

# Your Guide to Military Burials

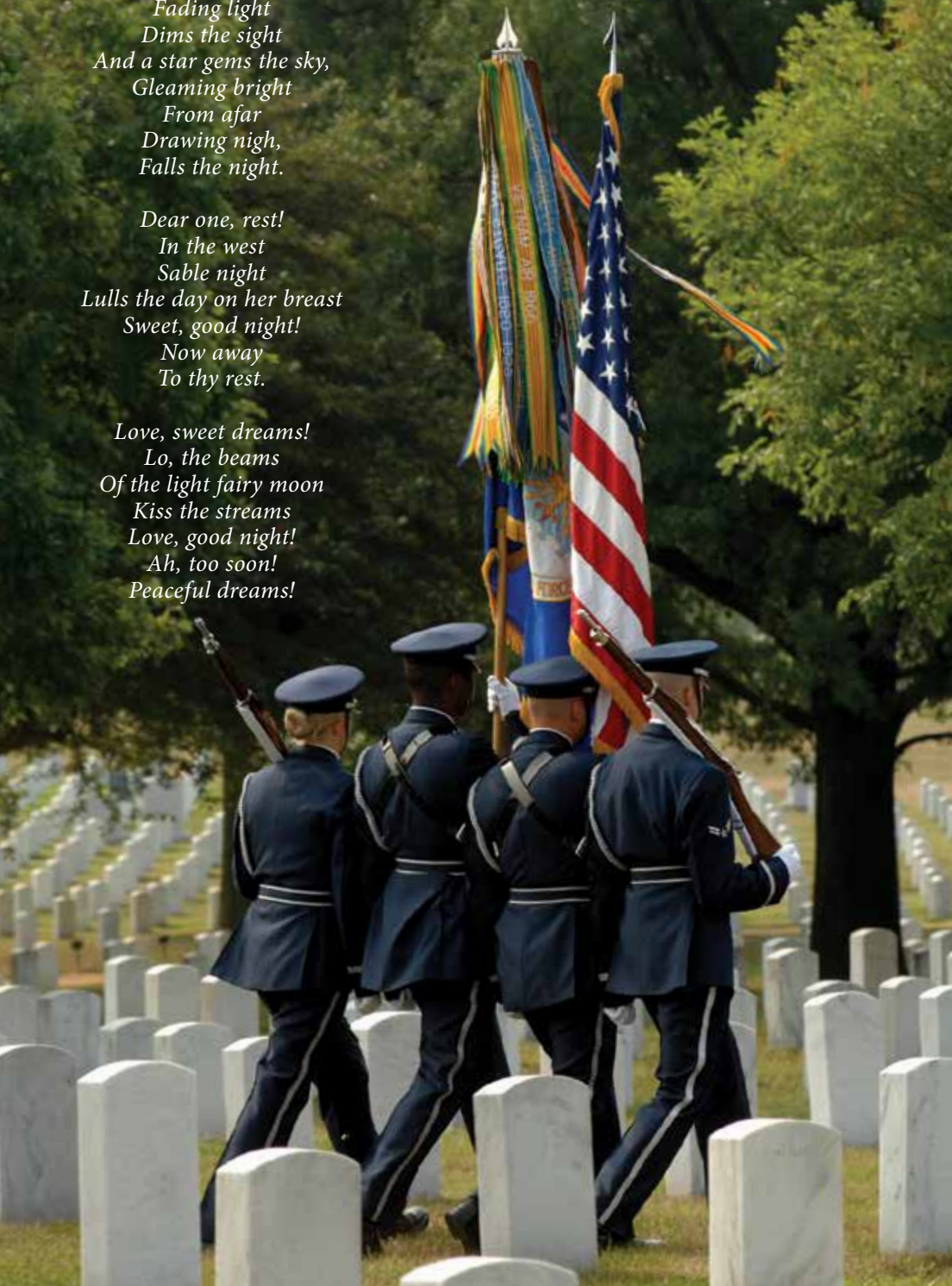
Find peace of mind as you choose  
your final resting place

## TAPS

*Fading light  
Dims the sight  
And a star gems the sky,  
Gleaming bright  
From afar  
Drawing nigh,  
Falls the night.*

*Dear one, rest!  
In the west  
Sable night  
Lulls the day on her breast  
Sweet, good night!  
Now away  
To thy rest.*

*Love, sweet dreams!  
Lo, the beams  
Of the light fairy moon  
Kiss the streams  
Love, good night!  
Ah, too soon!  
Peaceful dreams!*



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>Chapter 1</b> General Information .....	5
<b>Chapter 2</b> Eligibility for Interment.....	13
<b>Chapter 3</b> Arlington National Cemetery .....	16
<b>Chapter 4</b> State Cemeteries .....	22
<b>Chapter 5</b> Overseas Cemeteries .....	23
<b>Chapter 6</b> Burial at Sea .....	24
<b>Chapter 7</b> Death Abroad .....	26
<b>Chapter 8</b> Anatomical Gifts .....	28
<b>Chapter 9</b> National, Post, and State Veterans' Cemeteries .....	30

This booklet answers questions former and retired military personnel and their families frequently ask about military burials. Eligibility for burial; locations of federal, state, and post cemeteries; burial at sea; and deaths abroad all are covered here. Call MOAA at (800) 234-MOAA (6622) to request additional copies or email [beninfo@moaa.org](mailto:beninfo@moaa.org) if you have questions or need clarification.

The information contained in this publication is intended for personal use by individuals who serve or who have served in the U.S. military and is not meant to substitute for legal or professional services. The regulations covering the earned benefits discussed herein are constantly amended — the information within is current as of the publication date.

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# Introduction

This booklet answers questions former military personnel and their families frequently ask about military burial. Although considered accurate and correct as of the date of publication, this is not an official publication of the uniformed services or any government agency.

For official, up-to-date information and details not included in this booklet, visit [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov). You also may contact the director of the appropriate cemetery or the nearest office of the VA. Questions about burial in Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia should be directed to the superintendent of that facility. (Find contact information at [www.arlingtoncemetery.mil](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil).)

