



# RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

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County Executive

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## Burial and Plot Interment Allowance

### What Are VA Burial Allowances?

VA burial allowances are flat-rate monetary benefits. They help cover eligible Veterans' burial and funeral costs. Generally, they are paid at the maximum amount allowed by law.

A 2014 VA regulation change helped simplify the program. Eligible surviving spouses are now paid automatically. This happens upon notification of the Veteran's death. There is no need to submit a claim.

However, VA may grant additional benefits after receiving a claim. These include plot or interment allowance and transportation allowance.

### Who Is Eligible?

If the surviving spouse has not been automatically paid, VA will pay whomever files a claim first of the following:

- The Veteran's surviving spouse
- The Veteran's children, regardless of age
- The Veteran's parents
- The executor or administrator of the estate
- The survivor of a legal union with the Veteran. This applies to formal relationships that continued up until the Veteran's death. The couple needs to have formalized the relationship under the law of the state. There should be state-issued documentation of the relationship.

The Veteran must have a discharge other than dishonorable. The Veteran must also have met one of the following conditions:

- Death as the result of a service-connected disability
- Receiving VA pension or compensation at time of death
- Entitled to receive VA pension or compensation at time of death, but instead received full military retirement or disability pay
- Died while hospitalized by VA or while receiving care under VA contract
- Died while traveling under the following circumstances:

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### Van Transportation...

\* Don't drive and need to get to the VA Medical Center or the Troy VA Clinic?

\* We offer complimentary van transportation to and from the VAMC and Clinic for most morning medical appointments.

For more details please call 270-2760.



### VETERANS CRISIS LINE

1-800-273-8255  
PRESS 1

\*\*Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to 838255\*\*  
TTY service 1-800-799-4889

Confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, for veterans and their loved ones.

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- Under proper authorization and at VA expense
- To or from a place for the purpose of examination, treatment or care
- Had an original or reopened claim for VA compensation or pension pending at the time of death
  - Only if the Veteran would have been entitled to benefits from a date prior to the death date
- Died on or after Oct. 9, 1996, while a patient at a VA-approved state nursing home

### **How Much Does VA Pay?**

For service-connected deaths:

- If the Veteran died on or after Sept. 11, 2001: maximum \$2,000
- If the Veteran died before Sept. 11, 2001: maximum \$1,500
- If the Veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery: some or all of the costs of transporting remains

For non-service-connected deaths:

- If the Veteran died on or after Oct. 1, 2017: \$300 burial allowance; \$762 for a plot
- If the Veteran died on or after Oct. 1, 2016, but before Oct. 1, 2017: \$300 burial allowance; \$749 for a plot
- If the Veteran died on or after Oct. 1, 2015, but before Oct. 1, 2016: \$300 burial allowance; \$747 for a plot

Effective Oct. 1, 2011, non-service-connected death rates have changed. Payable rates are higher if the Veteran was hospitalized by VA at time of death.

- If the Veteran died on or after Oct. 1, 2017: \$762 burial allowance; \$762 for a plot
- If the Veteran died on or after Oct. 1, 2016: \$749 burial allowance; \$749 for a plot
- If the Veteran died on or after Oct. 1, 2015, but before Oct. 1, 2016: \$747 burial allowance; \$747 for a plot
- If death occurred while the Veteran was hospitalized by VA: some or all costs of transporting remains
  - This also applies to VA-contracted nursing home care.

Note: If the Veteran dies while traveling at VA expense, VA will pay burial, funeral, plot or interment allowances. VA will also pay transportation expenses. The traveling must have been for the purpose of an exam, treatment or care.

For unclaimed remains:

- If Veteran remains are unclaimed, the entity responsible for burial can receive a \$300 burial allowance.
- If buried in a VA national cemetery, VA may reimburse:
  - The cost of transporting remains
  - The cost for a plot

### **How Can You Apply?**

Apply by filling out VA Form 21P-530, "Application for Burial Benefits." You can find the form at <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21p-530-ARE.pdf>. Attach a copy of the deceased's discharge document and a death certificate. Attach a receipt if you are claiming transportation expenses. Mail your application to the VA regional benefit office in your state. You can find your office location by visiting <https://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp>. Or call the Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency .

## **Burial Flag**

### **Why Does VA Provide a Burial Flag?**

A United States flag is provided to drape the casket of a deceased Veteran. The flag is provided at no cost. It is intended to honor the memory of a Veteran who served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces. VA furnishes a burial flag for the following Veterans who received other than dishonorable discharge:

- Veterans who served during wartime
- Veterans who died on active duty after May 27, 1941
- Veterans who served after Jan. 31, 1955
- Peacetime Veterans who were discharged or released before June 27, 1950
- Certain people who served in the organized military forces of the Commonwealth of the Philippines while in service of the U.S. Armed Forces
  - Must have died on or after April 25, 1951
- Certain former members of the Selected Reserves

### **Who Is Eligible to Receive the Burial Flag?**

After the funeral service, the flag is given to the next-of-kin as a keepsake. When there is no next-of-kin, VA will give the flag to a friend who requests it. For VA national cemeteries with an Avenue of Flags, you can donate the flag to be flown on patriotic holidays.

### **How Can You Apply?**

Complete VA Form 27-2008, "Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes" to apply. You can find the form at <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-27-2008-ARE.pdf>. VA regional benefit offices and some post offices are the primary issuing points for burial flags. You can find your closest regional benefit office by visiting <https://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp>. Please note, not all local post offices have burial flags on hand. Call and confirm with your local post office in advance.

### **Can a Burial Flag Be Replaced?**

According to law, VA can issue only one flag for a Veteran's funeral. It cannot be replaced if lost, destroyed or stolen. However, some organizations or community groups may be able to help you get another flag.

### **How Should the Burial Flag Be Displayed?**

This depends on whether the casket is open or closed. VA Form 27-2009 (<https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-27-2008-ARE.pdf>) provides the correct method for displaying and folding. The burial flag is not suitable for outside display. This is due to its size and fabric. The cotton can easily be damaged by weather.

## **A Message from the Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency Director**

We hope this issue finds you mentally and physically well with the challenges posed by the COVID-19 outbreak. We encourage everyone to continue practicing social distancing and other lifesaving preventive measures. We encourage you to reach out to your loved ones, support systems and health professionals with any issues. Remember you are not alone; assistance is always available.

We will continue to provide information to help ensure that everyone is addressing their current needs as we all cope with the present situation, as all Veterans always do.

As the weather warms up, our thoughts turn to Memorial Day and honoring our fallen comrades. There may or may not be parades and ceremonies to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice and joined the ranks of those we honor annually in May, but we must still remember every day. Remember and honor them!

Remember and honor them by living above the common level of life and assisting your fellow veterans in whatever way that you can. Join with other veterans, to make it easier to see the cumulative effects of our efforts, and to help Veterans who may not be aware of the aid that is out there for them, and for the less fortunate in our communities. Remember and honor them!

Join a post you are eligible for. Get out there and join us to help out Veterans. Remember and honor them! "Find Your Niche"!

All Veterans should have their DD-214's or discharge documents registered at the Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency and/or the Rensselaer County Clerk's Office.

Honorably Discharged Veterans can get their Return the F.A.V.O.R. card at the County Clerk's Office at 150 Third Street, Troy, New York. Call them at (518) 270-4080, before visiting to learn their current hours and procedures.

Remember to find those deceased Veterans that we can honor. Everyone at your Posts and every Veteran out there should know at least one Veteran that the Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Committee can remember in the monthly poignant ceremony. Remember and honor them!

Each Post should also contact the Rensselaer County Legislature to honor our living Veterans at (518) 270-2880 or email: [Rensscolg@renesco.com](mailto:Rensscolg@renesco.com). This is a straight forward process and won't take much time. Remember and honor them!

Enjoy your break as much as possible and remember Memorial Day when we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our Nation. Stay healthy; stay safe! Remember and honor them!

Yours in Patriotism,

*Peter K. Goebel*

## **CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION**

**THIS IS A RAPIDLY CHANGING SITUATION, INFORMATION CURRENT AS OF 3/26/20 AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE CHECK THE RENSELAER COUNTY WEBPAGE AND FACEBOOK PAGE FOR UPDATES REGULARLY.**

**Rensselaer County COVID-19 (Corona Virus) Hotline 518-270-0450**

**Rensselaer County Test Result Information 518-270-2659 M-F; 518-857-4660 after hours**

**Rensselaer County Department of Social Services: 518-266-7800/518-266-7850**

**Rensselaer County Department for the Aging: 518-270-2730 9-5 M-F; 518-270-2767 after hours**

**Rensselaer County Mental Health Department: 24 hour hotline: 518-270-2800**

**NYS Department of Labor (518) 457-9000**

**NYS Attorney General's office (212) 416-8700**

**Rensselaer County COVID-19 (Corona Virus) email: [Coronainfo@renesco.com](mailto:Coronainfo@renesco.com)**

**NYSDOH COVID-19 hotline at: (888) 364-3065**