a veteran is completing the numerous Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) forms for survivor and/or burial benefits. The TVC can be a source of assistance during this time.

To help ease this burden and to ensure that you have the details of where and how to get assistance, this brochure outlines some of the basic information you will need at this time.

Provided inside the back cover of this booklet is a complete list of all TVC Claims Representation & Counseling offices. Please contact the TVC or your local Veterans County Service Officer for assistance in filing a claim for survivor and/or burial benefits. You may call the Veterans HOTLINE at 1-800-252-VETS (8387) for the location and phone number or visit our website at [www.tvc.state.tx.us](http://www.tvc.state.tx.us).



**"A Sacred Trust: The Story of the  
National Cemetery Administration"**

*The National Cemetery honors veterans with a final resting place and  
lasting memorials that commemorate their service to our nation.*

This is the inspiring story of the National Cemetery Administration and its service to our nation's veterans. Through personal interviews with dedicated NCA representatives, viewers learn of the many benefits available to them and their families in our nation's veterans' cemeteries. Through interviews with family members, viewers experience personal stories of the honorable and dignified process of their veteran's burial – from application to interment and beyond. Stirring photography accompanies informative narration as viewers gain familiarity with the National Cemetery Administration and its efforts to provide burial benefits to those who gave so much for their country. To the National Cemetery Administration, this is more than a mission. It is - "A Sacred Trust." Produced by the Employee Education System for the National Cemetery Administration, you can view this online at [www.cem.va.gov/sacred.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/sacred.asp).



- Copy of all marriage certificates and divorce decrees (if any)
- Copy of each child's birth certificate or adoption papers

Provided inside the back cover of this booklet is a complete list of all Texas Veterans Commission Claims Representation & Counseling offices. For a list of Veterans County Service Officers, visit our website at [www.tvc.state.tx.us](http://www.tvc.state.tx.us) or call the Veterans' HOTLINE at 1-800-VETS (8387) for locations and contact numbers.



There is no limit to the number of vouchers a student can accumulate. These vouchers may be used by the student at any time for tuition and fees and are not transferable.

Visit our website at [www.tvc.state.tx.us](http://www.tvc.state.tx.us); email us at [info@tvc.state.tx.us](mailto:info@tvc.state.tx.us) or call us at (512) 463-5538.

### ***Additional Information***

There is a variety of important information that needs to be provided when applying for survivor/burial benefits. In addition, certain veterans may have various benefit plans or insurance coverage available to survivors.

#### **Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)**

If the veteran was a military retiree, the widow and/or children may be entitled to payments from the Survivor Benefit Plan. Survivors should contact the nearest Personnel Affairs Office of the service department of the veteran to determine if the veteran made necessary provision for SBP coverage.

Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines  
1-800-269-5170  
Coast Guard, NOAA  
1-800-772-8724

#### **Insurance & Additional Benefits**

A TVC counselor or a Veterans County Service Officer may offer assistance in supplying and completing forms for G.I. Insurance. If life insurance is carried with another commercial company, contact an agent of that company.

In addition to insurance, TVC can assist in applying for other VA and State benefits to which the veteran's survivors may be entitled. These include:

- Widow's or children's compensation
- Widow's or children's pension
- Parent's compensation
- Education benefits
- Medical benefits

#### **Important Documents To Safeguard**

Below is a list of important documents and other relevant information to have available when applying for VA survivor and/or burial benefits:

- Veteran's discharge certificate (DD Form 214)
- Veteran's VA claim number or Social Security Number
- Veteran's death certificate
- Veteran's Government Life Insurance Policy information

# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	Page
Eligibility for Federal Burial Benefits .....	1
Reimbursement of Burial Expenses .....	1
Military Funeral Honors .....	2
VA Headstones and Markers .....	2
Presidential Memorial Certificates .....	7
Burial Flags .....	7
Burial in VA National Cemeteries .....	8
Veterans' Cemeteries Administered by Other Agencies .....	13
Texas State Veterans Cemetery Program .....	13
Students Sounding "TAPS" at Military Funerals .....	14
Additional Information.....	15



# *Federal & State of Texas* **BURIAL BENEFITS** **for Veterans, Dependents** **& Survivors**

## ***Eligibility for Federal Burial Benefits***

Veterans discharged from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable and servicemembers who die while on active duty, as well as spouses and dependent children of veterans and active duty servicemembers may, be eligible for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) burial and memorial benefits. The veteran does not have to pre-decease a spouse or dependent child for them to be eligible. See *VA's Headstone and Markers* on page 2 and *Burial in VA National Cemeteries* on page 8 for information pertaining to spouses, dependent children and active duty servicepersons.

