



The Veteran's Voice

Newsletter

July 2024

Edition

THE VETERANS VOICE

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VA Benefits Likely Won't Cover All of a Veteran's Funeral Costs



Members of the Combat Vets Association attend the 50th anniversary celebration of the National Cemetery Administration at the National Memorial Cemetery at Quantico, Triangle, Virginia, Sept. 21, 2023. The NCA is one of three federal agencies responsible for managing national cemeteries. Its administrative birthday is 1973 and manages 155 cemeteries around the country. (Lance Cpl. Joaquin Dela Torre/Marine Corps)

Military.com | By Kate Horrell
Published May 16, 2024

Many military veterans want to be buried in military-related cemeteries. One common misconception when planning the burial of a veteran is that the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) will cover all the costs of the funeral. While burial in a VA cemetery or [state veterans cemetery](#) may eliminate many of the expenses, quite a few costs are not covered by the VA.

A veteran's surviving family members may be caught off guard if they expect these costs to be covered.

What's Covered

The VA offers a [burial allowance](#) that it pays to the designated survivor. The amount varies depending on the cause of death, date of death, and whether there are expenses for the burial plot.

For example, for a non-service-connected death of a veteran who died on or after Oct. 1, 2023, the burial allowance is \$948. An additional allowance of \$948 is available if the veteran is not buried in a national or state veterans cemetery and there are expenses for a burial plot. If applicable, a headstone or marker allowance is \$231 if the veteran died on or after Oct. 1, 2021.

For a service-connected death on or after Sept. 11, 2001, the maximum allowance is \$2,000. The VA may pay some or all of the transportation costs if the veteran is buried in a national cemetery.

What's Not Covered

The VA allowance may help cover burial costs such as a casket, transfer of the remains, embalming, cosmetic services, the cost of the funeral service, use of the funeral home facilities, cremation, urn, use of hearse and/or limousines, funeral cards and other printed materials, and flowers.

If the veteran is not buried in a veterans cemetery, burial costs include the burial plot, opening and closing the burial plot, and any additional services at the cemetery.

How to Receive a VA Burial Allowance

If the veteran was married and the [spouse](#) was listed in VA records, the VA will typically send the payment automatically after being notified of the veteran's death. In all other situations, a claim is filed with the VA.

There is a two-year deadline to file claims for non-service-connected deaths. There is no deadline to file claims for service-connected deaths.

Active-Duty Deaths

The branch of service typically covers the majority of expenses for the burial of an active-duty service member.

What Should You Do?

Everyone should have a plan for paying their final expenses. Burial in a national or state veterans cemetery will reduce costs significantly. The VA's burial allowance will help offset the additional costs. For the rest of the expenses, options include a special savings account, prepaying funeral expenses or a life insurance policy specifically for this purpose.

If you intend to be buried in a national veterans cemetery, fill out the VA's [Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery](#).

Most importantly, make sure your family knows there will be expenses beyond the veteran's benefits. This will give them time to prepare and not be surprised.



President's Corner

Hello Everyone

I was going to say that here we are going into the dog days of summer but the last week shows we are all ready there with the temps in the upper 80 - 90.

With this great warm weather comes and increase in traffic and tourists. When you venture out please be safe. Allow some extra time to get where you are going and if you are enjoying the outdoors be safe and try not to over due it. Remember we are no longer those young adults that we once were. LOL

If you have an idea for a show please email me and we can talk about it.

**Respectfully
Joseph Armstrong
President**

From the Desk
Of
Conrad Letellier
1stst Vice-President

Hello Brothers and Sisters

I received some good news this month. For months I have been trying to make contact with the Main State Prison to see if we would be allowed to come in and speak with any veterans that are presently incarcerated. I finally was able to meet with the warden of the Maine State Prison. I informed him of what I had in mind and he told me that he was the one to talk with. Now that we have a contact I will be contacting him and set up a meeting.

