



The Veteran's Voice

Newsletter

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Edition

THE VETERANS VOICE

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Updated Burial Eligibility to Include National Guard and Reservists for Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries
The Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services (MBVS) is pleased to announce updates to the eligibility criteria for burial in the Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemetery System. These changes, enacted under Public Law 2022, Chapter 593, expand eligibility to include members of the Maine National Guard and certain Reserve Component members, ensuring broader access to the honor and dignity of resting in one of Maine's veterans' cemeteries.

The updated rules reflect Maine's commitment to honoring all who have served in the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, and Reserve Components. This includes Guard members and Reservists who completed their initial military service contract and received an honorable discharge, as well as those who died under specific conditions while serving. Eligible spouses and dependents also qualify for burial, preserving the legacy of family service and sacrifice.

Expanded Coverage for Guard and Reserve Members: Includes those who completed their first military service contract with an honorable discharge and those who died in the line of duty while serving in Active Guard Reserve or active state service.

Support for Spouses and Dependents: Eligible dependents include spouses, minor children, and certain adult children with disabilities.

Headstones, Markers, or Columbarium Niche Covers: The State of Maine now provides headstones or markers at no cost for eligible Guard members, Reservists, and their dependents. Funding is supported through a designated plot allowance, ensuring perpetual care for the cemeteries.

Director David Richmond of the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services stated, "In accordance with the federal enactment of the Burial Equity Act, the State of Maine has passed the necessary legislation and allocated the resources required to honor Maine National Guard servicemembers and Reservists for their selfless service to our state—in times of war and peace—and in countless civil emergencies through the years."

MBVS encourages veterans, guard members, reservists, and their families to learn about burial eligibility and plan for future needs. To qualify, individuals must meet specific service requirements and discharge conditions outlined in the new rules which can be found on our website.

For more information about eligibility requirements, cemetery locations, or to begin the application process, please visit www.maine.gov/veterans or contact the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services at (207) 287-3481.

2025 VA disability pay rates, which are effective December 1, 2024, have a confirmed year over year increase of 2.5% based on the latest cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) announced by the social security administration on October 10, 2024. Use the charts provided on this page to determine your eligibility and expected monthly payout for your approved VA disability claim based on the 2.5% COLA increase. Official and final figures will be announced December 1, 2024.

10% - 20% (No Dependents)

Percentage	Rate
10%	\$175.51
20%	\$346.95

30% - 60% Without Children

Dependent Status	30%	40%	50%	60%
Veteran Alone	\$537.42	\$774.16	\$1,102.04	\$1,395.93
Veteran with Spouse Only	\$600.97	\$859.24	\$1,208.64	\$1,524.05
Veteran with Spouse & One Parent	\$652.22	\$926.89	\$1,293.71	\$1,626.55
Veteran with Spouse and Two Parents	\$703.47	\$994.54	\$1,378.79	\$1,729.05
Veteran with One Parent	\$588.67	\$841.81	\$1,187.11	\$1,498.43
Veteran with Two Parents	\$639.92	\$909.46	\$1,272.19	\$1,600.93
Additional for A/A spouse	\$58.43	\$77.90	\$97.38	\$116.85

70% - 100% Without Children

Dependent Status	70%	80%	90%	100%
Veteran Alone	\$1,759.19	\$2,044.89	\$2,297.96	\$3,831.30
Veteran with Spouse Only	\$1,907.81	\$2,215.04	\$2,489.63	\$4,044.91
Veteran with Spouse and One Parent	\$2,027.74	\$2,351.36	\$2,643.38	\$4,216.35
Veteran with Spouse and Two Parents	\$2,147.66	\$2,487.69	\$2,797.13	\$4,387.79
Veteran with One Parent	\$1,879.11	\$2,181.21	\$2,451.71	\$4,002.74
Veteran with Two Parents	\$1,999.04	\$2,317.54	\$2,605.46	\$4,174.18
Additional for A/A spouse	\$137.35	\$156.83	\$176.30	\$195.92

30% - 60% With Children

Dependent Status	30%	40%	50%	60%
Veteran with Child OnlyVeteran with Spouse and Child	\$579.44	\$830.54	\$1,172.76	\$1,481.00

30% - 60% With Children

Veteran with Spouse and Child	\$648.12	\$921.76	\$1,286.54	\$1,617.33
Veteran with Spouse, One Parent and Child	\$699.37	\$989.41	\$1,371.61	\$1,719.83
Veteran with Spouse, Two Parents and Child	\$750.62	\$1,057.06	\$1,456.69	\$1,822.33
Veteran with One Parent and Child	\$630.69	\$898.19	\$1,257.84	\$1,583.50
Veteran with Two Parents and Child	\$681.94	\$965.84	\$1,342.91	\$1,686.00
Add for Each Additional Child Under Age 18	\$31.78	\$42.03	\$52.28	\$63.55
Each Additional Schoolchild Over Age 18	\$102.50	\$136.33	\$171.18	\$205.00
Additional for A/A spouse	\$58.43	\$77.90	\$97.38	\$116.85