With certain exceptions, active duty service beginning after September 7, 1980, as an enlisted person, and after October 16, 1981, as an officer, must be for a minimum of 24 consecutive months or the full period of active duty (as in the case of reservists or National Guard members called to active duty for a limited duration). Eligibility is not established by active duty for training in the Reserves or National Guard. Generally, the minimum 24-month service requirements apply to entitlement to headstones and markers, burial in a National Cemetery and a Presidential Memorial Certificate.

Burial and memorial benefits are available for Filipino veterans of World War II who have been receiving service-connected disability compensation, or are eligible for nonservice-connected disability pension (PL 106-419, Section 332). American Merchant Marines in oceangoing service during the period of armed conflict, December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946, who meet general eligibility criteria are entitled to burial and memorial benefits.

Under Section 2411 of Title 38 of the United States Code, certain otherwise eligible individuals found to have committed federal or state capital crimes are barred from burial or memorialization in a VA National Cemetery, and from receipt of government furnished headstones, markers, burial flags and Presidential Memorial Certificates.

## ***Reimbursement of Burial Expenses***

VA will pay a burial allowance up to \$2,000 if the veteran's death is service-connected. In some instances, VA also will pay the cost of transporting the remains of a service-disabled veteran to the national cemetery nearest the home of the deceased that has available gravesites. In such cases, the person who bore the veteran's burial expenses may claim reimbursement from VA. There is no time limit for filing reimbursement claims in service-connected death cases.

Rio Grande Valley State Veterans Cemetery  
2520 South Inspiration Road  
Mission, Texas 78572-9897  
Office: (956) 583-7227; Fax: (956) 583-7887  
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

### **Abilene**

The Texas State Veterans Cemetery at Abilene opened June 1, 2009. Applications are being accepted for interment of deceased veterans and their qualified family members. The facility will be a 63-acre cemetery providing approximately 20,000 burials for veterans, their spouses and eligible dependent children. Contact information:

Texas State Veterans Cemetery at Abilene  
7457 West Lake Road  
Abilene, Texas 79601-8278  
Office: (325) 673-4446; Fax: (325) 673-4448  
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

### **Future Site**

#### **Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery in Corpus Christi**

Planning and design work on the site is already under way. The 54-acre site, off Carbon Plant Road, was donated by Flint Hills Resources and submitted by Nueces County. Once the plans are complete, the Texas Veterans Land Board will seek construction bids and then seek final grant approval from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Construction of the Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery is expected to take about 18 months once funding is approved.

### **State of Texas Eligibility and Burial Benefits**

The rules for eligibility for burial in the TSVC are the same as for national cemeteries. Overall eligibility for burial in a veterans cemetery (national or state) is determined by a VA regulation based on a variety of qualifying criteria, many of which may apply to your periods of service on active duty or while in the Guard or Reserves. To ascertain your eligibility or for assistance in applying for VA burial benefits, contact the nearest TVC Veterans Counselor or your local Veterans County Service Officer. You may also contact the VLB toll-free at 1-800-252-VETS (8387). Updates on the State Veterans Cemetery Program are available at [www.glo.state.tx.us/vlb/cemetery/index.html](http://www.glo.state.tx.us/vlb/cemetery/index.html).

## ***Students Sounding "TAPS" At Military Funerals***

The Texas Veterans Commission has established a program to encourage students in grades 6 through 12 or at post-secondary educational institutions to sound "Taps" on a bugle, trumpet, or coronet as part of the military honors funerals held in Texas for deceased veterans. A student, in exchange for sounding "Taps" at a military funeral, will be issued a voucher in the amount of \$25 to be exchanged for an exemption from the payment of tuition and required fees in that amount at a State of Texas public institution of higher education.