MOAA's resource *Help Your Survivors Now: A Guide to Planning Ahead* contains additional information for survivors, and a *Personal Affairs Action Guide* should be completed and made a part of your personal papers.



Contact the VA for current information and additional details.

- Call the MyVA411 information line at (800) 698-2411

# Chapter 1

## General Information

An act signed by President Abraham Lincoln July 17, 1862, authorized the establishment of national cemeteries “for the soldiers who shall die in the service of the country.” Following this authorization, 14 cemeteries were established.

Through the years, responsibility for and authority over these cemeteries have shifted several times, eligibility criteria have been enlarged, and the overall cemetery system has expanded dramatically. Today, more than 160 national cemeteries, soldiers’ lots, and monument sites are under the jurisdiction of the VA-managed National Cemetery Administration. The National Park Service administers 14 national cemeteries, although burial space is available in only two (with the exception of previous, valid reservations or prior burial of family members). Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia currently is under the administration of the commander, U.S. Army Military District of Washington.

### NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

The interment of an eligible person is authorized in any national cemetery in which space is available. Access a list of national, post, and state cemeteries with grave space available in Chapter 9: National, Post, and State Veterans’ Cemeteries.

At national veterans’ cemeteries, a particular gravesite, columbarium, or garden niche cannot be reserved in advance. Space is assigned only at the time burial arrangements are completed. Cremated remains are inurned in national cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains.

### ARRANGEMENTS

To schedule a burial in any of the VA national cemeteries except Puerto Rico, contact the National Cemetery Administration scheduling office by following the instructions below:

**Fax eligibility documentation to (866) 900-6417.** Fax all eligibility documentation to the scheduling office before calling. Burial in a

national cemetery is based on military service. A copy of an official military discharge document bearing an official seal or other supporting documentation is usually sufficient to determine eligibility for burial. The document must show release from service was under conditions other than dishonorable. Discharge documentation usually is not needed to schedule burial with a veteran or eligible dependent who already is interred in a national cemetery.

If you do not have discharge documentation, scheduling office agents are available to assist you with the verification process. Requests for eligibility determination when no military discharge documents are available might require 48 hours or more for verification. Scheduling office personnel will contact you within 48 hours of the initial process with verification results or an explanation of the delay.

**Call the National Cemetery Administration scheduling office at (800) 535-1117.** If possible, prepare answers to these questions ahead of time:

- What is the cemetery of choice?
- Is this the first or a subsequent burial?
- If this is a subsequent interment, who already is interred and what are the section and site numbers (if known)?
- What is the decedent's full name, gender, Social Security number, date of death, date of birth, and relationship to the person previously interred, if applicable?
- What is the contact information (funeral director's name as well as the name, address, and email address of the funeral home)?
- Who is next of kin (provide name, relationship to deceased, Social Security number, phone number, and address)?
- What type of religious emblem is desired for the headstone (if known)?
- Did the decedent reside within 75 miles of requested cemetery?
- What is the ZIP code of the decedent's residence at time of death?
- In what county did the decedent reside at time of death?
- What type of burial (casket or cremation) did the decedent request?
- What is the marital status of deceased (if veteran is buried in a private cemetery, must provide documentation of marital status of spouse at time of death)?
- What casket size/liner size/urn size/urn vault size is necessary?
- Is the surviving spouse a veteran?
- Will any disabled children be interred (must provide name and date of birth)? If requesting immediate interment, provide marital status, doctor's statement stating type of illness, date of onset of illness, and capability of self-support.

- What military honors are requested?

Remains should not be shipped to the national cemetery, nor should the date and time of the interment be set or announced, until verification has been obtained.

In the case of cremation, the receptacle containing the remains may be brought personally to the cemetery or may be sent by mail or other commercial means to the cemetery's director. Find specific instructions for Arlington National Cemetery in Chapter 3: Arlington National Cemetery.

An eligible spouse or child who predeceases an eligible veteran may be buried in a national cemetery. In most cases, one gravesite is provided for the burial of all eligible family members and a single headstone or marker is provided. If both spouses are veterans, two gravesites and two headstones or markers may be provided.

Contact a national cemetery directly for scheduling support when:

- requesting burial in Puerto Rico;
- scheduling an active duty interment;
- rescheduling or canceling interment;
- changing information initially provided to the scheduling office;
- requesting disinterment and/or relocation to another national cemetery; or
- requesting information pertaining to headstones, floral policy, hours of operation, or other items unique to that cemetery.

## MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS

All eligible veterans, including military retirees, are entitled to military funeral honors. At a minimum, the funeral honors ceremony will consist of the folding and presentation of the American flag and the playing of taps. At least two uniformed military personnel shall perform the ceremony. If a bugler is not available, an electronic recording will be played. One of the uniformed military personnel will be from the deceased veteran's parent military service and will present the flag to the next of kin.

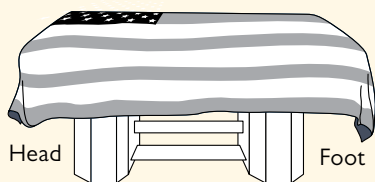
The military services may provide additional elements of honors and may use additional uniformed military personnel or other authorized providers, such as members of a veterans' organization, to augment the funeral honors detail.

The next of kin or otherwise appropriate individual must request the funeral honors; they are not provided automatically. Per DoD policy, the family must request that the funeral director contact the military. Funeral directors may call (877) MIL-HONR (645-4667) to coordinate the ceremonies.

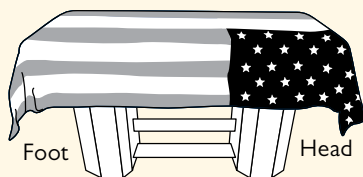
## DISPLAYING THE FLAG ON A CASKET



To correctly display a U.S. flag on a casket, center the flag on the casket so the blue shield is at the head and over the left shoulder of the deceased.