Also we set up a table at the La Kermesse event. We handed out some applications and received some donations. It would have been better if it didn't rain all weekend

Respectfully
Conrad Letellier
1st vice-president

Membership Corner

By
Conrad Letellier Membership Chairman

During the last few weeks I have been very busy sending out letters to those members that no longer attend our meetings. Basically, I asked them if they would be willing to share with me the reason that they no longer attend meetings. I also asked them what it was that (WE) the chapter can do to make it interesting for them to attend.

I am hoping that we do get a response as it will help to strengthen our chapter.

It is so very important to keep up updated on your contact information. Otherwise we can not update you on events and news important to our chapter.

Conrad Letellier
Membership Chairman

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

Conrad Letellier

RUMOR MILLS

Rumor mills are permanent fixtures in schools, offices and wherever people congregate, and most of the time they're pretty innocuous. But myths and rumors that deal with health—in this case Veterans health—are a serious matter that can prevent qualified Vets from seeking the care they both need and deserve.

Five Myths About VA Health Care Eligibility

Myth Number One

Wasn't injured in the service, so I'm not eligible for VA health care.

Status: False

One of the most common myths revolves around ~~eligibility for health care at VA~~. ~~Many think~~ that you have to first establish a disability rating before you can start to make appointments, see doctors and receive medication. That is not the case. If you served in the military, even during peace time, and were honorably discharged, **you likely qualify for VA care**. Even if you don't meet those requirements, special circumstances might apply, like Vietnam service, exposure to ~~Agent Orange and household income~~. The best way to find out if you qualify is to submit an application for health benefits. **You can fill one out online** or at a VA Medical Center. If you are an Iraq or Afghanistan Veteran, **there are special combat Veteran benefits** from VA, like temporary access to dental care and guaranteed access to Priority 6 for five years (unless you are eligible for a higher priority group). **See the priority enrollment groups here.**

Also, if new regulations are established regarding health benefits, VA will automatically reassess your case if it's on file.

Myth Number Two

I can only receive care for service connected injuries.

Status: False

You can receive VA hospital and outpatient care for any ailment, service connected or not if you are enrolled in the VA healthcare system, but you may have to pay a copayment. For example, if a Veteran is service-connected for a bad knee, any VA hospital and outpatient care and medication for the knee is free of charge. However, if the same Vet goes into surgery to remove an appendix and it's not service connected, he may be subject to a co-pay depending on the amount of his ~~disability rating and other factors~~. Familiarize yourself with **co-pay guidelines** and **rates**.

A small number of Veterans, such as those with **bad conduct discharges** that VA has determined were issued under conditions other than honorable and who are not subject to certain statutory bars to benefits, can only be treated for their service connected disabilities and nothing else. If one of those Vets is service connected for their left foot, they can only use VA health care for their left foot and nothing else.

Myth Number Three

I make too much money to qualify for VA health care.

may have to pick up the tab for traveling and receive your care and medication by paying a co-pay. Recently, the rules have been changed for Priority 8 Veterans to permit more of them to enroll for VA health care. [Go here for more information](#) and an income calculator to see if you qualify under the new rules.

Myth Number Four

I can't use VA health care if I have private health insurance.

Status: False

From VA's [Health Eligibility Center](#) Director Tony Guagliardo:

“We strongly encourage Veterans to receive all your health care through VA. However, if you choose to receive treatment from private doctors, VA will work with them to meet your health care needs and coordinate effective treatment. We call this Co-managed Care or [Dual Care](#) — which means that your VA and private doctors will work together to provide safe, appropriate, and ethical medical care.”

Myth Number Five

If I'm 100 percent disabled, that means I'm permanently disabled

Status: False

You could have a 100 percent disability rating as a temporary status while you undergo surgery, and have it reduced to its previous rating after you heal. 100 percent doesn't necessarily stay with you.

