

# Collier's Affordable Caskets Military / Veterans Benefit Guide

We pay our respects to our Soldiers and Veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice while in service, and for those whose service ended honorably, but have now gone on. We recognize the sacrifices made by all veterans and their families during and after their time of service.

This information about military and veterans benefits may prove useful. If we can assist with your casket needs, contact us at [affordablecaskets@gmail.com](mailto:affordablecaskets@gmail.com) or (512) 821-2755.

## Military & Veteran Burial and Survivor Benefits

As a prior member of the military, the deceased may have been receiving benefits from the military, or the Veterans Administration, or both. Survivors may be also be eligible to continue receiving benefits from either or both, or at least final benefits related to the burial of the veteran.

### Military Retirees

If the deceased was receiving military pension benefits as either the retiree or the spouse/child of a deceased retiree, you must notify the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) immediately to stop payment. Delays can cause the survivors to have to return payments made after death of the beneficiary.

#### To report a death

View instructions online (<http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/survivors/Retiree-death.html>) for how to report a death. Or, Call DFAS at 800-321-1080, Option 1.

#### Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)

If the military retiree was enrolled in the Survivor Benefit Plan, which is insurance that partially replaces their retirement pay for their spouse upon death, there are two situations which require action Start benefits for the surviving spouse/child. Consult the DFAS instructions online (<http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/provide/sbp/after-death.html>) for starting SBP payments, or call 800-321-1080. Report death of the military retiree to DFAS. Complete a Verification for Survivor Annuity (DD Form 2656-7) NOTE: Beneficiaries may be required to complete an annual certification of eligibility, especially if under age 55.

### Death of a Survivor Military Family Member

Stop benefits when the surviving spouse/child dies. To report the death of a survivor receiving SBP payments, view the DFAS site (<http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/survivors/annuitant-death.html>) for information, or call 500-321-1080. Again, this must be done as soon as possible to prevent repayment of benefits issued after death.

### Veterans Administration Benefits

#### Burial Benefits

If the deceased was a military veteran or their family member, they may be eligible for burial benefits from the Veterans Administration. These can include:

- Burial in a VA national cemetery (including opening/closing of the grave, burial, or placement in a vault)
- Perpetual care of the gravesite
- Headstone with inscription
- Burial flag
- Military honors ceremony
- Transportation of flowers from service location to gravesite.

Veterans who are buried in private cemeteries are also available for some benefits. In such cases the VA generally pays a flat fee to the survivor for funeral expenses. The burial and funeral allowance is currently \$300 or \$700 for non-service-connected death and \$2000 if death is connected to military service.

The VA will also pay a \$700 plot-interment allowance if the veteran is not buried in a national cemetery. Benefits increase annually based on the Consumer Price Index.

Consult the VA Memorial Benefits site (<http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-burial.asp>) for more information and how to apply.

#### Survivor Benefits

Survivor Benefits of deceased veterans is subject to many factors and is beyond the scope of this website. Here are a few references that may assist in learning what survivors may be eligible to receive.

- Veteran's Administration: Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors ([http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits\\_book/benefits\\_chap13.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/benefits_chap13.asp))
- I am a Dependent or Survivor ([http://www.va.gov/opa/persona/dependent\\_survivor.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/persona/dependent_survivor.asp))

### Phone Numbers to the Veterans Administration

Various phone numbers for different VA benefits can be found online here ([https://iris.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/1703](https://iris.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/1703)). A couple are of the most pertinent to the passing of a Veteran are:

To start or get benefits: 800-827-1000

To stop pension benefits: 877-294-6380

### Helpful Veterans Organizations

Additionally, various organizations may offer assistance with navigating the process.

#### Veterans of Foreign Wars

Filing a VA Claim (<http://www.vfw.org/NVS>)

Phone: 800-VFW-1899

#### Military Retired Officer's Association

Survivors ([http://www.moaa.org/main\\_landingpage.aspx?id=116](http://www.moaa.org/main_landingpage.aspx?id=116))

Phone: 800-234-6622

**Uniformed Services Automobile Association** (if the veteran or family member was/is a member) – though not a veteran organization per se, USAA does provide information to veteran families who are members.

Losing a Loved One ([https://www.usaa.com/inet/pages/advice\\_experiencing\\_a\\_loss\\_main#Losing\\_a\\_Loved\\_One](https://www.usaa.com/inet/pages/advice_experiencing_a_loss_main#Losing_a_Loved_One))

Phone Number for Survivors Relations Team: 800-531-1045