



# 2007 Veterans Burial Benefits Survey

**Purpose of Survey:**

This survey is designed to gather information from you that will help the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) better plan for the future burial needs of veterans. We also hope that you find the process of responding to the survey helpful.

**Your Burial Benefits:**

As a veteran, you may be eligible to be buried in a national or state veterans cemetery. Burial benefits include a gravesite in one of 125 national veteran cemeteries or one of the state veteran cemeteries with available space, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a Government headstone or marker, a U.S. flag, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate. These benefits are available at no cost to the family. Some veterans may also be eligible for Burial Allowances. Cremated remains are buried in national and state veteran cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains. Burial benefits available for spouses and dependents buried in a national and state veteran cemetery include burial with the veteran, perpetual care, and the spouse or dependent's name and date of birth and death inscribed on the veteran's headstone, at no cost to the family.

**Use of Survey Results:**

The Department of Veterans Affairs will be using the information collected from you to improve services and plan for the future needs of veterans and their families.

**Confidentiality of Data:**

Providing information on this survey is voluntary; your veterans benefits will not be affected in any way. Please be assured that your survey answers are confidential and will only be used to report group-level findings.

**OMB Statement:**

To be provided.

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey and for helping VA's Burial Program.**

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## I. ABOUT YOUR SERVICE

**Q1. In which branch of Service did you serve? (Mark ALL that apply.)**

- Air Force
- Air Force Reserve
- Air National Guard
- Army
- Army National Guard
- Army Reserve
- Coast Guard
- Marine Corps
- Marine Corps Reserve
- Navy
- Navy Reserve

**Q2. In what year did you begin your first term of Service?**

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**Q3. In what year did you end your last term of Service?**

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**Q4. How much time did you serve in the military (Active, Guard, and Reserve)?**

Years	Months				
<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>			<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>		

**Q5. How much active duty military service time did you complete?**

Years	Months				
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**Q6. What was your pay grade at the time of your last discharge?**

- E1-E4
- E5-E6
- E7-E9
- WO1-CW5
- O1-O3
- O4-O6
- O7-O10

**Q7. Do you have a service-connected disability rating from the VA?**

- Yes
- No (SKIP to Q9)

**Q8. What is your disability rating?**

- 10 percent
- 20 percent
- 30 percent
- 40 percent
- 50 percent
- 60 percent
- 70 percent
- 80 percent
- 90 percent
- 100 percent

**Q9. Which of the following VA programs and services have you ever used or received?  
(Mark ALL that apply.)**

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- GI Bill
- Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation
- Disability Compensation
- Disability Pension
- Education and training benefits (any VA education and training program)
- Foreign Medical Program
- Home Loan Certificate of Eligibility
- Independent Living
- Home Loan Guaranty
- National Cemetery Burial (For an eligible family member)

- Service Disabled Veterans Insurance
- Supplemental Service Disabled Veterans Insurance
- VA Health Care (Enrollment)
- Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance
- Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI)
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Other : \_\_\_\_\_

**Q10. Are you...**

- Male
- Female

**Q11. In what year were you born?**

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## II. ABOUT YOUR FUTURE BURIAL CHOICE

To adequately prepare for the future needs of veterans, the VA needs to know the wishes and intentions of veterans about burial issues.

Please answer the following questions as best you can, even though you may not have thought much about your burial preferences.

**Q12. How much have you thought about how you want to be buried?**

- Thought about it a lot
- Thought about it some
- Thought about it hardly at all
- Never thought about it

**Q13. Regardless of how much you've thought about it, what type of burial do you prefer?**

- In-ground casket burial
- Cremation, in-ground
- Cremation columbarium (a vault for cremation remains)
- Mausoleum (i.e., tomb within a monument or building)
- Something else (Please be specific): \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know

**Q14. For each of the burial options listed below, please tell us if you consider the option 'preferable', 'acceptable', or 'unacceptable'. Please read the definitions of these terms below before answering.**