Front View



Rear View

## BURIAL FLAG

The VA will furnish an American flag to drape over the casket of a veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and people entitled to military retired pay, including reservists. Submit VA Form 27-2008, which can be found at [www.cem.va.gov/cem/bbene/bflags.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/bbene/bflags.asp). Flags also are available at no cost through many U.S. Postal Service facilities. Funeral directors usually obtain the flag for burial; the flag is presented to the next of kin following interment.

## HEADSTONE, GRAVE MARKER, OR MEDALLION

The VA furnishes a government headstone or grave marker with inscriptions, at no cost to the applicant, for the unmarked grave of any deceased eligible veteran in any cemetery in the world, regardless of the veteran's date of death. For eligible veterans who died on or after Nov. 1, 1990, and whose graves are marked with privately purchased headstones, the VA also may furnish headstones or markers to supplement the graves or medallions that may be affixed to privately purchased headstones.

The VA also provides a headstone or marker to reservists who are entitled to military retired pay. The nearest VA office or administration office



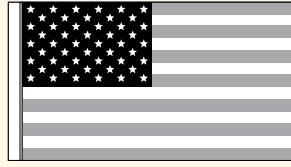
The VA will furnish an American flag to drape over the casket of those who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and those entitled to military retired pay.



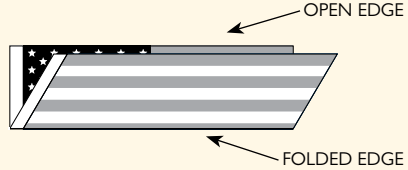
## FOLDING THE U.S. FLAG



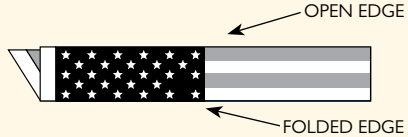
Here are step-by-step instructions to correctly fold a U.S. flag.



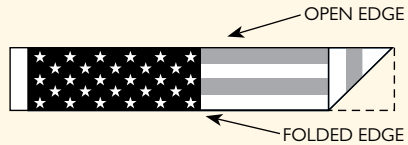
Fold the striped section of the flag over the blue field.



Fold the folded edge over to meet the open edge.



Start a triangular fold by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to the open edge.



Fold the outer point inward parallel with the open edge to form a second triangle.



Continue folding until the entire length of the flag is folded into a triangle with only the blue field and margin showing.



Tuck the remaining margin into the pocket formed by the folds at the blue field edge of the flag.



The folded flag should resemble a cocked hat.



of a national cemetery will assist in requesting a headstone or grave marker.

Eligible veterans may receive a government-furnished headstone or marker or a medallion but not both.

## PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATES PROGRAM

A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is an engraved paper certificate signed by the current president to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans. President John Kennedy started the program in March 1962, and all subsequent presidents have continued it; the VA now administers the program.

Eligible recipients include the next of kin and loved ones of honorably discharged deceased veterans. Eligible recipients, or someone acting on their behalf, may apply for a PMC in person at any VA regional office, by U.S. mail, or by fax. More than one certificate may be provided. Requests are not accepted via email. Use VA Form 40-0247 ([www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp)) when requesting a PMC, and enclose a copy of the veteran's discharge and death certificates. Submit copies only; original documents will not be returned.

If you would like to request a PMC by VA Form 40-0247, either:

- fax your request and all supporting documents (copy of discharge and death certificates) to (800) 455-7143 (visit [www.cem.va.gov/cem/faxpmc.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/faxpmc.asp)), or

- mail your request and all supporting documents to:  
Presidential Memorial Certificates (41B)  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
5109 Russell Road  
Quantico, VA 22134-3903

If you have questions about a certificate you have received, a request you already have mailed in, or the program in general, email [pmc@va.gov](mailto:pmc@va.gov) or visit [www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp).

## REIMBURSEMENT

If a death is service-related and occurred on or after Sept. 11, 2001, the VA will pay up to \$2,000 toward burial expenses. If the death occurred before Sept. 11, 2001, the VA will pay up to \$1,500. Some or all of the cost of transporting the deceased also might be reimbursed if the veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery. More information on transportation allowances is included in the following section.



To apply for a headstone or grave marker, fill out the form at [www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/va40-1330.pdf](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/va40-1330.pdf). To apply for a medallion, visit [www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/va40-1330m.pdf](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/va40-1330m.pdf).

For information on non-service-related deaths reimbursement, please reference the charts on the VA website: <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/veterans-burial-allowance>.

## TRANSPORTATION ALLOWANCES

The VA may authorize the cost of transporting the remains of a veteran who at the time of death was hospitalized in a VA facility or domiciled at another facility at VA expense. The VA also may authorize payment of transportation allowance for the remains of a service-connected disabled veteran from the place of death to the national cemetery nearest the veteran's last residence in which space is available.

Similarly, if the veteran died en route while traveling under prior authorization of the VA for the purpose of examination, treatment, or care, a transportation allowance may be paid.

The VA or the military (depending on the situation) supplies a transportation allowance. If military transport is used, there is no allowance. The transport is the benefit.

## ELIGIBILITY

You might be eligible for a VA burial allowance if:

- you paid for a veteran's burial or funeral;
- you have 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.
- The veteran was receiving a VA pension or compensation at the time of death.
- The veteran was entitled to receive a VA pension or compensation but decided not to reduce his or her military retirement or disability pay.
- The veteran died in a VA hospital, in a nursing home under a VA contract, or in an approved state nursing home.

The allowances highlighted in this chapter are revised periodically through changes in legislation. Obtain exact amounts from the nearest VA regional office at (800) 827-1000 or the VA website at [www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial\\_benefits/index.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/index.asp).

To file a claim for burial, plot, or transportation expenses, fill out VA Form 21-530, Application for Burial Allowances. The funeral director or person responsible for the veteran's burial expenses usually files the expenses. The claim must be filed within two years of the permanent burial or cremation of the remains. There is no time limit for submission of a claim when a veteran's death has been determined to be service-connected or for

transportation of the remains of an otherwise qualified deceased veteran to a national cemetery. Find additional information at [www.benefits.va.gov/com-pensation/claims-special-burial.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/com-pensation/claims-special-burial.asp).

