

FACT SHEET

VA HEADSTONES & MARKERS

The VA furnishes upon request, at no charge to the applicant, a Government headstone or marker for the grave of any deceased eligible veteran in any cemetery around the world. For all deaths occurring before 11 SEP 2001, the VA may provide a headstone or marker only for graves that are not marked with a private headstone. For deaths after that date a headstone or marker will be provided regardless of whether the grave is already marked with a non-government marker. Headstones and markers are provided for eligible spouses and dependents of veterans only when buried in a national, military post/base, or State veterans cemetery. Flat markers in granite, marble, and bronze, and upright headstones in granite and marble are available. The style chosen must be consistent with existing monuments at the place of burial. Emblems of belief for placement on Government Headstones and Markers are available can be viewed at www.cem.va.gov. Niche markers are also available to mark columbaria used for inurnment of cremated remains.

When burial or memorialization is in a national cemetery, a headstone or marker will be ordered by the cemetery officials based on inscription information provided by next of kin. When burial is in a private cemetery VA Form 40-1330, application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker (PDF), must be submitted by the next of kin or a representative, such as a funeral director, cemetery official, or veterans counselor, along with veterans military discharge documents, to request a government-provided headstone or marker. Do not send original documents as they will not be returned. Application for National Guard or Reserves who are entitled must include a copy of the Reserve Retirement Eligibility Benefits Letter with the application. Use of the Fax service at 1(800) 455-7143 can save up to seven days in obtaining a marker. This toll free fax service is only available for headstones or markers being placed in private cemeteries. All state veterans, military and post cemeteries must submit their applications by regular mail. The form and instructions are available at www.cem.va.gov. The application form on the website can be filled in and printed for submitting by mail or fax. If you mail forward to: Memorial Programs Service (41A1), Department of Veterans Affairs, 5109 Russell Road, Quantico, VA 22134-3903. Questions about a headstone or marker application can be directed to VA's Memorial Programs Service applicant assistance unit at (800) 697-6947. Persons not eligible for a headstone or marker are:

- Anyone whose only separation from the Armed Forces was under dishonorable conditions or whose character of service results in a bar to veterans benefits.
- Anyone ordered to report to an induction station, but was not actually inducted into military service.
- Anyone convicted of a Federal capital crime and sentenced to death or life imprisonment, or convicted of a State capital crime, and sentenced to death or life imprisonment without parole. Federal officials are authorized to deny requests for headstones or markers to persons who are shown by clear and convincing evidence to have committed a Federal or State capital crime but were not convicted of such crime because of flight to avoid prosecution or by death prior to trial.
- Anyone convicted of subversive activities after 1 SEP 1959. Eligibility will be reinstated if the President of the United States grants a pardon.
- 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.

- 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 following criteria:

(1) Reservists and National Guard members who, at time of death, were entitled to retired pay under Chap 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 Chap 1223, title 10, United States Code.

(2) Members of reserve components 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 U.S. 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 incurred or aggravated in line of duty.

Headstones and markers previously furnished by the Government may be replaced at Government expense if badly deteriorated, illegible, stolen or vandalized. They will also replace the headstone or marker if the inscription is incorrect, if it was damaged during shipping, or if the material or workmanship does not meet contract specifications. If a Government headstone or marker in a private cemetery is damaged by cemetery personnel, the cemetery should pay all replacement costs. Marble and granite headstones or markers that are 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 08-1700 (EST), M-F at 1(800) 697-6947 or click on the "Contact the VA" link on their website to contact the office via e-mail. Be sure to include the veteran's name, social security and/or service number, and date of death. Special Pre-World War I Era Headstones and Markers can also be obtained. Refer to www.cem.va.gov/cem/hm_hm.asp for additional info on this subject.

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