## ***Veterans' Cemeteries Administered by Other Agencies***

### **Arlington National Cemetery**

The Department of the Army administers Arlington National Cemetery. Eligibility for burial is more restrictive than at VA national cemeteries. For information, contact:

Superintendent  
Arlington National Cemetery  
Arlington, VA 22211  
(703) 607-8000  
[www.arlingtoncemetery.org](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.org)

### **Department of the Interior**

The Department of the Interior administers two active national cemeteries: Andersonville National Cemetery in Georgia and Andrew Johnson National Cemetery in Tennessee. Eligibility for burial is similar to VA cemetery eligibility.

### **State Veterans Cemeteries**

Individual states operate cemeteries for veterans. Eligibility requirements may differ from those for national cemeteries. Contact the state cemetery or state veterans affairs office for additional information. To locate a state veteran's cemetery, visit [www.cem.va.gov/scg/lsvc.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/scg/lsvc.asp).

## ***Texas State Veterans Cemetery Program***

Currently the State of Texas has three veterans' cemeteries: central Texas in Killeen; south Texas in Mission; and west-central Texas in Abilene. A future cemetery site is planned in the coastal bend area in Corpus Christi.

### **Opened Sites**

#### **Killeen**

The Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery opened January 3, 2006. Applications are being accepted for interment of deceased veterans and their qualified family members. The Killeen facility is 174 acres and is capable of providing approximately 50,000 burial places for veterans, their spouses, and eligible dependent children.

Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery  
11463 State Highway 195  
Killeen, Texas 76542-4945  
Office: (254) 616-1770; Fax: (254) 616-1769  
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

#### **Mission**

The Rio Grande Valley State Veterans Cemetery opened December 1, 2006. Applications are being accepted for interment of deceased veterans and their qualified family members. The Mission site is 75 acres and will provide approximately 25,000 burial places for veterans, their spouses and eligible dependent children. Contact information:

VA will pay a \$300 burial and funeral expense allowance for veterans who, at time of death, were entitled to receive pension or compensation or would have been entitled to compensation but for receipt of military retirement pay. Eligibility also may be established when death occurs in a VA facility, a nursing home under VA contract or a state veterans nursing home. Additional costs of transportation of the remains may be paid. In nonservice-connected death cases, claims must be filed within two years after permanent burial or cremation.

VA will pay a \$300 plot allowance when a veteran is not buried in a cemetery that is under U.S. government jurisdiction under the following circumstances:

- The veteran was discharged from active duty because of disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty; or
- The veteran was in receipt of compensation or pension or would have been except for receiving military retired pay;
- The veteran died in a VA facility.

The \$300 plot allowance may be paid to the state if a veteran is buried without charge for the cost of a plot or interment in a state-owned cemetery reserved solely for veteran burials. Burial expenses paid by the deceased's employer or a state agency will not be reimbursed.

## ***Military Funeral Honors***

Upon request, the Department of Defense (DoD) will provide military funeral honors consisting of folding and presentation of the United States flag and the sounding of "Taps." A funeral honors detail consists of two or more uniformed members of the armed forces, with a least one member from the deceased's branch of service.

Family members should inform their funeral directors if they want military honors. DoD maintains a toll-free number, 1-877-MILHONR (1-877-645-4667) for use by **funeral directors only** to request honors. VA can help arrange honors for burials at VA national cemeteries. Veterans' service organizations or volunteer groups may help provide honors. For more information, visit [www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil](http://www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil).

## ***VA's Headstones & Markers***

### **Eligibility**

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 certain veterans whose deaths occurred on or after November 1, 1990, VA may provide a government headstone or marker even if the grave is already marked with a private one.

Public Law 110-157, signed on Dec. 26, 2007, allows the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to furnish a Government headstone or marker for the graves of eligible veterans who died on or after Nov. 1, 1990, regardless of whether the grave is already marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. Under the previous law, when the grave was already marked, only veterans who died on or after Sept. 11, 2001 were eligible. When the

grave is already marked, applicants will have the option to apply for either a traditional headstone or marker, or the new device, a medallion.(See details on page 3).

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.