## SOCIAL SECURITY SPECIAL LUMP SUM

The Social Security Administration may authorize a lump-sum payment up to \$255 if eligible individuals meet certain requirements. Survivors must apply for this payment within two years of the date of death.

## NATIONWIDE GRAVESITE LOCATOR

To search for a person's burial location, visit <https://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/ngl>. Some newer interments might not be listed.

Arlington National Cemetery records also are available for interments that occurred after Dec. 31, 1999. As more records are added to the database, more burial information will become available.

Contact the national cemetery or the state cemetery directly to discuss your findings if your search does not work. (See Chapter 9: National, Post, and State Veterans' Cemeteries.)

If you cannot locate the person for whom you are searching, provide the following information on each individual to the address below: full name, including any alternate spellings; date and place of birth; date and place of death; state from which the individual entered active duty; and military service branch.

It takes approximately four weeks to receive a reply. Include your return mailing address, phone number, and/or email address with your request, and send your request to:

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
National Cemetery Administration (43A1)  
Burial Location Request  
810 Vermont Ave. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20420



For information about the Social Security Administration's lump-sum payment, visit [www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-8.html](http://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-8.html).

# Chapter 2

## Eligibility for Interment

The circumstances in which a person is eligible for burial in a national cemetery vary. They are outlined below. Learn more at [www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial\\_benefits/eligible.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/eligible.asp).

### ELIGIBLE FOR BURIAL IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES

#### ***Veterans and members of the armed forces.***

- Any member of the armed forces who dies on active duty.
- Any veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. With certain exceptions, service beginning after Sept. 7, 1980, as an enlisted person, and service after Oct. 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 type of discharge other than honorable might not qualify the individual for veterans' benefits, depending upon a determination by a VA regional office. Cases presenting multiple discharges of varying character also are referred for adjudication to a VA regional office.

***U.S. Merchant Mariners with oceangoing service during the period of armed conflict from Dec. 7, 1941, to Dec. 31, 1946.*** Prior to the enactment of Public Law 105-368, U.S. Merchant Mariners with oceangoing service during the period of armed conflict from Dec. 7, 1941, to Aug. 15, 1945, were eligible. With enactment of Public Law 105-368, the service period is extended to Dec. 31, 1946, for those dying on or after Nov. 11, 1998.

***Certain officers of the U.S. Public Health Service with wartime service.*** The National Cemetery Administration scheduling office can confirm eligibility.

***Philippine veterans who meet certain eligibility criteria.*** The National Cemetery Administration scheduling office can confirm eligibility.

***Commissioned officers of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who meet certain service requirements.*** The National Cemetery Administration scheduling office can confirm eligibility.

### ***National Guard members and reservists and members of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC).***

- Reservists and National Guard members who, at time of death, were entitled to retired pay under Chapter 1223, title 10, U.S. 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, U.S. Code.
- Members of reserve components who die while hospitalized or undergoing treatment at the expense of the U.S. 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.
- Members of Army, Navy, or Air Force ROTC units 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 U.S. for injury or disease contracted or incurred under honorable conditions while engaged in one of those activities.
- 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 the line of duty or who, during a period of inactive duty training, were disabled or died from an injury or certain cardiovascular disorders incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

### ***Spouses and dependents.***

- The spouse, surviving spouse, or dependent of an eligible veteran or member of the armed forces might be eligible for interment in a national cemetery even if that veteran is not buried or memorialized in a national cemetery.
- The surviving spouse of an eligible veteran who had a subsequent remarriage to a nonveteran and whose death occurred on or after Jan. 1, 2000, is eligible for burial in a national cemetery (with the exception of Arlington National Cemetery), based on his or her marriage to the eligible veteran.
- Unmarried minor children of an eligible person. Includes unmarried children younger than 21 (or age 23 if attending college).
- Unmarried adult children of an eligible person, if they are permanently incapable of self-support because of a mental or physical disability incurred before age 21. A national cemetery director can confirm eligibility.

### **Other classes of people designated by the VA secretary.**

#### Parents.

- Parents might be eligible if they are the biological or adoptive parents of a servicemember and the parent died after Oct. 13, 2010. Furthermore, the servicemember:
- must have died on or after Oct. 7, 2001;
- must have died as the result of a hostile casualty or training-related injury;
- must be interred in a national cemetery with additional space available in his or her gravesite; and
- must have had no spouse, surviving spouse, or child who is buried or might be eligible for burial.

### **NOT ELIGIBLE FOR BURIAL IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES**

- A nonveteran spouse who received a divorce or an annulment from an eligible person.
- Parents (except as specified above), siblings, or in-laws, even though they might depend on an eligible person for support or be members of that person's household.
- A person whose separation from the armed forces was under dishonorable conditions.
- Persons convicted of certain capital offenses as under 38 U.S. Code § 2411.
- A person whose only service is active duty for training or inactive duty training in the National Guard or Reserve, unless the individual meets the eligibility criteria listed above.
- A person convicted of subversive activities after Sept. 1, 1959.
- A person who was ordered to report to an induction station but was not actually inducted into military service.
- 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 the VA.



All eligible veterans, including military retirees, are entitled to military funerals. Funeral directors may call (877) MIL-HONR (645-4667) to coordinate the ceremonies.