**Preferable** = Your first choice (choose one)

*Not Sure or Don't Know*

**Acceptable** = Not your first choice, but would be OK

**Unacceptable**

**Unacceptable** = You would never choose this type of burial

**Acceptable**

**Preferable**

a. Casket burial, in-ground at a national or state veterans cemetery.....	0	0	0	0
b. Casket burial, in-ground at a private cemetery .....	0	0	0	0
c. Casket burial, mausoleum at a national or state veterans cemetery.....	0	0	0	0
d. Casket burial, mausoleum at a private cemetery.....	0	0	0	0
e. Cremation, with my ashes buried in-ground in a national or state veterans cemetery.....	0	0	0	0
f. Cremation, with my ashes buried in-ground in a private cemetery.....	0	0	0	0
g. Cremation, with my ashes placed in a columbarium at a national or state veterans cemetery.....	0	0	0	0
h. Cremation, with my ashes placed in a columbarium at a private cemetery.....	0	0	0	0
i. Cremation, with my ashes placed in a mausoleum in a national or state veterans cemetery.....	0	0	0	0
j. Cremation, with my ashes placed in a mausoleum in a private cemetery.....	0	0	0	0
k. Cremation, with my ashes kept by my family or scattered.....	0	0	0	0
l. Something not listed (Please be specific): _____.....	0	0	0	0

**Q15. What is the likelihood that you will choose burial in a national or state veterans cemetery?**

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely

**Q16. If cremation (in a columbarium or in-ground) was the only burial option available at the closest national or state veterans cemetery, how likely would you be to choose this cemetery?**

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely

**Q17. What is your religious preference? (Mark only ONE.)**

- Protestant
- Catholic
- Jewish
- Some other religion (Please be specific): \_\_\_\_\_
- No religion

**Q18. The kind of cemetery in which I will be buried (e.g., national or state veterans cemetery versus private cemetery) is more important to me than the type of burial (e.g., cremation versus casket)?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

*Q19. Please indicate how strongly each of the following influences your choice for burial location (e.g., national or state veterans cemetery versus private cemetery).*

	Not Sure or Don't Know				
	Not at all influential				
	Not very influential				
	Moderately influential				
	Very influential				
a. My religious practices.....	0	0	0	0	0
b. The preferences of my family.....	0	0	0	0	0
c. The cost to my family/next of kin.....	0	0	0	0	0
d. Distance to cemetery.....	0	0	0	0	0
e. Wish to be buried with other family members.....	0	0	0	0	0
f. My connection to the military/past service to country .....	0	0	0	0	0
g. Other preferences (Please be specific): _____ .....	0	0	0	0	0

*Q20. Please indicate how strongly each of the following influences your choice for burial type (e.g., casket versus cremation).*

	Not Sure or Don't Know				
	Not at all influential				
	Not very influential				
	Moderately influential				
	Very influential				
a. My religious practices.....	0	0	0	0	0
b. The preferences of my family.....	0	0	0	0	0
c. The cost to my family/next of kin.....	0	0	0	0	0
d. Other preferences (Please be specific): _____ .....	0	0	0	0	0

*Q21 – Q23. Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements about burial location and costs.*

	Strongly disagree				
	Disagree				
	Neither agree nor disagree				
	Agree				
	Strongly agree				
Q21. If the closest national or state veterans cemetery is closed to new burials, a private cemetery is acceptable to me.....	0	0	0	0	0
Q22. A private cemetery would be just as acceptable to me as a national or state veterans cemetery if my family could receive help to defray the additional cost.....	0	0	0	0	0
Q23. I am concerned that the cost of my burial will be a financial burden for my family .....	0	0	0	0	0

### III. ABOUT BURIAL ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS INFORMATION

**Q24. How much knowledge would you say you have about VA's burial benefits?**

- A great deal
- A moderate amount
- Not very much
- None

**Q25. When you were discharged from the military, were you given a packet that explained all the VA benefits available to you?**

- Yes
- No (SKIP to Q27)
- Don't remember (SKIP to Q27)

**Q26. Do you still have the packet of information?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Q27. If you wanted more information about VA's burial benefits, what sources would you try? (Mark ALL that apply.)**

- Department of Veterans Affairs by toll-free telephone
- Department of Veterans Affairs Web Site (e.g., [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov))
- Visit to Department of Veterans Affairs facility (e.g., VA national cemetery, VA Regional Office, VA Medical Center)
- Non-government Web site (e.g., [www.military.com](http://www.military.com))
- Military Web site (e.g., [www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil), [www.defenselink.mil](http://www.defenselink.mil), [www.army.mil](http://www.army.mil))
- Internet Search Engine (e.g., [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com))
- Veterans Service Organization (e.g., VFW, AMVETS)
- VA benefits handbook
- Social Security Administration
- Senior Citizens Group (e.g., AARP)
- A funeral home
- Physician
- Employer
- A fellow veteran
- Family member
- Newspaper or magazine
- TV or radio public service announcement
- Don't know
- Other (Please be specific): \_\_\_\_\_

Q28. Please indicate if you have heard about these benefits before filling out this survey: (Mark ALL that apply.)

