

“PRESS RELEASE”

BURIAL AND PLOT ALLOWANCE FOR VETERANS

By Douglas County Veterans Service Officer Jerry Seiner

The VA burial allowance is a partial reimbursement of an eligible veteran's burial and funeral costs. To be eligible, the veteran must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. The amount of payment depends upon whether the veteran's cause of death is service-connected or nonservice-connected.

VA may pay up to \$2,000 toward burial expenses for deaths on or after September 11, 2001, or up to \$1,500 for deaths prior to September 11, 2001.

If the cause of the veteran's death is due to a service-connected disability or disease, the maximum entitlement is \$2000. There is no time limit for applying for the service-connected burial allowance.

For nonservice-connected death, the VA will pay up to \$978 toward burial and funeral expenses for deaths on or after October 1, 2024, and a \$978 plot-interment allowance if not buried in a National Cemetery. Application for the nonservice-connected death benefits must be submitted within two years following the burial or cremation of the veteran's body.

If a veteran dies from nonservice-connected causes while hospitalized by the VA, the VA may pay \$978 for the burial allowance and an additional \$978 for plot allowance. The term "hospitalized by the VA" includes hospital, nursing home or domiciliary care or, while on approved travel for VA medical care.

To be eligible for payment of non-service connected burial benefits, one of the following requirements must be met. The veteran must have:

- been in receipt of VA disability compensation or pension at the time of death or was in receipt of military retirement pay in lieu of VA compensation.
- had a claim pending for disability compensation or pension benefits and was later determined to be eligible for the benefit from a date prior to the date of his or her death.
- been indigent. An indigent veteran must have been a veteran of a war or was discharged from active duty for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

The Department of Veterans Affairs also furnishes upon request, a government headstone or marker for the grave of any deceased eligible veteran in any cemetery around the world. Eligible veterans include:

- any deceased veteran discharged under conditions other than dishonorable
- members of the National Guard or Reserves who die while on training
- Members of the National Guard or Reserves who are eligible for retirement
- Members of the National Guard or Reserves who have been activated and who served for the period for which called to active duty.

If you have any questions about this topic or anything concerning your veteran's benefits, contact your local Veterans Service Officer, Jerry Seiner at 605-724-2750 or 605-481-1338. The Douglas County Courthouse office is open on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 8:00 to 4:30.