# Chapter 3

## Arlington National Cemetery

### GROUND BURIAL

Space in Arlington National Cemetery ([www.arlingtoncemetery.mil](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil)) in Virginia may not be reserved in advance; it is assigned at the time of death. Because of space limitations, ground burial in Arlington is limited to:

- Any active duty member of the armed forces (except those members serving on active duty for training only).
- Any retired member of the armed forces. A retired member of the armed forces, in the context of this paragraph, is a retired member of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, or Coast Guard or a reserve component who has served on active duty (other than for training), is carried on an official retired list, and is entitled to receive retired pay stemming from service in the armed forces. If, at the time of death, a retired member of the armed forces is not entitled to receive retired pay stemming from his or her service in the armed forces until some future date, the retired member will not be eligible for ground burial.
- Any former member of the armed forces separated honorably prior to Oct. 1, 1949, for medical reasons and who was rated 30-percent-or-greater disabled effective on the day of discharge.
- Any former member of the armed forces who has been awarded one of the following decorations:
  - Medal of Honor
  - Distinguished Service Cross (Navy Cross or Air Force Cross)
  - Distinguished Service Medal
  - Silver Star
  - Purple Heart
- The president of the U.S. or any former president of the U.S.
- Any former member of the armed forces who served on active duty (other than for training) and who held any of the following positions:
  - An elective office of the U.S. government
  - Office of the chief justice of the U.S. or of an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court



- An office listed, at the time the person held the position, in 5 U.S. Code 5312 or 5313 (Levels I and II of the Executive Schedule)
- The chief of a mission who was at any time during his or her tenure classified in Class I under the provisions of Section 411, Act of 13 August 1946, 60 Stat. 1002, as amended (22 U.S. Code 866)
- Any former prisoner of war who, while a prisoner of war, served honorably in active military, naval, or air service, whose last period of military, naval, or air service terminated honorably, and who died on or after Nov. 30, 1993.
- The spouse, survivor, minor child, or permanently dependent child and certain unmarried adult children of any of the above eligible veterans.
- Survivors of servicemembers who are interred in Arlington National Cemetery as part of a group burial; these may be interred/inurned in the cemetery but not in the same gravesite as the group burial.
- The surviving spouse, minor child, or permanently dependent child of any person already buried in Arlington National Cemetery.
- The parents of a minor child, or permanently dependent child, whose remains, based on the eligibility of a parent, already are buried in Arlington National Cemetery. A spouse divorced from the primary eligible, or widowed and remarried, is not eligible for interment.

## COLUMBARIUM

The following are eligible for inurnment in the columbarium:

- Any member of the armed forces who dies on active duty.
- Any former member of the armed forces who served on active duty (other than for training) and whose last service terminated honorably.
- Any member of a reserve component of the armed forces who dies while he or she is
  - on active duty for training or performing full-time service under Title 32, U.S. Code;
  - performing authorized travel to or from that duty or service;
  - on authorized inactive duty training, including training performed as a member of the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard (23 U.S. Code 502); or



To learn more about Arlington National Cemetery and eligibility rules for burial in the cemetery, visit [www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/funeralinformation/establishservices.aspx](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/funeralinformation/establishservices.aspx).

- hospitalized or being treated at the expense of the U.S. for injury or disease incurred or contracted while he or she is on that duty or service, performing that travel or inactive duty training, or undergoing that hospitalization or treatment at the expense of the U.S.
- Any member of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps of the Army, Navy, or Air Force whose death occurs while he or she is
  - attending an authorized training camp;
  - on an authorized practice cruise;
  - performing authorized travel to or from an authorized training camp or practice cruise; or
  - hospitalized or receiving treatment at the expense of the U.S. for injury or disease incurred while attending an authorized training camp or practice cruise, performing that travel, or receiving that hospitalization or treatment at the expense of the U.S.
- Any former prisoner of war who, while a prisoner of war, served honorably in active military, naval, or air service, whose last period of active military, naval, or air service terminated honorably, and who died on or after Nov. 30, 1993.
- Any citizen of the U.S. who, during any war in which the U.S. has been engaged, served in the armed forces of any government allied with the U.S. during that war; whose last service ended honorably by death or otherwise; and who was a citizen of the U.S. at the time of entry into that service and at the time of death.
- Certain commissioned officers of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
- Certain commissioned officers of the U.S. Public Health Service.
- Spouses and minor and certain adult children of those eligible above. For additional information, visit [www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/funeralinformation/establishservices.aspx](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/funeralinformation/establishservices.aspx).

## AGREEMENT FOR INTERMENT/INURNMENT

If a family member eligible for burial or inurnment in Arlington National Cemetery predeceases the person on whom that eligibility is based, an Agreement for Interment must be executed. This agreement stipulates the person providing entitlement also will be buried or inurned in Arlington National Cemetery or the dependent's remains will be removed from the cemetery without cost to the government.

## GROUND BURIAL AND COLUMBARIUM INURNMENT PROCEDURES

Burial and inurnment procedures at Arlington National Cemetery are similar to those explained in Chapter 1. However, the following addi-

tional information might be useful.

Arlington National Cemetery does not make prearrangements or reservations before the time of death (time of need). However, at the time of need, the surviving spouse or parent of the deceased should go to the local funeral home to make arrangements for any desired funeral services in your area. A funeral director should call Arlington National Cemetery to make burial arrangements using the Consolidated Customer Service Center (877) 907-8585. Provide the funeral director with all required documents. After calling and receiving a case file number, fax or email scheduling documentation only, which is requested for establishing eligibility, using one of the contact methods below.

Include the case number in the subject of your communications.

[Example: Subject: CASE No. #####]

Consolidated Customer Service Center

- (877) 907-8585
- Fax: (571) 256-3334
- Email: arlingtoncemetery.isb@mail.mil

When a death occurs outside the Washington, D.C., area, the remains must be shipped to a local funeral director and not to Arlington National Cemetery. The funeral director must make arrangements for the pickup, transportation, and storage of remains, if necessary, using a commercial funeral director from the Washington, D.C., area. Costs or charges in connection with this process must be paid by the decedent's estate. The receiving funeral director must reconfirm and coordinate the scheduled interment date and time with Arlington National Cemetery.

If you choose to be cremated, your next of kin or personal representative can call the Consolidated Customer Service Center for a case number and to schedule the service. The urn containing the cremated remains must be sealed tightly and hand-carried by the family on the day of the service or delivered by a local funeral home up to three working days prior to the service. The cemetery will not accept cremated remains sent via U.S. Postal Service or other common carrier. Costs of cremation, an urn, services by a funeral director, and transportation of remains to the cemetery are the responsibility of the family or other party who secures funeral services. Should it be impractical for relatives or friends to accompany the remains, interment or inurnment will be carried out with the same reverence and careful attention as though the remains were accompanied.