Any deceased veteran discharged from the U.S. armed forces under conditions other than dishonorable is eligible to receive a government headstone or marker. For enlisted persons whose service began after September 7, 1980, and for officers whose service began after October 17, 1981, service must have been for at least 24 months, or the period for which the person was called to active duty.

Members of the Reserves and National Guard who die on active duty or while performing training duty may receive a headstone or marker. Reservists and National Guard members with 20 years service who are entitled to retired pay are also eligible. A copy of the Reserve Retirement Eligibility Benefits Letter must accompany the application. People who had only active duty for training while in the National Guard or Reserves are not eligible unless there are special circumstances, such as death while on duty or as a result of training.

### Medallion

Public Law 110-157, also gives VA authority to "furnish, upon request, a medallion or other device of a design determined by the Secretary to signify the deceased's status as a veteran, to be attached to a headstone or marker furnished at private expense." This benefit will be available in lieu of a Government furnished headstone or marker, for veterans in privately marked graves who died on or after November 1, 1990.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is in the preliminary stages of designing a medallion to be affixed to an existing privately purchased headstone or marker to signify the deceased's status as a veteran.

**Important:** This benefit is only applicable if the grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. In these instances, eligible veterans are entitled to either a traditional Government-furnished headstone or marker, or the new medallion, **but not both**.

VA estimates this new medallion will be available in summer 2009. Once a contract has been awarded for its manufacture, VA will begin accepting claims. Claim instructions will be posted on the VA website. If, after seeing the final new medallion design, you change your mind, you will still have the option to submit a claim for a traditional Government-furnished headstone or marker.

### Upright Types

These headstones are 42 inches long, 13 inches wide and 4 inches thick. Weight is approximately 230 pounds. Variations may occur in stone color, and the marble may contain light to moderate veining.

### Additional Information

Gravesites in VA national cemeteries cannot be reserved in advance. However, families are encouraged to prepare in advance by discussing cemetery options and setting aside copies of any discharge documents. See "*Important Documents To Safeguard*" on page 16.

VA will provide—at not cost to the veteran's family—a gravesite, headstone or marker, Presidential Memorial Certificate, U.S. flag, perpetual care of the gravesite and will open and close the grave. The veteran's family must pay for services and other related costs provided by funeral directors.

To establish eligibility for burial in a VA national cemetery, the family should provide:

- Veteran's discharge document or report of casualty
- Veteran's full name
- Military rank
- Branch of service
- Dates of entry and discharge
- Serial, social security and/or VA claim number
- Date and place of birth
- Date of death.

The same procedures should be followed to determine the eligibility of a veteran's spouse or dependent. In most cases, one gravesite is provided for the burial of all eligible family members, marked by a single headstone or marker. When both spouses are veterans, two gravesites and two headstones or markers may be provided, if requested.

Formal funeral services are not held at national cemeteries, but final committal services may be performed at the cemetery. For safety reasons, these services are held in committal shelters located away from the gravesite. Burial will take place following the committal service. Immediate family members maybe allowed to view the actual burial only if arrangement has been made in advance with the cemetery director.

National cemeteries do not usually conduct burials on weekends or federal holidays, However, weekend callers may schedule burials for the upcoming week. Floral arrangements may accompany the casket or urn and will be placed on the grave after burial.

National cemeteries in Texas are located at:

Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery  
2000 Mountain Creek Parkway  
**Dallas, TX 75211**  
(214) 467-3374

Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery  
1520 Harry Wurzbach Road  
**San Antonio, TX 78209**  
(210) 820-3891 or 3894

Fort Bliss National Cemetery  
5200 Fred Wilson Blvd.  
P. O. Box 6342  
**Fort Bliss, TX 79906**  
(915) 564-0201

Kerrville National Cemetery  
VA Medical Center  
3600 Memorial Boulevard  
**Kerrville, TX 78028**  
*Contact the Ft. Sam Houston Cemetery*

Houston National Cemetery  
10410 Veterans Memorial Drive  
**Houston, TX 77038**  
(281) 447-8686

San Antonio National Cemetery  
517 Paso Hondo Street  
**San Antonio, TX 78202**  
*Contact the Ft. Sam Houston Cemetery*



an approved educational institution. Proper supporting documentation must be provided.