Conrad Letellier

Veterans Service Officer

Status: It depends

If you do not have a service connected disability, you may want to use VA's financial calculator to see if you qualify for free VA care, medication and travel benefits. If your income is too high (over a maximum income level set every year), you

***Never be a Prisoner of your Past.
It was just a lesson, not a lifer sentence
By Walt Whitman***

***Submitted by
Pricilla L. Miles AVVA member***

POW MIA INFORMATION

Conrad Letellier

STATUS OF THE POW/MIA ISSUE

March 1, 2024

1,577 Americans are now listed by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) as missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War: Vietnam - 1,237; Laos - 285; Cambodia = 48; Peoples Republic of China territorial waters - 7.

On March 23 rd, DPAA posted the accounting for two USAF officers, listed MIA in Vietnam on April 12, 1969/ Their identities - Colonel Ernest DeSoto and Captain Frederick Hall were released on April 7, 2023.



History of the POW/MIA Flag

In 1970, Lt. Commander Michael Hoff went missing in action when his plane crashed over Laos, Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. His wife, Mary Hoff, felt there was a need for the nation to have a symbol in which those who were lost to war would not be forgotten, thus becoming the pioneer of the POW/MIA flag. She read an article in the Jacksonville Florida Time Union about how Annin & Co. Helped to design and manufacture flags for newer UN member nations. Mrs. Hoff contacted Annin and their VP of Sales, Norman Rivkes commissioned graphic designer Newt Heisley to design a flag to represent the group/

Newt Heisley found inspiration for designing the flag from his past experiences as a WWII pilot: "I used to fly within range of the Japanese and wondered how I would hold up if I ever got captured. When I did the design, I thought how easy it would be to forget those guys." The now familiar slogan :You are not forgotten" was born of that senti-

ment. Heisley's son, Jeffrey, upon returning home ill from Marine training, inspired the gaunt appearance of the flag's silhouette. In addition to the slogan and silhouette, the flag also boasts a 5-point star, a watchtower with a guard on patrol, a strand of barbed wire, and a black and white wreath.

WHAT DOES THE POW/MIA MEAN?

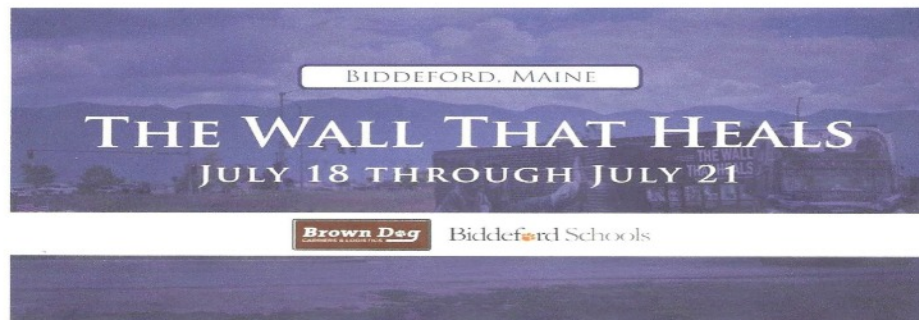
The POW/MIA flag is a reminder for Americans to never forget our Prisoners of War (POW) and those Missing in Action (MIA). Prisoners of War are individuals - whether military personnel or civilians - who are captured and imprisoned by the enemy during times of war. The status of life for those who are MIA have not yet been confirmed. According to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, over 83,00 Americans who fought in wars since World War II are still; missing.

On November 18, 1997 the 1998 Defense Authorization Act was signed into law. A section of the act required that the POW/MIA flag be flown from Military Installations, National Cemeteries, V.A. Medical Centers and many other Federal Buildings

From The Desk of the Events Coordinator Jim Davis



**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING WILL BE SUNDAY 07 July 2024.
MEETING WILL START AT 1:30 PM 13:30 HRS.
THERE WILL BE A BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING PRIOR
TO OUR REGULAR MEETING STARTING AT 12:00 NOON.**



25 Tiger Drive
Biddeford, Maine 04005

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.