Arlington National Cemetery does not charge for the services the cemetery provides. However, if the next of kin desires a private headstone marker/monument or a vault (in lieu of a government headstone or graveliner), the family of the deceased incurs all costs associated with

the private monument or vault. Arrangements for the private headstone marker/monument and/or the vault are the responsibility of the next of kin. There is no charge for a gravesite, the excavation required to open the grave, the setup of the gravesite, or the closing of the gravesite. There is no charge for a government headstone or government graveliner. To assist your survivors, maintain your personal data, as well as a Statement of Desire for Cremation, if applicable, with all your personal papers.

The VA provides upright marble headstones to mark the graves of those buried in Arlington National Cemetery. The cemetery orders these headstones at the time of interment. The next of kin will fill out a form verifying the accuracy of what is to be inscribed on the stone.

Each niche in the columbarium will be sealed with a marble plaque inscribed with the name, highest military grade, and year of birth and death of the deceased. Plaques are ordered automatically when inurnment is completed and are provided at no cost.

Learn more at [www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/funerals/scheduling-a-funeral/establishing-eligibility](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/funerals/scheduling-a-funeral/establishing-eligibility).

## MILITARY HONORS

Military personnel, retirees, and veterans may be interred or inurned with military honors. The Arlington National Cemetery superintendent will help make arrangements. Interment/inurnment services and military funeral honors are first-come, first-served. The following honors are available but can be modified if a family does not want part or all of the available honors:

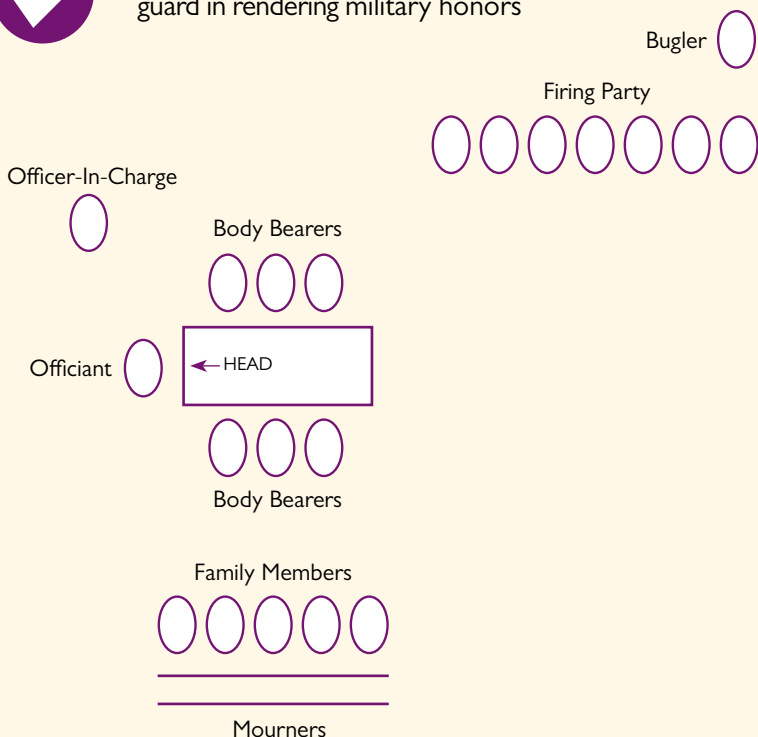
- Officers through O-3, warrant officers through CW3, and enlisted members through E-8: The appropriate branch of service will provide military funeral honors, to include pallbearers, a firing party, and a bugler. Cemetery staff will schedule the honors and support. A military chaplain can be scheduled, or the next of kin or funeral director may provide a family minister.
- Officers in grades O-4 and above, warrant officers in grades CW4 or CW5, and enlisted members in grade E-9 are eligible for military honors plus an escort and a military band upon request. The escort element varies according to the rank of the deceased. A caisson may also be requested, subject to availability. Servicemembers killed in action and those who receive the Medal of Honor also are eligible for these elements.
- The riderless (caparisoned) horse is used for Army and Marine Corps colonels and higher ranks. For flag officers (Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps), minute guns are provided. For flag officers (Army, Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps), a gun salute is provided.

- Aviation personnel: Each military service has specific rules and regulations regarding flyovers at military funerals that should be addressed/requested when scheduling the service.
- Dependents with no military service: The appropriate branch of service will provide casket team (body bearers/pallbearers). A military chaplain can be scheduled, or the next of kin or funeral director may provide a family minister.

## GUIDELINES FOR CEREMONIAL GUARD



Guidelines for positioning of ceremonial guard in rendering military honors



# Chapter 4

## State Cemeteries

Many states maintain cemeteries specifically for burial of eligible veterans and eligible family members. To assist states, the VA can provide up to 100 percent of the development cost for an approved project. For establishment of new cemeteries and expansion and improvement of state-owned veterans' cemeteries, the VA can provide for operating equipment but cannot provide for the acquisition of land for a new state cemetery. State governments maintain and operate these cemeteries and complement VA national cemeteries by providing gravesites in areas of the country not served by national cemeteries.

Eligibility for these cemeteries is the same as for national cemeteries, but the state may add requirements. For example, the state can establish residency requirements. In most cases, no charge is associated with the burial of a veteran in a federally funded state veterans' cemetery, but there might be a small charge for the interment of an eligible family member. Eligibility requirements can be confirmed with the state veterans' cemetery director. For more information, see Chapter 9: National, Post, and State Veterans' Cemeteries.



Many states have established veterans' cemeteries. Learn more about eligibility requirements and find a map of state veterans' cemeteries at [www.cem.va.gov/grants/veterans\\_cemeteries.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/grants/veterans_cemeteries.asp).



No additional burials may be made in American Battle Monuments Commission cemeteries, except the remains of war dead that still might be found on former battlefields.

# Chapter 5

## Overseas Cemeteries

The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), an independent agency of the government's executive branch, is responsible for administering and maintaining cemeteries and monuments honoring U.S. war dead who are buried overseas. The ABMC commemorative mission is reflected in 25 overseas military cemeteries that serve as resting places for almost 125,000 American war dead; on Tablets of the Missing that memorialize more than 94,000 U.S. servicemembers; and through 26 memorials, monuments, and markers.