	Yes	Don't Know	No
a. Burial in a national or state veterans cemetery.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Headstone and burial markers provided by VA at private cemeteries.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Presidential Memorial Certificate for next of kin.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Cash plot allowance <sup>1</sup> .....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Cash burial allowance <sup>2</sup> .....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Military Funeral Honors.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. U.S. Flag.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<sup>1</sup>VA plot allowance is a partial payment for burial costs associated with an individual's gravesite, mausoleum, vault, or columbarium at a private or state cemetery.

<sup>2</sup>VA burial allowance is a partial reimbursement of an eligible veteran's burial and funeral costs.

Q29. How satisfied are you with your ability to get accurate information about burial benefits?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Does not apply, I have not tried to get information

Q30. When you are seeking information, how likely is it that you would use the World Wide Web to find the information you need?

- Very often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Q31. A headstone or marker is a burial benefit available to all eligible veterans, regardless of where they are buried. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

The headstone or marker benefit makes me feel...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not Sure or Don't Know
a. That the country appreciates the service of veterans to our nation .....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. That the country appreciates all veterans, including those who served during peacetime .....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. That I will be remembered.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. That the country understands that veterans have <u>earned</u> these benefits.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q32. A Presidential Memorial Certificate<sup>3</sup> is a burial benefit available to families of veterans, regardless of where they are buried. Please

Not Sure or Don't Know

indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

The Presidential Memorial Certificate benefit makes me feel:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. That the country appreciates the service of veterans to our nation.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. That the country appreciates all veterans, including those who served during peacetime .....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. That I will be remembered.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. That the country understands that veterans have <u>earned</u> these benefits.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<sup>3</sup> **A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC)** is an engraved paper certificate, bearing the current President's signature, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans. Eligible recipients include the deceased veteran's next of kin and loved ones.

Q33. How important are each of these burial benefits to you as recognition of your Service?

	Don't know	Not at all important	Not very important	Important	Very important
a. U.S. Flag.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Headstone or marker.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Presidential Memorial Certificate.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Military Funeral Honors.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q34. How important are each of the following aspects of the headstone or marker that are not currently available?

	Don't know	Not at all important	Not very important	Important	Very important
a. Availability of different shaped headstones (e.g., round, or 5-sided-geometric shape).....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Availability of different materials (e.g., pewter).....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Larger area for personal inscription.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Option to place military symbols on the marker.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Option to place additional symbols on the marker.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### IV. ABOUT YOU

Q35. Are you Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino?



- Yes
- No

**Q36. Which of the following describes your race? (Mark ALL that apply.)**

- American Indian or Alaska Native (e.g., Eskimo, Aleutian Islander)
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other (Please be specific:) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q37. What is the highest civilian education or degree you have received?**

- High school, but no diploma or GED
- GED or other high school equivalency
- High school diploma
- Some college credit, but less than 1 year
- 1 or more years of college, but no degree
- Associate's degree (e.g., A.A., A.S.)
- Bachelor's degree (e.g., B.A., B.S.)
- Graduate or professional degree (e.g., M.A., Ph.D., M.D., J.D.)

**Q38. What was your total family income for 2006 before taxes and deductions (gross income)?**

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,001 to \$20,000
- \$20,001 to \$30,000
- \$30,001 to \$40,000
- \$40,001 to \$50,000
- \$50,001 to \$75,000
- \$75,001 to \$100,000
- More than \$100,000

**Q39. What is your CURRENT marital status?**

- Married living with spouse
- Married not living with spouse
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Legally separated
- Never married

**Q40. Is your spouse:**

- Currently serving in the Active component military?
- Currently serving in the Reserve component?
- Retired from the military?
- Veteran who served fewer than 20 years?
- None of the above?

**Q41. How many dependents (children or adults), other than your spouse, are now living with you?**

- None
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more

GENERAL COMMENTS: Please use this space to share your comments with us about this survey or to elaborate on any of the responses you provided.

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**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your answers are very important to ensure that VA's Burial Program meets your needs and expectations. Please return your questionnaire in the postage-paid envelope.**