70% - 100% With Children

Dependent Status	70%	80%	90%	100%
Veteran with one Child (no spouse and no parents)	\$1,858.61	\$2,158.66	\$2,426.08	\$3,974.15
Veteran with Spouse and Child (no parents)	\$2,017.49	\$2,340.09	\$2,630.06	\$4,201.34
Veteran with Spouse, One Parent and One Child	\$2,137.41	\$2,476.41	\$2,783.81	\$4,372.78
Veteran with Spouse, Two Parents and Child	\$2,257.34	\$2,612.74	\$2,937.56	\$4,544.22
Veteran with One Parent and Child	\$1,978.54	\$2,294.99	\$2,579.83	\$4,145.59
Veteran with Two Parents and Child	\$2,098.46	\$2,431.31	\$2,733.58	\$4,317.03
Add for Each Additional Child Under Age 18	\$73.80	\$84.05	\$95.33	\$106.14
Each Additional Schoolchild Over Age 18	\$239.85	\$273.68	\$308.53	\$342.85
Additional for A/A spouse	\$137.35	\$156.83	\$176.30	\$195.92



Women Veterans Call Center

The Women Veterans Call Center will help you navigate VA, point you in the right direction, and connect you with the Women Veterans Program Manager at your local VA medical center.

This service is free and confidential, and you can call as many times as you need. If you are a woman Veteran you may call for yourself, or a friend, relative, or caregiver may call for you.

Call or text the Women Veterans Call Center at 1-855-VA-WOMEN ([1-855-829-6636](tel:1-855-829-6636)) or use the online chat feature. Women Veterans Call Center representatives are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. ET, excluding federal holidays. If you contact the Women Veterans Call Center after hours and leave a message, you will receive a return call the next day the call center is open.

The Women Veterans Call Center is your resource for information about a variety of services and benefits that you have earned and deserve through your military service. The Women Veterans Call Center can be your first call to find out how VA can help you. No question is too big or too small, and every question is important. Examples of questions the Women Veterans Call Center can help with are:

- How to reconnect with VA health care if you applied a long time ago but never used your benefits
- How to connect with your local women's health contacts including your local Maternity Care Coordinator or Women Veterans Program Manager, who will assist in coordinating all the services you need
- How to find out what you are eligible for (including general questions about disability ratings) and other VA benefits like employment, education, and home loans
- How to refill your prescription or make an appointment



President's Corner

Hello Everyone

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Well here we are in 2025 starting a new year, a year that I am hoping will be very active and productive for our chapter.

I would like to thank all of our members for their support and commitment during the past 12 months.

A lot has been accomplished and because of your hard work and dedication our chapter is being recognized through out the state for our accomplishments.

I would also take a moment and thank our AVVA brothers and sisters for their commitment and hard work on behalf of our chapter.

We have another very busy year planned but we can not do it alone. We need you our members to step forward and help out where ever and when ever you can. It can be for just a half hour or hours at a time. What ever you can offer is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully

From the Desk
Of
Conrad Letellier
1stst Vice-President

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

VETERANS AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION EXPO!

On January 11, 2025, at the University of Maine Orono. This event is a great opportunity to connect with fellow Veterans and community members, share resources, and build relationships.

The Veterans and Community Connection Expo will be held from 09:00AM to 1:00PM. Don't miss out on this chance to make meaningful connections and discover new opportunities.

For more information please contact me.

Respectfully
Conrad Letellier
1st vice-president

Membership Corner

By
Conrad Letellier Membership Chairman

The below article was printed in our monthly VVA magazine.

92,000 and Counting

I want to start this report by encouraging everyone to keep recruiting. And by asking the question: Can we increase the membership numbers? The answer is: YES, we can and in fact, we did. As of September 30, 2024, Vietnam Veterans of America is 92,126 members strong.

What's more, we are gaining about 200 new members a month, while losing about 90. The average number of members in any given chapter is now 120. Our chapter has approximately 185. Two new chapters have been chartered since the last report. The goal to reach 92,000 members was ambitious, yet it was accomplished with the concerted effort of VVA members across the country.

Can VVA get to 93,00 members? Again, the answer is that we can and will. Here are some statistics about Vietnam War veterans. There are some 6.6 million veterans living in America and abroad who served on active duty from November 1, 1955, to May 7, 1975, at any location around the globe. About 16 percent of American citizens are 65 years or older and 44 percent of them are males. About a third of American men 65 or older are Vietnam War veterans. That equates to about 2.1 percent of the total U.S. population based on 2020 U.S. Census.