### ON FOREIGN SOIL



Many U.S. war dead are buried in cemeteries overseas.

The American Battle Monuments Commission has a map of cemetery and memorial locations overseas and a searchable database of those buried on foreign soil. Learn more at:

- [www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov)
- American Battle Monuments Commission  
Courthouse Plaza II, Suite 500  
2300 Clarendon Blvd.  
Arlington, VA 22201
- (703) 584-1501
- Email: [info@abmc.gov](mailto:info@abmc.gov)

# Chapter 6

## Burial at Sea

Individuals eligible for this program are (1) active duty members of the uniformed services; (2) retirees and veterans who were honorably discharged; (3) U.S. civilian marine personnel of the Military Sealift Command; and (4) dependent family members of active duty personnel, retirees, and veterans of the uniformed services. After the death of the individual for whom the request for burial at sea is being made, the person authorized to direct disposition (PADD) should print out and complete the Burial at Sea Request Form at [www.navy.mil/navydata/questions/bas-form.pdf](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/questions/bas-form.pdf).

Call the Burial at Sea program, U.S. Navy Mortuary Affairs Office, at (866) 787-0081. A person in this office can mail, email, or fax an information packet containing the burial at sea request/authorization form. Supporting documents that must accompany this request are (1) a photocopy of the death certificate; (2) the burial transit permit or the cremation certificate; and (3) a copy of the DD Form 214, discharge certificate, or retirement order. The Burial at Sea Request Form and the three supporting documents make up the Burial at Sea Request package.

If the retired servicemember did not put in writing a preference for burial at sea, the PADD may authorize burial at sea.

All expenses incurred in this process are the responsibility of the family, which will select a funeral home in the area of the port of embarkation. Once the selection has been made and the coordinator has been notified, the next step is to forward the casketed remains, request form, supporting documents, and burial flag to the funeral home.

The coordinator will make the inspection and complete the checklist for the preparation of casketed remains. Specific guidelines are required for the preparation of casketed remains.

The Coast Guard also performs burials at sea for eligible members as their operational schedule allows but for cremains only. After the death of the individual for whom the request for Burial at Sea is being made, the PADD may complete the Burial at Sea worksheet (Worksheet 1779 Rev. 11-2011, found at <https://bit.ly/2MkxBTA>) or provide a letter with the same information. Supporting documents that must accompany the request include:



## REQUEST BURIAL AT SEA



Burial at sea is available for select active duty, former, and retired servicemembers and some family members.

Call the U.S. Navy Mortuary Affairs Office at (866) 787-0081 to receive an information packet. The following documents must accompany the request:

- a death certificate photocopy;
- the burial transit permit or cremation certificate; and
- a copy of the DD Form 214, discharge certificate, or retirement order.

Visit <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/Casualty/Mortuary-Services/Burial-at-Sea/> to find more information.

- a legible copy of the death certificate;
- the cremation certificate; and
- (for military only) a copy of DD Form 214 or an equivalent discharge certificate or retirement order or DD Form 1300.

The PADD is the person designated on form CG-2020D for members of the Coast Guard or on DD Form 93 for military members of DoD services.

Requests to conduct burials at sea shall be approved by the district commander in the area in which death occurs or burial is desired. This approval will be based on operational commitments, and the date of burial will be determined by the availability of the Coast Guard asset concerned. Burial at sea coordinators can tell you whether a burial at sea can be done and if so, what documentation is required. Find more details as well as a list of the ports of embarkation and coordinators at <https://bit.ly/2ASYdpe>. Family members are not allowed to attend burials at sea because of safety and scheduling issues.

When a person is buried at sea, an application may be made to the VA for a memorial headstone or marker (VA Form 40-1330). The headstone or marker may be placed in a VA national cemetery. There is no charge for placement in a VA national cemetery.

# Chapter 7

## Death Abroad

The State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs is responsible for the welfare and whereabouts of U.S. citizens traveling and residing abroad. To learn more, visit [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

