

Planning a Funeral to Honor a US Veteran

If your loved one was a US military Servicemember or Veteran, they have earned our nation's respect and gratitude. Whether they served during wartime or peacetime, were on active duty or retired, they deserve an honorable funeral service that officially commemorates their dedication and service to our country.

You can plan a funeral to honor a US Servicemember or Veteran loved one by requesting Military Funeral Honors from the Department of Defense (DOD), and burial and memorial benefits from the Veterans Administration (VA).

Requesting Military Funeral Honors

The DOD provides Military Funeral Honors to Active Duty, Reserve and Veterans through its, "Honoring Those Who Served" program. Ceremonial funeral honors are a distinguished way to show our nation's appreciation to those who have faithfully defended our country and to the sacrifice their families endured.

Military units are required to appoint a two-person uniformed detail to be present at a Military Funeral Honors ceremony; one person must represent the deceased loved one's branch of service. The ceremony will include playing of the music, "Taps" and folding and presentation of the US flag to the next of kin. Additional elements, including rifle detail, color guard, military pallbearers, caisson and military flyover are available if personnel and resources allow. For more information, please visit: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/mfh/>.

Obtaining Burial Benefits and Services

The VA provides benefits, services and allowances to reimburse burial and memorial costs for US military Servicemembers and Veterans.

Burial services include burial in any of 131 National or State Cemeteries with available space, burial allowances, grave liner, grave opening and closing and perpetual care of the gravesite.

Physical memorials include provisions for a burial flag, government headstone, marker or medallion. Veterans who choose to be buried in a private cemetery may still be entitled to physical memorials. Go to: www.cem.va.gov/burial_benefits/ for more information.

Flags, Headstones, Markers and Medallions

The VA will provide a burial flag to drape the casket or accompany the urn of a deceased Veteran. Burial flags are available at any VA regional office or US Post Office, and may also be available from your funeral provider. For more information, please visit http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/burial_flags.asp

The VA will also provide memorial headstones and markers for eligible deceased US Servicemembers and Veterans. Please visit www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/ for more information.

Presidential Memorial Certificate

A Presidential Memorial Certificate is a certificate signed by the President to honor Veterans who died in active military, naval or air service. Please visit <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-0247.pdf> for an application, or go to: www.cem.va.gov for eligibility.

Honoring Those Who Served

Are you or a loved one a US military Servicemember or Veteran? Please go to: www.passare.com for resources on benefits and services, as well as other End-of-Life planning topics including: how to create a will and choose an executor, how to avoid probate, how to obtain life insurance, estate planning and financing your funeral.