

MANUAL: Personnel  
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Part 2--Commissioned Corps Personnel Administration

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Public Health Service

Chapter CC29--Officer Relations, Services, and Benefits  
Subchapter CC29.5--Death Benefits  
Personnel INSTRUCTION 3--Burial in National Cemeteries

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Section A. Purpose and Scope

This INSTRUCTION states the eligibility requirements, procedures, and other information related to burial in a national cemetery.

Section B. Authority

The authority under which deceased PHS commissioned officers may be buried in national cemeteries is 42 U.S.C. 213(d).

Section C. PHS Commissioned Officers' Eligibility Requirements

1. General. Burial in a national cemetery (other than Arlington National Cemetery, see paragraph 2 below) is generally provided personnel of the uniformed services who served on active duty and were separated under other than dishonorable conditions. An individual who served on active duty in the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service (PHS) is eligible for burial in a national cemetery if:

- a. He or she served on full-time active duty before October 17, 1981, for 180 consecutive days.
  - b. He or she first served on full-time active duty (except for training purposes) on or after October 17, 1981 for the lesser of:
    - (1) 24 consecutive months; or
    - (2) The full period of active service for which the individual was ordered or called to active duty.
  - c. He or she incurred or aggravated a disease or injury while on active duty which was determined by VA to be service-connected.
2. Arlington National Cemetery. Arlington National Cemetery is administered by the Department of the Army, and as such policies and procedures for burial differ from those of the National Cemetery system.

Because burial space in Arlington National Cemetery is being rapidly exhausted, restrictions have been placed on interment eligibility. Since February 17, 1967, burials in Arlington National Cemetery have been limited to active duty and retired members of the Armed Forces. However, survivors of those PHS officers interred in Arlington before February 17, 1967 are still eligible for interment in the same plot with the deceased sponsor.

- a. Space may be available for interment of cremated remains of PHS commissioned officers in the Arlington National Cemetery columbarium if the deceased officer was detailed to an armed force or served on full-time active duty during a period when the PHS Commissioned Corps was declared a military service by Executive Order. Determination of eligibility will be made by the Department of the Army, Office of Memorial Affairs, when interment of cremated remains is requested on behalf of a deceased PHS officer.

Section D. Entitlement of Family Members

1. Interment of the spouse and children of those eligible for burial in a national cemetery is authorized provided the officer on whom the dependent's eligibility is based is buried in that same national cemetery or plans to be buried in that same cemetery.
2. In cases where an eligible family member dies before the PHS commissioned officer, a written statement will be required from the officer stating that he or she will eventually be buried in the same gravesite. A single-gravesite policy has been adopted by the National Cemetery system. To conserve space, remains of family members are interred in the same gravesite directly above the remains of other family members.

3. To be eligible for burial in a national cemetery, a child must be unmarried and:
  - a. Under the age of 21 years; or
  - b. After attaining the age of 21 years, pursuing a course of instruction at an approved educational institution. The child remains eligible until completing the education or training or until attaining the age of 23 years, whichever occurs first; or
  - c. Over age 21, but permanently incapable of self-support because of physical or mental disability incurred before attaining the age of 21 years.
4. Parents, brothers, sisters, or in-laws, do not have entitlement to national cemetery burial based on their relationship to those who are eligible, regardless of dependency. In addition, a deceased veteran's spouse who is remarried at the time of death is not eligible.

Section E. Arranging for Burial

1. When an eligible person dies, the funeral director or other person responsible for the funeral arrangements should request interment directly to the superintendent of the national cemetery in which burial is desired.
2. To establish eligibility, the following information should be supplied: full name, service number, social security and/or VA claim number, rank, date and place of birth, date of death, and dates of entry and separation from the last service of the individual upon whose service the request for burial is based. The information furnished will then be verified by the Survivor Assistance Officer, Commissioned Personnel Operations Division, Room 4-38, Parklawn Building, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Maryland.
3. Remains should not be shipped to the national cemetery nor should final time of burial be set until all arrangements with the superintendent of the national cemetery have been completed and burial has been authorized at a specific time and date (see CCPM Subchapter CC29.5, INSTRUCTION 2, for instructions on shipment of remains of officers who die while on active duty).
4. A burial flag should accompany the remains of a commissioned officer. This flag may be obtained at local offices of the Veterans Administration or any first-class post office (application is made on VA Form 07-2008).
5. Services incident to interments are performed by the cemetery at no cost to the family. There is also no charge for the burial site in a national cemetery (see CCPM Subchapter CC29.5, INSTRUCTION 2, for information on allowances paid for other burial expenses).

6. Military ceremonies or honors provided at the time of burial depend on the status of the deceased and the availability of Armed Forces personnel. If not available, the next of kin or his or her representative may be able to arrange for participation by a local veterans' organization. Although the superintendent of the national cemetery cannot assume responsibility for providing honors, he or she may be able to assist the next of kin if desired and if it is practicable under the particular circumstances.
7. Honorary pall bearers may be selected for any type of funeral. The number may range from four to eight. If military honors are being provided, officers serving as honorary pall bearers will wear uniforms as prescribed for the occasion (see CCPM Subchapter CC26.3, INSTRUCTIONS 1 - 8).

Section F. Headstones and Monuments

1. All graves in national cemeteries will be marked automatically with a headstone supplied by the Government and properly inscribed, at no expense to the family.
  - a. The inscription on the headstone furnished for a PHS commissioned officer will show the name of the decedent, branch of service, years of birth and death, and Medal of Honor, when appropriate. Optional items which may be included when specifically requested by the applicant are grade or rank, war service, months and days to complete the dates of birth and death, and a religious emblem. The superintendent of the national cemetery will obtain required inscription information from the next of kin following the burial service.
  - b. The inscription on the headstone furnished for the grave of a spouse consists of the name of the decedent, the words "Wife (Husband) of (rank, name and component of service member)," and the dates of birth and death.
  - c. The inscription on the headstone furnished for the grave of an eligible child consists of the name of the decedent, the words "Son (daughter) of (rank, name, and component of member)," and the dates of birth and death.
  - d. Whenever an additional interment is made in a grave, the stone will be replaced with a multiple-inscribed stone of the same type as the original stone.
2. Upon request, the Veterans Administration will furnish a Government headstone or marker at the expense of the United States for the unmarked grave of an eligible veteran buried in a non-Government cemetery. Request must be made on VA Form 40-1330, "Application for Headstone or Marker." An instruction sheet accompanying the form furnishes general information, explains each item on the application, illustrates the types of headstones and markers furnished, and provides inscription information. Government

headstones or markers are not authorized for the family members of veterans who are buried in nonGovernment cemeteries.

3. In newly established national cemeteries, or in new sections of existing national cemeteries, the erection of private monuments is not permitted. Where erection of monuments at private expense is permitted, authorization must be requested from the agency responsible for the national cemetery concerned. In cases where permission is granted, the monument must meet certain specifications and the next of kin must agree to maintain the monument at his or her own expense.

Section G. Location of Cemeteries

Information about the location of national cemeteries, and which national cemeteries have grave space available may be obtained from the local Veterans Administration office. Several new national cemeteries are being established and additional grave space is being added to many existing ones.