



— FROM THE SURGEON GENERAL —

Dr. Vito Matthew Rao



Dr. Vito Rao

PRE-NEED BURIAL ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION IN VA NATIONAL CEMETERIES

It is with particular significance that the Department of Veteran Affairs announced it would provide eligibility determination for internment in a VA National Cemetery. Further the VA implemented the pre-need burial eligibility to assist anyone who would like to know if they are eligible for burial in a VA National Cemetery. The VA is also promoting pre-need eligibility to encourage Veterans and their eligible family member to plan in advance to use VA burial benefits that Veterans have earned through their military service. Planning in advance for a Veteran's or loved-one's final resting place can eliminate unnecessary delays and reduce stress on a family at a difficult time. Veteran families will have increased confidence that their loved ones are eligible for burial in a VA National Cemetery at their time of need.

Upon request VA will make eligibility determinations for burial in a VA national cemetery in advance of need. Eligibility individuals are entitled to burial in any open VA national cemetery which included opening/closing of the grave, a government-furnished grave liner, perpetual care of the grave site, and a government-furnished upright headstone or flat marker or niche cover (<http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/index.asp>), all at no cost to the family. Veterans are also eligible for a burial flag (http://www.cen.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/burial_flags.asp) and Presidential Memorial Certificate (<http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/pmc.asp>).

Burial in a VA national cemetery is open to all member of the armed forces and Veterans who have met minimum active duty service requirements, as applicable by law and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Member of the reserve components of the armed forces who die while on active duty under certain circumstances or who die while on training duty are also eligible for burial, as are service members and former service members who were eligible for retired pay at the time of their death. Spouses, minor children and, under certain conditions, dependent unmarried adult children are also eligible for burial even if they predecease the Veteran.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has implemented this pre-need eligibility program so that Veterans, spouses and unmarried dependent adult children may better prepare for burial in a VA national cemetery prior to the time of need. Interested individuals may submit VA Form 40-10007 (<http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-10007.pdf>), Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery, along with a copy of supporting documentation of military service such as a DD214, if readily available, by: toll-free fax at 1-855-840-8299; email to Eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov (<mailto:Eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov>); or mail to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office, P.O. Box 510543, St. Louis, MO 63151.

How Can I Find Out More?

At your time of need, your next-of-kin, funeral home or other representative responsible for making your final arrangements should contact the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at (800) 535-1117 to request burial. VA will locate your pre-need decision letter and validate our determination. Because laws affecting VA burial eligibility and individual circumstances may change, upon receipt of a burial request, VA will verify pre-need decisions in accordance with the laws in effect at that time including bars to receipt of burial benefits.

If further assistance is required with this report, please feel free to contact this Surgeon General. Additionally, if you need further assistance, locate your VA Health Care Facility, State Regional Office or Convenient Veterans County Service Office.

Trusting that all Marines and family experienced a great Second Marine Division 76th Birthday that attended Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Semper Fi & God bless,
Dr. V. Matthew Rao
SMDA Surgeon General
9326 Ketay Circle
Boca Raton, FL 33428-1518
TEL: 561-451-8772
Email: drvmatthewrao@juno.com

◆ ◆ ◆
*Marines, Always Faithful,
Brothers Forever*

Links to VA burial information:

VA Form 40-10007 - <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-10007.pdf>

Headstone Markers and Medallions - <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/index.asp>

Burial Flag - http://www.cen.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/burial_flags.asp

Presidential Memorial Certificate - <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/pmc.asp>