

Gravesite Reservation Questionnaire (2-Year)
OMB 2900-0546
VA Form FL-4040

A. Justification

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection of information.**

From the late 1940's until January 1962, the Department of the Army allowed active duty servicepersons and surviving spouses of deceased veterans interred in national cemeteries to reserve gravesites for their interments. Recurring gravesite reservation contact are necessary as some reservees become ineligible, are buried elsewhere, or cancel their reservations; therefore, reserved gravesites would exist forever without use. VA FL 40-40 is used for this program to ensure that veterans upon their death would have space for themselves and eligible family members in national cemeteries. In 2014, the 30 day FRN for this collection was submitted as an extension. However, since that time OMB requested a revision to the form to add an expiration date placeholder, thus the revision. In addition, the thirty day notice was published with an incorrect title. The correct title is Gravesite Reservation Questionnaire and will be corrected and reflected in another Federal Register Notice.

Moreover, in 1982, the Adjacent Gravesite Set-Aside Program (AGS) was established, which allowed cemeteries to administer gravesite set-asides at cemeteries where 4'x 8' single-depth interments are authorized. This program permitted an adjacent gravesite to be set-aside at the time of the first interment of a veteran's family for future use. The original AGS Program was abandoned in 1986, when the then National Cemetery System discontinued the usage of 4' x 8' gravesites for initial burials.

However, on October 12, 1994, the AGS Program was reopened for married couples that are both veterans, allowing the establishment of an adjacent gravesite reservation at the time of burial of a veteran spouse upon the request of the surviving veteran spouse. This expands the potential for AGS reservations from the original 13 national cemeteries to all open national cemeteries. VA honors all gravesite set-asides established since the inception of the AGS Program in 1982.

An automated Adjacent Gravesite Set-Aside System (AGSS) was developed and managed by the staff at Philadelphia National Cemetery Area Office (NCAO), now Philadelphia Memorial Service Network. They formulated a database to record the names of the holders and pertinent information about the particular adjacent gravesite set-aside (AGS) that they gained through annual questionnaire. Philadelphia NCAO managed their database until recently.

In August 1997, the AGS Program was transferred to the Austin Automated Center (AAC). Computer-generated form letters were sent from the AAC to AGS holders biennially via FL 40-40 to ascertain their wish to retain their set-aside, or their wish to relinquish it. If a holder cancels his/her set-aside or becomes ineligible, the gravesite set-aside is then relinquished, and will be used for another eligible veteran and/or dependent. The biennial questionnaire in which AGS holders provide information directly to the national cemetery allows each national cemetery staff to update, add or delete records to the database.

Currently, the Gravesite Reservation Program utilizes FL 40-40 only for veterans and eligible persons to request space in a national cemetery. With this form VA is able to maintain an accurate accounting of who is reserved in a particular cemetery and who does not wish to hold their previously claimed plot.

On March 14, 2016, instructions for the Gravesite Relinquishment Improvement Program Phase I were provided to the field in order to improve the burial access to the field to determine the gravesites reserved, set-a-sides, for an individual in accordance to NCA Policy are no longer needed by that individual and made available by another eligible individual. Working with VA's Office of Governance and Analysis, NCA received many updated addresses; however, the entire GRIP Plan is not completed. Gravesites were cancelled for those sites were if deceased for more than one year and were 120 years old.

On February 10, 2017, instructions for the Gravesite Relinquishment Improvement Program Phase II were provided implementing a year long process to correct the Burial Operations Support System (BOSS) data base pertaining to gravesite reservations so future analysis of reservation data is more effective in accomplishing the overall objective to the Gravesite Relinquishment Improvement Program.

After completion of GRIP II as early as March 2018, NCA will work with VA's Office of Governance and Analysis (VAOG&A), to receive updated addresses, will released on the FL40-40 through the BOSS system in a gradual transition process continuum in FY2018 and FY2019.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purposes the information is to be used; indicate actual use the agency has made of the information received from current collection.

Questionnaire is necessary to assure gravesite reservations do not go unused. Some holders become ineligible, are buried elsewhere, or simply wish to cancel a gravesite reservation. If such a questionnaire were not performed, unused reservations would exist needlessly. Other veterans or eligible persons may use these spaces. The questionnaire provides full knowledge of gravesite availability.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological

collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

Automated technology is required to prepare questionnaire, and for storage and retrieval of information upon receipt. Reservations have been reduced by approximately 800 records each year as holders become ineligible, are buried elsewhere, or cancel their gravesite reservation.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

The information is not contained in any other VA record nor is it available from any other source.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

The collection of information does not involve small businesses or entities.

6. Describe the consequences to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Biennial questionnaire is made to determine if the holder desires to continue the gravesite reservation. If the information collection were conducted less frequently, the database would lack credibility.

- 7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted more often than quarterly or require respondents to prepare written responses to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it; submit more than an original and two copies of any document; retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years; in connection with a statistical survey that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study and require the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB.**

There is no special circumstance requiring collection in a manner inconsistent with 5 CFR 1320.6 guidelines.

- 8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the sponsor's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the sponsor in responses to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

The Department notice was published in the Federal Register on Wednesday, April 19, 2017, Volume 82, No. 74, page 18540. No public comments were received.

- 9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

No payments or gifts to respondents have been made under this collection of information.

- 10. Describe any assurance of privacy, to the extent permitted by law, provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

The information collection conforms to the Privacy Act of 1974 and is subject to the conditions of disclosure contained therein. The records are maintained in the system identified as (42VA41), "Veterans and Dependents National Cemetery Interment Records-VA," as published in the Federal Register (#40 FR38095), August 26, 1995.

- 11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature (Information that, with a reasonable degree of medical certainty, is likely to have a serious adverse effect on an individual's mental or physical health if revealed to him or her), such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private; include specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the**

information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimate of the hour burden of the collection of information:

Estimate of Information Collection Burden.

- a. Number of Respondents: 25,000
- b. Frequency of Response: 1
- c. Annual Burden Hours: 4,166
- d. Estimated Completion Time: 10 min

e. According to the May 2016, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates Average Hourly Earnings, the mean hourly wage is \$23.86, therefore, the cost to the respondent is \$99,400.76 (4,166 burden hours x \$23.86 per hour) All Occupations link: https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm#00-0000

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in Items 12 and 14).

This submission does not involve any recordkeeping costs.

14. Provide estimates of annual cost to the Federal Government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operation expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information. Agencies also may aggregate cost estimates from Items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.

Estimated Costs to the Federal Government:

- a. Processing/Analyzing costs -\$3,488
- b. Forms are available on the VA inter/intranet forms websites.
- c. Printing and production cost - \$25,600
- d. Total cost to government - \$25,601

(www.OPM.gov/Policy-data-over-sight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2017/general-schedule-gs-salary-calculator).

15. Explain the reason for any burden hour changes since the last submission.

There was an increase in the number of respondents, which affects the burden hours. The form was changed to reflect an expiration date place holder, the title of the form was changed to Gravesite Reservation Questionnaire and the questions in the form were changed to reflect alignment with PL 108-183, §502, dated December 16, 2003 - A surviving non-veteran spouse, who died before January 1, 2000, and whose remarriage to a nonveteran was terminated by divorce or the death of the non-veteran and A surviving non-veteran spouse of a veteran, who had a subsequent remarriage to a non-veteran, and who died on or after January 1, 2000.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

The information collection is not for publication or tabulation use.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

We are not seeking approval to omit the expiration date for OMB approval.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions," of OMB 83-I.

This submission does not contain any exceptions to the certification statement.

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

This collection of information does / does not employ statistical methods.

If statistical methods are employed, Part B must be completed.