

VETERANS BURIAL BENEFITS

WESTPORT BENEFITS

BURIAL IN BEECH GROVE CEMETERY

Eligible veterans and their spouse can be buried in the Veterans section of Beech Grove Cemetery if they meet at least ONE of the following criteria:

- ★ Must live in Westport at time of death; OR
- ★ Veteran must have lived in Westport at time of enlistment

Please be aware of the following:

- ★ There is no charge for plot for veteran or spouse, but certain fees must be paid
- ★ Plots cannot be reserved
- ★ Only flat markers are permitted and non-veteran spouse must have their own marker as that will not be provided by the VA. There is a fee for the installation of the flat marker.

STATE BENEFITS

Massachusetts has two Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries. Both military service and residency requirements must be met.

Military Service

- ★ Veteran separated from active duty service under honorable conditions; OR
- ★ Veteran served at least 20 years in the National Guard or Reserve and is in receipt of, or eligible for, military retirement pension; OR
- ★ Service member dies on active duty; OR
- ★ With certain exceptions, service beginning after 9/7/1980 as an enlisted person, or service after 10/16/1981 as an officer, must be for a minimum of 24 months OR the full period for which the person was called to active duty

Residency

- ★ Veteran's home of record was Massachusetts at the time of entry into active military service; OR
- ★ Veteran resided in Massachusetts at least one day after discharge from active duty; OR
- ★ Veteran was a resident of Massachusetts at the time of death

FEDERAL VA BENEFITS

BURIAL ALLOWANCE

◆ www.va.gov/burials-memorials

You can apply in advance to see if you can be buried in a VA National Cemetery. This pre-need determination of eligibility can help make the burial planning process easier for your family members in their time of need.

VA burial benefits can provide a burial allowance to help pay for the unreimbursed burial or memorial service expenses of qualifying veterans.

To qualify, the veteran must not have received a dishonorable discharge and must have died:

- ★ As a result of a service-connected disability; OR
- ★ While getting VA care, either at a VA facility or a facility contracted by the VA; OR
- ★ While traveling with proper authorization, and at VA expense, either to or from a facility for an examination, or to receive treatment or care; OR
- ★ With an original or reopened claim for VA compensation or pension pending at the time of death, if they would've been entitled to benefits before the time of death; OR
- ★ While receiving VA pension or compensation OR received full military retirement or disability pay in lieu of compensation or pension

Note: The VA will also provide an allowance for the cost of transporting a Veteran's remains for burial in a national cemetery.

Application for non-service-connected burial allowance must be made within 2 years after the veteran's burial or cremation. There is no time limit to file for service-connected burial, plot, or interment allowance.

HEADSTONE, MARKER, MEDALLION / PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATE

◆ www.va.gov/burials-memorials/memorial-items/headstones-markers-medallions ◆ www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/types.asp

While planning a burial for a veteran or reservist, you can apply for certain memorial items to honor their military service.

Headstone, marker, niche, or medallion: upright headstone; flat marker; bronze niche; "In Memory Of" markers for veterans whose remains are not recovered or identified, are buried at sea, donated to science, or cremated and scattered; or medallion that can be affixed to a privately purchased headstone or marker. An eligible spouse or other family member buried in a national cemetery may also qualify for a headstone or marker to identify the place of burial.

Presidential Memorial Certificate: engraved paper certificate(s) signed by the current president.

BURIAL BENEFITS FAQs

Can a veteran or veteran's spouse be buried in the Beech Grove Cemetery veterans section?

- ✦ That depends. To qualify for burial in the veterans section, the veteran must meet at least one of the residency requirements listed in the Westport Benefits section on the reverse side. Please note that these plots cannot be reserved prior to the passing of the veteran or spouse and will be assigned by the Cemetery Department at the time of need. If separate plots are needed, it is important to notify the Cemetery Department and/or funeral home to ensure that the chosen plot has an adjacent vacant spot that will be reserved for the surviving spouse.

Is there a cost for burial in the veterans section?

- ✦ Yes. Although there is no charge for the plot itself, there are certain fees which must be paid and they depend on the type of burial, i.e., casket or cremation, and the fees in place at the time of burial.

Can the veteran or spouse get a grave marker or headstone?

- ✦ Headstones are no longer allowed in the veterans section. If the veteran qualifies, the VA can provide a flat grave marker for the veteran only once he/she has passed. The application is usually completed by the funeral home, but it can be completed with the assistance of the Veterans Service Officer. Supporting documentation, including the veteran's DD-214 and death certificate must be provided along with the application. There is a foundation fee that must be paid to install a flat grave marker.
- ✦ Two grave markers are allowed per plot at Beech Grove Cemetery. If the veteran and spouse are buried in the same plot, a private grave marker will need to be purchased for the non-veteran spouse.

Are there other veteran cemeteries in Massachusetts where the veteran and/or spouse can be buried?

- ✦ That depends on the veteran's eligibility. If the veteran qualifies under state or federal regulations, there are three options for burial. One is at the VA's National Cemetery in Bourne. The other two are at either of the state's Memorial Cemeteries, which are located in Agawam and Winchendon. See the reverse side for more information.

Is there a cost for burial at either of these 3 cemeteries?

- ✦ Possibly. There is no cost at the VA National Cemetery for either the veteran, spouse, or other eligible family member. There is a nominal cost for the spouse or other eligible family member at either of the two state Memorial Cemeteries.

Can military honors be provided for a veteran's funeral?

- ✦ Yes. In general, the military will provide a minimum of a two-person honor guard with at least one member from the veteran's branch of service for the presentation of a flag to the veteran's next of kin. If possible, the honor guard will also play Taps. Here in Westport, the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 207 also provides an honor guard if they are available. Either option is typically arranged by the funeral home.

Does the VA provide a financial benefit when a veteran passes away?

- ✦ Possibly. There are requirements that determine if the family of a veteran is entitled to a monetary benefit due to the veteran's passing. See the Federal VA Benefits section on the reverse side for these requirements. Please note that if the veteran is buried in a state Memorial Cemetery or a VA National Cemetery, the plot allowance is not paid as there is no cost for the veteran's burial. Also note that there may be time limits to apply for this benefit.

If a veteran is receiving money from the VA and passes away, does that benefit transfer to the spouse?

- ✦ No. Disability compensation is not transferrable to the surviving spouse. However, if the veteran died from a service-connected condition or was rated totally and permanently disabled for the ten years leading up to the veteran's death, then the surviving spouse can apply for survivor's benefits, called Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).
- ✦ If the veteran was receiving non-serviced connected pension, the surviving spouse could possibly continue to qualify for this benefit, however the benefit amount for a surviving spouse is much lower than the amount for the veteran with a dependent and is based on income and unreimbursed medical expenses.

For questions about any of the benefits on this flyer, please contact:

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