These statistics underscore the importance of outreach and recruitment efforts to this large number of prospective members just waiting for you to invite them to join Vietnam Veterans of America. Here's a recruiting hint: Keep a sharp lookout for folks in "Vietnam veteran" ball caps.

The committee continues to be available to help you find ways to recruit members. Feel free to contact me with any membership-related questions at dwouthern@vva.org

Conrad Letellier
Membership Chairman

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

Conrad Letellier

I have been very busy this past year and still going strong. I have been averaging 2 clients per week some weeks more. I have been receiving some great feed back from some which is always great news.

I am always looking to help new veterans and their families with benefits. If you know of a veteran in need please have them get in touch with me.

Wishing everyone a Happy New Year

Conrad Letellier
Service Officer

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1044 Maine

Launches FREE COFFEE FOR VETERANS WEDNESDAYS

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1044 is located at 508 Elm Street Biddeford, Maine (basement of the American Legion Post 26). Our founding principle is "Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another".

Meetings are held on the first Sunday of each month. Meetings start at 1:30 pm (13:30).

To honor and appreciate our veterans, we're offering **FREE COFFEE EVERY WEDNESDAY** to all veterans!

Whether you served in the past or are currently serving, this is our small way of saying thank you for your service and dedication.

WHEN: Every Wednesday from 09:00 – 11:00 hrs.

WHERE: Vietnam Veterans of America
508 Elm Street Biddeford, Maine (Downstairs American Legion Post 26)

WHO: All veterans are welcome

Simply show your military ID or wear something that identifies your service, and your coffee is on us!

Help us spread the word and bring a fellow veteran along for a cup of gratitude. We look forward to serving you!

We offer to the veterans a place to sit and enjoy a cup of fresh coffee and a pastry or donut, read a book or magazine or just talk with fellow veterans. We also have several tables set up with board games such as chess, checkers.

A veteran's service officer will be available to answer any questions on veterans' benefits or to help file a claim for disability thru the VA system. This service is available to spouses of veterans as well.

Also available will be a veterans assistance officer to help those veterans and or families in need of assistance with heating fuel or other issues.

We will add additional days that we will be open as the demand increases

For more information contact our chapter president Joseph Armstrong at (207) 494 – 9287 or visit us at <http://www.vva1044maine.org>

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POW MIA INFORMATION

Conrad Letellier

As of October 28 2024, the number of American missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War is 1,574. 11 of which are from right here in the state of Maine. The countries are Vietnam (1,237); Laos (282); Cambodia (48); and the Peoples Republic of China territorial waters (7). These numbers fluctuate due to investigations resulting in changed locations of loss.

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced on October 17 that U.S. Army Warrant Officer Albert R. Trudeau, who was killed in action during the Vietnam War, was accounted for on September 11.

In October 1971, Trydeau was assigned to the 68th Aviation Company in the 17th Aviation Group's 52nd Aviation Battalion. Trudeau then 22, was the co-pilot of a CH-47B Chinook helicopter when it went down on a supply mission over water in bad weather on October 26, while flying from Tuy Hoa to Cam Ranh Bay in South Vietnam.

Remains of four of the ten soldiers on board were recovered during subsequent search and rescue operations, but Trudeau was not accounted for. The complete accounting of Trudeau's case will be published once the family receives a full briefing.

Conrad Lettelier

**From The Desk of the Events Coordinator
Jim Davis**



**MEETING
NOTICE!**

**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING WILL BE SUNDAY 05 JANUARY
2025. MEETING WILL START AT 1:30 PM 13:30 HRS.
THERE WILL BE A BOARD DIRECTORS MEETING PRIOR TO
OUR REGULAR MEETING. BOD MEETING WILL START AT
12:00 NOON.**

Membership in VVA is the Right Choice

First I want to say "WELCOME HOME "

The goals of Vietnam Veterans of America are to promote and support the full range of issues important to Vietnam veterans. To create a new identity for this generation of veterans and to change public perception of Vietnam veterans.

VVA is a "home of our own" - a community of fellowship with people who share our experiences, needs, and hopes for the future.

Be as active as your time, talents, and interests allow. Or, simply be a proud member of VVA, knowing that your membership helps VVA work for you and your fellow Vietnam veterans.

Membership includes a subscription to our award-winning newspaper, The VVA Veteran, bringing you updates on issues and legislation affecting veterans, as well as unique articles on the people, places, and history of the Vietnam experience.

Membership is open to U.S. armed force veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975, OR in any duty location between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975.

Our chapter is working very hard to help our brothers and sisters, their families and veterans of today.

We meet once a month at the American Legion Post 26 located at 508 Elm Street Biddeford. Meetings start at 1:30 (13:30)

If you would like further information on joining our chapter please email me your mailing address at **cwomaine@metrocast.net** I will send the information to you.