

Veteran Funeral Planning Guide

Planning a funeral for a veteran involves unique considerations to honor their service and ensure they receive the benefits and recognition they deserve. This guide will help you navigate the process, from gathering necessary documentation to accessing veteran-specific resources.

Step 1: Gather Essential Information

To ensure your loved one receives the appropriate honors and benefits, you'll need to gather the following documents and information:

- ☐ **Discharge Papers (DD Form 214):** This form is crucial for verifying military service and eligibility for benefits.
- ☐ **Social Security Number:** Required for many forms and applications.
- ☐ **Veteran's Full Name and Date of Birth:** Ensure you have the correct information for all records.
- ☐ **Service Information:** Include branch of service, rank, dates of service, and any wars/conflicts they served in.
- ☐ **Medals and Awards:** A list of any medals, awards, or honors the veteran received during their service.
- ☐ **Burial Preference:** Determine if the veteran wishes to be buried in a national cemetery.

Step 2: Explore Veteran Benefits

Veterans are entitled to several benefits, including burial in a national cemetery, a government-issued headstone or marker, and military funeral honors.

- **VA National Cemetery Scheduling Office:**
 - **Phone:** 1-800-535-1117
 - **Website:** www.cem.va.gov
- **Burial Benefits Information:**
 - **Phone:** 1-800-827-1000
 - **Website:** www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/burials.asp
- **Military Funeral Honors:**
 - **Phone:** Contact your local military branch representative or funeral director to arrange honors.
 - **Website:** www.militaryonesource.mil

Step 3: Choose A Burial Or Cremation Option

Veterans may be eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery, a state veteran cemetery, or a private cemetery. If cremation is preferred, there are options for urn burial, scattering, or keeping the urn in a columbarium.

- **National Cemetery Administration:**
 - **Phone:** 1-800-535-1117
 - **Website:** www.cem.va.gov
- **VA Burial Allowance Information:**
 - **Phone:** 1-800-827-1000
 - **Website:** www.va.gov/burials-memorials/veterans-burial-allowance/

Step 4: Arrange For Military Funeral Honors

Military funeral honors include the folding and presentation of the U.S. flag and the playing of "Taps." You can arrange these honors through the funeral director or by contacting your local military branch representative.

- **Military Funeral Honors Information:**
 - **Website:** www.militaryonesource.mil

Step 5: Order A Government-Issued Headstone Or Marker

Eligible veterans can receive a government-issued headstone or marker, regardless of burial location. The headstone or marker can be ordered through the VA.

- **VA Headstone and Marker Information:**
 - **Phone:** 1-800-697-6947
 - **Website:** www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/

Step 6: Notify And Involve The Community

Ensure that the veteran's service is recognized by their community. This may include involving veterans' organizations, arranging for honor guards, or having a local official present at the service.

- **American Legion:**
 - **Phone:** 1-800-433-3318
 - **Website:** www.legion.org
- **Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW):**
 - **Phone:** 1-816-756-3390

- **Website:** www.vfw.org

Step 7: Consider Additional Resources And Support

There are additional resources available to assist with the funeral planning process and provide support to the veteran's family.

- **VA Survivor Benefits:**
 - **Phone:** 1-800-827-1000
 - **Website:** www.va.gov/survivor-benefits/
- **Military OneSource:**
 - **Phone:** 1-800-342-9647
 - **Website:** www.militaryonesource.mil

Final Notes

Planning a funeral for a veteran involves navigating several unique processes and benefits. By following this guide, you can ensure that your loved one receives the honor and recognition they deserve for their service to our country. If you need assistance at any stage, please don't hesitate to reach out to Dignity Funeral Home. Our team is here to support you with compassion, care, and respect.