- h. Others:** Such other persons or classes of persons as designated by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (38 U.S.C. § 2402(6)) or the Secretary of Defense (Public Law 95-202, § 401, and 38 CFR § 3.7(x)).

### **Persons NOT eligible for burial in a VA National Cemetery**

- a. Former Spouses:** A former spouse of an eligible individual whose marriage to that individual has been terminated by annulment or divorce, if not otherwise eligible.
- b. Other Family Members:** Family members of an eligible person except those defined as eligible in Section III, paragraph g.
- c. Disqualifying Characters of Discharge:** A person whose only separation from the Armed Forces was under dishonorable conditions or whose character of service results in a bar to veterans benefits.
- d. Discharge from Draft:** A person who was ordered to report to an induction station, but was not actually inducted into military service.
- e. Persons Found Guilty of a Capital Crime:** Under 38 U.S.C. § 2411, interment or memorialization in a VA national cemetery or in Arlington National Cemetery is prohibited if a person is convicted of a Federal or State capital crime, for which a sentence of imprisonment for life or the death penalty may be imposed and the conviction is final. Federal officials may not inter in veterans cemeteries persons who are shown by clear and convincing evidence to have committed a Federal or State capital crime but were unavailable for trial due to death or flight to avoid prosecution. Federally funded State veterans cemeteries must also adhere to this law. This prohibition is also extended to furnishing a Presidential Memorial Certificate, a burial flag, and a headstone or marker.
- f. Subversive Activities:** Any person convicted of subversive activities after September 1, 1959, shall have no right to burial in a national cemetery from and after the date of commission of such offense, based on periods of active military service commencing before the date of the commission of such offense, nor shall another person be entitled to burial on account of such an individual. Eligibility will be reinstated if the President of the United States grants a pardon.
- g. Active or Inactive Duty for Training:** A person whose only service is active duty for training or inactive duty training in the National Guard or Reserve Component, unless the individual meets the eligibility criteria listed in Section III.1.b. of this information sheet.
- h. Other Groups:** Members of groups whose service has been determined by the Secretary of the Air Force under the provisions of Public Law 95-202 as not warranting entitlement to benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

### **Flat Types**

The flat bronze grave marker is 24 inches long, 12 inches wide, with 3/4 inch rise. Weight is approximately 18 pounds. Anchor bolts, nuts and washers for fastening to a base are furnished with the marker. The government does not furnish a base. The flat granite and flat marble grave marker is 24 inches long, 12 inches wide, and 4 inches thick. Weight is approximately 130 pounds. Variations may occur in stone color and the marble may contain light to moderate veining.

### **Bronze Niche**

This niche marker is 8 1/2 inches long, 5 1/2 inches wide, with 7/16 inch rise. Weight is approximately 3 pounds; mounting bolts and washers are furnished with the marker.

### **Memorial Headstones & Markers**

VA provides memorial headstones and markers, bearing the inscription "In Memory Of" as the first line, to memorialize those whose remains were not recovered or identified, were buried at sea, donated to science or cremated and scattered. Eligibility is the same as for regular headstones and markers. There is no fee when the "In Memory Of" marker is placed in a national cemetery. VA will not reimburse any fees associated with placement in another cemetery.

### **Pre-World War I Era Headstones & Markers**

There are specific styles of upright headstones and flat markers to mark the graves of Union and Confederate Civil War and Spanish-American War dead.

Proof of military service before World War I requires documentation, such as muster rolls, extracts from state files, pension documents or land warrants, to apply for a government headstone or marker.

Memorial markers usually are not provided to memorialize Civil War soldiers whose graves are not identified. The mere fact that the whereabouts of a grave is not known is not sufficient reason to furnish a government headstone or marker. If, however, documentation shows a soldier was buried in a mass grave, even if the actual location of the grave is unknown, VA will provide a memorial marker for placement in a national, state veterans or private cemetery.

For more detailed information for markers and headstones for pre-World War I era, visit the website at [www.cem.va.gov/cem/hm/hmcivil.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hm/hmcivil.asp) or contact VA toll-free at 1-800-697-6947 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (ET). Telephone customer service representatives do not have access to information about other VA benefits. To inquire about other VA benefits, call 1-800-827-1000.