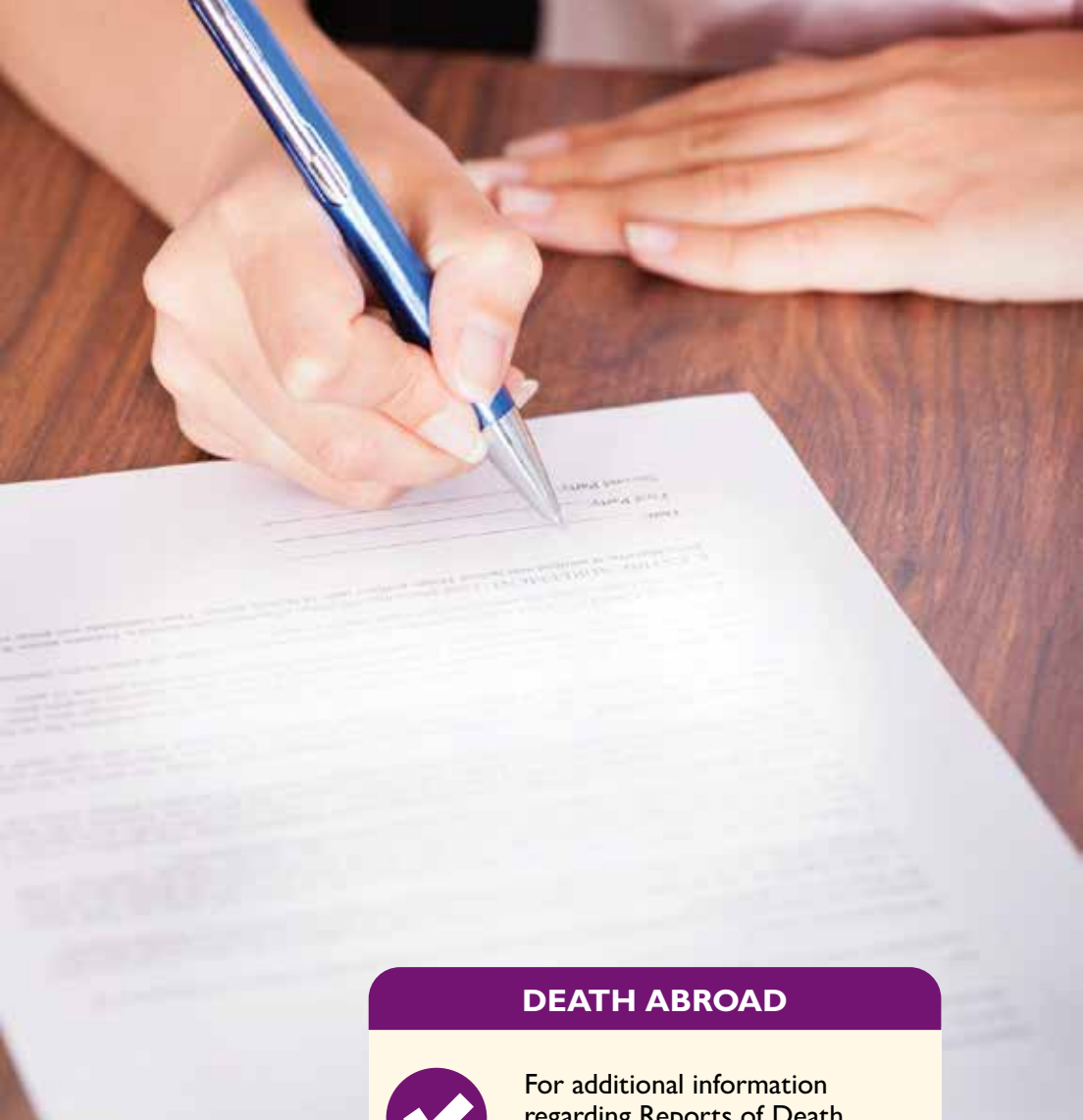
Each year, more than 6,000 Americans die abroad. Most of them are Americans who live overseas, but each year, a few thousand Americans die while on short visits abroad. One of the most important tasks of U.S. consular officers abroad is to provide assistance to the families of U.S. citizens who die abroad.

When an American citizen dies abroad, consular officers:

- confirm the death, identity, and U.S. citizenship of the deceased;
- notify the next of kin if they do not already know about the death and provide information about disposition of the remains and the effects of the deceased and guidance on forwarding funds to cover costs;
- serve as provisional conservator of the estate, absent a legal representative in country;
- prepare documents for disposition of the remains in accordance with instructions from the next of kin or legal representative and oversee the performance of disposition of the remains and of the effects of the deceased; and
- send signed copies of the Consular Report of Death of an American Citizen Abroad to the next of kin or legal representative, for use in settling estate matters in the U.S.



For more information about consular assistance when an American citizen has died abroad, visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/abroad/events-and-records/death.html>.



## DEATH ABROAD



For additional information regarding Reports of Death, contact:

- Department of State: Office of American Citizens Services  
Monday through Friday, 8:15 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
Overseas Citizens Services 24-hour hotlines:
- U.S. and Canada: (888) 407-4747
  - Overseas: +1 (202) 501-4444

# Chapter 8

## Anatomical Gifts

The Uniform Anatomical Gift Act originally was passed in 1968 in conjunction with the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Law and the American Bar Association. Within five years, all states and Washington, D.C., adopted the act. Since then, most states have legislated strict statutory rules and regulations; nearly all provide that a person execute a statutory form. As time is a major factor in anatomical gift donations, a person's wishes should be made known to the family.

### MEDICAL RESEARCH



Servicemembers may choose to leave their bodies to military medical science upon their deaths or choose not to donate their bodies for research.

A person who does not want to donate a portion of his or her body should make this known. Information can be provided to:

- The Living Bank  
4545 Post Oak Drive #340  
Houston, TX 77027
- (800) 528-2971
- [www.livingbank.org](http://www.livingbank.org)
- Email: [info@livingbank.org](mailto:info@livingbank.org)

It is possible to leave one's body for military medical science purposes. Obtain specific details by writing or calling the university.

- The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences  
Attn: Anatomical Gift Program  
4301 Jones Bridge Road  
Bethesda, MD 20814
- (301) 295-3301
- Fax: (301) 295-9194
- Information and questions:  
(301) 295-3301, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Equally important, a person who does not want to donate a portion of his or her body should make this known. He or she may contact The Living Bank to elect this option. (See facing page for more information.)

It is possible to leave one's body for military medical science purposes. The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences accepts anatomical gifts. Obtain specific details by writing or calling the university. (See "Medical Research," facing page, for more information.)



For emergencies or imminent donation, call the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences at (301) 295-3333, 24 hours a day, or visit [www.usuhs.edu/mdl/agprogram](http://www.usuhs.edu/mdl/agprogram).

# Chapter 9

## National, Post, and State Veterans' Cemeteries

Burial availability at national cemeteries is subject to frequent changes. For the most complete, up-to-date list, visit the VA website at [www.cem.va.gov/cems/listcem.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/listcem.asp).

### NATIONAL

To determine whether grave space is available at national veterans' cemeteries, note the asterisk(s) associated with each listing (in the digital edition of this guide) and consult the legend. Note: Not every state has a veterans' cemetery.

### POST

Eligibility requirements and procedures for burial in post cemeteries, which are under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Army, are more restrictive than those of national cemeteries. The Army Human Resources Command commander has staff supervision over the operation and maintenance of post cemeteries. To contact the Army Human Resources Command, use the following address:

U.S. Army Human Resources Command (AHRC-PED-F)  
200 Stovall St.  
Alexandria, VA 22332

Gravesites may not be reserved in advance. However, plot reservations made before May 1, 1975, will be honored. Those contemplating burial in a post cemetery should contact the mortuary officer for details and instructions.

### STATE

Many states have established state veterans' cemeteries. Eligibility is similar to VA national cemeteries but might include residency requirements. Even though they might have been established or improved with government funds through VA's Veterans Cemetery Grants Program, state veterans' cemeteries are run solely by the states.

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