



Headstones, Markers, and Medallions

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My last column “Funeral Tips for Veterans,” which appeared in the March/April 2013 edition of the PA VFW News, generated a lot of response and some very thoughtful inquires. Therefore, additional information on Headstones, Markers, and Medallions is provided in this column.

Any Veteran and Member of the Armed Forces who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable is eligible for a Government Headstone, Marker, or Medallion. However, the following exception does apply: *service beginning after September 7, 1980, as an enlisted person, and service after October 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.*

Memorial headstones and markers, for individuals or groups, are also furnished for eligible deceased active duty service members and Veterans whose remains have not been recovered or identified, are buried at sea, donated to science or whose cremated remains have been scattered.

While there is no charge for the headstone or marker itself, arrangements for placing it in a private cemetery are the applicant's responsibility, and all setting fees are at private expense.

- How to Apply for a Headstone, Marker, or Medallion

When burial is in a private cemetery, VA Form 40-1330, Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker or VA Form 40-1330M, Claim for Government Medallion must be submitted along with Veterans military discharge documents (DD214). Do not send original documents, as they will not be returned.

- Details for the Headstone or Marker, and the form can be found at:
<http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330.pdf>.

➤ Details for the Medallion, and the form, can be found at:
<http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330M.pdf>

- What is the Medallion?

The medallion is a device furnished in lieu of a traditional government headstone or grave marker for Veterans whose death occurred on or after Nov. 1, 1990, and whose grave in a private cemetery is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. Under federal law, eligible Veterans buried in a private cemetery are entitled to either a government-furnished grave marker or the medallion, but not both.

The medallion is available in three sizes: 5 inches, 3 inches and 1 ½ inches in width. Each bronze medallion features the image of a folded burial flag adorned with laurels and is inscribed with the word “Veteran” at the top and the Veteran’s branch of service at the bottom.



Next of kin receive the medallion, along with a kit that allows the family or the staff of a private cemetery to affix the medallion to a headstone, grave marker, mausoleum or columbarium niche cover.

- Who Can Apply for a Headstone, Marker, or Medallion?

Only the following individuals may apply for a headstone, marker, or medallion:

1. Decedent's next-of-kin (NOK)
2. Authorized representative on behalf of decedent
3. Authorized representative on behalf of next-of-kin

If someone other than the NOK is applying for the headstone, marker, or medallion, the application package must include a written statement signed by the NOK or decedent authorizing that person (the applicant) to apply for this benefit. A notarized statement is not required for these purposes.

- When to Apply?

The application can only be submitted upon the death of the Veteran. However, Veterans are encouraged to have the application prepared and stored, along with other important documents and instructions, for their next of kin.

For more information, you can contact the Applicant Assistance Unit between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (ET), Monday through Friday, at 1-800-697-6947. Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the VA Web site on the Internet at www.cem.va.gov or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.

Blessings,

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