### **Inscriptions**

Government-furnished headstones and markers must be inscribed with the legal name of the deceased, branch of service, and years of birth and death, in this order. Memorial markers must also include "In Memory Of" at the top. If space is available, the inscription may also contain any or all of the following: veteran's rank, war service, military decorations, awards and month and day of birth and death. All of these items must be inscribed in English.

Additional personalized inscriptions such as terms of endearment (“beloved brother and son”; “loving wife and mother”, etc.) and nicknames (“Poppy”, “Funny Face”, etc.) that meet acceptable standards of good taste may also be added. Affiliation with military components or organizations (Women’s Army Corps, WAC, WAVES, etc.) or veterans groups or other inscriptions may be added at the bottom of the headstone or marker with VA’s approval, if space is available and the requested inscription is respectful and in good taste.

Civilian titles such as Doctor or Reverend, or any other additions to the legal name, are not permitted on the mandatory name line of the headstone or marker, but may be added as part of the additional inscription at the bottom of the marker.

Non-English optional inscription items must be in Latin-alphabet characters and numerals. Accent marks and standard marks of punctuation may be used. Requests for an additional inscription in a language other than English must include the English translation of the inscription.

No graphics (logos, symbols, etc.) are permitted on government headstones and markers other than approved emblems of belief, the Civil War Union Shield, the Civil War Confederate Southern Cross of Honor and the Medal of Honor insignia.

Documentation must be provided with VA Form 40-1330 when requesting military awards in the inscription. In most cases this information is provided on the veteran’s military discharge documents. Military awards and decorations besides those listed in Block 8 of the application (including those from foreign governments) may be added if space is available. They should be requested in Block 27. Awards and decorations will not be inscribed without documentation to support the request.

A veteran’s spouse or other non-veteran dependent buried in a private cemetery is not eligible for a government headstone or marker. However, the applicant may reserve inscription space below the veteran’s inscription so that the non-veteran dependent’s commemorative data can be inscribed locally, at private expense, when the non-veteran dependent is buried. Alternatively, the non-veteran dependent’s name and date of birth can be added at government expense if requested on the application for the veteran’s headstone or marker. When the non-veteran dependent is buried, the date of death may then be added at private expense.

Inscriptions for a veteran’s spouse or dependent are provided at no expense when they are buried in a national, military post or state veterans cemetery.

### **Emblems of Belief**

Headstones and markers also may be inscribed with an approved “emblem of belief” such as a cross or Star of David. A listing of the emblems that may be inscribed is on the back of the application form and online at [www.cem.va.gov/hm/hmemb.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/hm/hmemb.asp).

### **How to Order a Government Headstone or Marker**

When burial or memorialization is in a national, military post, or state veterans cemetery,

### **e. World War II Merchant Mariners**

- (1) United States Merchant Mariners with oceangoing service during the period of armed conflict, December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946. Prior to the enactment of Public Law 105-368, United States Merchant Mariners with oceangoing service during the period of armed conflict of December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945, were eligible. With enactment of Public Law 105-368, the service period is extended to December 31, 1946, for those dying on or after November 11, 1998. A DD-214 documenting this service may be obtained by submitting an application to Commandant (G-MVP-6), United States Coast Guard, 2100 2nd Street, SW, Washington, DC 20593. Notwithstanding, the Mariner’s death must have occurred on or after the enactment of Public Law 105-368.
- (2) United States Merchant Mariners who served on blockships in support of Operation Mulberry during World War II.

### **f. The Philippine Armed Forces**

- (1) Any Philippine veteran who was a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States at the time of their death; and resided in the United States at the time of their death; and
  - (a) Was a person who served before July 1, 1946, in the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, while such forces were in the service of the Armed Forces of the United States pursuant to the military order of the President dated July 26, 1941, including organized guerilla forces under commanders appointed, designated, or subsequently recognized by the Commander in Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, or other competent authority in the Army of the United States, and who died on or after November 1, 2000; or,
  - (b) Was a person who enlisted between October 6, 1945, and June 30, 1947, with the Armed Forces of the United States with the consent of the Philippine government, pursuant to section 14 of the Armed Forces Voluntary Recruitment Act of 1945, and who died on or after December 16, 2003.

### **g. Spouses and Dependents**

- (1) The spouse or surviving spouse of an eligible veteran is eligible for interment in a national cemetery even if that veteran is not buried or memorialized in a national cemetery. In addition, the spouse or surviving spouse of a member of the Armed Forces of the United States whose remains are unavailable for burial is also eligible for burial.
- (2) The surviving spouse of an eligible veteran who had a subsequent remarriage to a non-veteran and whose death occurred on or after January 1, 2000, is eligible for burial in a national cemetery, based on his or her marriage to the eligible veteran.
- (3) The minor children of an eligible veteran. For purpose of burial in a national cemetery, a minor child is a child who is unmarried and:
  - (a) Who is under 21 years of age; or,
  - (b) Who is under 23 years of age and pursuing a full-time course of instruction at an approved educational institution.
- (4) The unmarried adult child of an eligible veteran. For purpose of burial in a national cemetery, an unmarried adult child is: Of any age but became permanently physically or mentally disabled and incapable of self-support before reaching 21 years of age, or before reaching 23 years of age if pursuing a full-time course of instruction at

retired pay under Chapter 1223, Title 10, United States Code, or would have been entitled, but for being under the age of 60. Specific categories of individuals eligible for retired pay are delineated in section 12731 of Chapter 1223, Title 10, United States Code.

- (2) Members of reserve components, and members of the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard, who die while hospitalized or undergoing treatment at the expense of the United States for injury or disease contracted or incurred under honorable conditions while performing active duty for training or inactive duty training, or undergoing such hospitalization or treatment.
- (3) Members of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps of the Army, Navy, or Air Force who die under honorable conditions while attending an authorized training camp or on an authorized cruise, while performing authorized travel to or from that camp or cruise, or while hospitalized or undergoing treatment at the expense of the United States for injury or disease contracted or incurred under honorable conditions while engaged in one of those activities.
- (4) Members of reserve components who, during a period of active duty for training, were disabled or died from a disease or injury incurred or aggravated in line of duty or, during a period of inactive duty training, were disabled or died from an injury or certain cardiovascular disorders incurred or aggravated in line of duty.

**c. Commissioned Officers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

- (1) A Commissioned Officer of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (formerly titled the Coast and Geodetic Survey and the Environmental Science Services Administration) with full-time duty on or after July 29, 1945.
- (2) A Commissioned Officer who served before July 29, 1945; and,
  - (a) Was assigned to an area of immediate military hazard as determined by the Secretary of Defense while in time of war, or in a Presidentially declared national emergency; or,
  - (b) Served in the Philippine Islands on December 7, 1941, and continuously in such islands thereafter.

**d. Public Health Service**

- (1) A Commissioned Officer of the Regular or Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service who served on full-time duty on or after July 29, 1945. If the service of the particular Public Health Service Officer falls within the meaning of active duty for training, as defined in section 101(22), Title 38, United States Code, he or she must have been disabled or died from a disease or injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.
- (2) A Commissioned Officer of the Regular or Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service who performed full-time duty prior to July 29, 1945:
  - (a) In time of war;
  - (b) On detail for duty with the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard; or
  - (c) While the Service was part of the military forces of the United States pursuant to Executive Order of the President.
- (3) A Commissioned Officer serving on inactive duty training as defined in Section 101(23), Title 38, United States Code, whose death resulted from an injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

cemetery staff will order a headstone or marker, using inscription information provided by the next of kin.

When burial is in a private cemetery, VA Form 40-1330, Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker, must be submitted, along with a copy of the veteran's military discharge documents. Do not send original documents because they will not be returned.

Usually, funeral directors will obtain headstones or markers as part of their services. Applications and additional information may be obtained at any VA national cemetery or regional office or by calling 1-800-827-1000. This form, VA Form 40-1330, is also available on VA's website at [www.va.gov/hmorder.htm](http://www.va.gov/hmorder.htm); however, it cannot be submitted electronically. Completed applications may be faxed toll-free to 1-800-455-7143 or mailed to:

Memorial Programs Service (41A1)  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
5109 Russell Road  
Quantico, VA 22134-3903

**Checking Your Headstone or Marker Order Status**

It generally takes 30 to 60 days to process an application and have the headstone or marker produced and delivered. To check on the status, VA provides assistance toll-free at 1-800-697-6947 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (ET). Applicants may also e-mail about the status of an order to [mps.headstones@va.gov](mailto:mps.headstones@va.gov). When inquiring by e-mail, be sure to include the veteran's full name, social security number (and/or service number), date of death and information about the veteran's service that may be helpful in researching our records. Please allow at least three business days for a response. Telephone and e-mail customer service representatives do not have access to information about other VA benefits. To inquire about other VA benefits, call 1-800-827-1000.

**Shipping Government Headstones and Markers**

Government-furnished headstones and markers are shipped free of charge to the cemetery or nearest local civilian monument business.

**Setting Government Headstones and Markers**

Cemetery staff in national, military post and military base cemeteries is 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 cemetery expense and is non-reimbursable.

For private cemeteries without a caretaker, the family member, civic group or friend may set the headstone or marker.

## Replacement of Headstones and Markers

Previously furnished headstones and markers may be replaced at government expense when badly deteriorated, illegible, vandalized or stolen. The government will also replace a headstone or marker if it is damaged, the inscription is incorrect, it is different from that specified by the applicant or permitted by the cemetery, or the material or workmanship are of poor quality.

If cemetery personnel damage a government headstone or marker located in a private cemetery, it should be replaced at the expense of the cemetery.

Marble or granite headstones or markers, permanently removed from a grave, must be destroyed ensuring that the inscription is no longer legible. Bronze markers must be returned to the contractor.

For guidance on obtaining a replacement headstone or marker, you may call the Memorial Programs Service Applicant Assistance Unit between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm (ET), Monday through Friday, toll-free at 1-800-697-6947.

## 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.

Certificates are issued upon request to recognize the military service of honorably discharged deceased veterans. Next of kin, other relatives and friends may request the certificate(s) by completing Form 40-0247, Presidential Memorial Certificate Request, and providing a copy (originals cannot be returned) of the deceased veteran's discharge document and death certificate. The form is available online at [www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-0247.pdf](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-0247.pdf). Requests can be made in person at any VA regional office, by toll-free fax to 1-800-455-7143 or by mail to:

Presidential Memorial Certificates (41A1C)  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
5109 Russell Rd., Quantico, VA 22134-3903

A sample certificate and additional information can be found on the Internet at [www.cem.va.gov/cem/pmc.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/pmc.asp).

## Burial Flags

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 listed below unless dishonorably 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

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.

To apply, complete VA Form 21-2008, Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes. Flag can be obtained at any VA regional office or U.S. Post Office. Generally, the funeral director will help you obtain the flag.

## Burial in VA National Cemeteries

### Persons eligible for burial in a VA National Cemetery

VA national cemetery directors have the primary responsibility for verifying eligibility for burial in VA national cemeteries. A determination of eligibility is usually made in response to a request for burial in a VA national cemetery. VA Regional Offices will also assist in determining eligibility for burial in a VA national cemetery. The toll-free number for the nearest VA Regional Office is 1-800-827-1000.

- a. Veterans and Members of the Armed Forces** (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard)
- (1) Any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who dies on active duty.
  - (2) Any veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. With certain exceptions, service beginning after September 7, 1980, as an enlisted person, and service after October 16, 1981, as an officer, must be for a minimum of 24 continuous months or the full period for which the person was called to active duty (as in the case of a Reservist called to active duty for a limited duration). Undesirable, bad conduct, and any other type of discharge other than honorable may or may not qualify the individual for veterans benefits, depending upon a determination made by a VA Regional Office. Cases presenting multiple discharges of varying character are also referred for adjudication to a VA Regional Office.
  - (3) Any citizen of the United States who, during any war in which the United States has or may be engaged, served in the Armed Forces of any Government allied with the United States during that war, whose last active service was terminated honorably by death or otherwise, and who was a citizen of the United States at the time of entry into such service and at the time of death.

**b. Members of Reserve Components and Reserve Officers' Training Corps**

- (1) Reservists and National Guard members who, at time of death, were entitled to