



Department of  
Veterans Affairs

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# Fact Sheet

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## Facts about VA's National Cemeteries

National cemeteries are hallowed places where deceased veterans and members of the armed forces receive perpetual care that honors their service to the nation. Dependent children and, usually, spouses are also eligible for burial in national cemeteries. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) manages the country's network of national cemeteries – considered by VA as “national shrines” -- through its National Cemetery Administration.

- VA maintains more than 2.8 million gravesites at 125 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico, as well as in 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. Occupied gravesites may hold the remains of more than one family member.
- Approximately 306,600 full-casket gravesites, 93,700 in-ground gravesites for cremated remains, and 79,400 columbarium niches are available in already developed acreage in VA national cemeteries.
- There are more than 17,000 acres within established national cemeteries. Just over half are undeveloped and -- along with available gravesites in developed acreage -- have the potential to provide more than four million gravesites.
- Of the 125 national cemeteries, 65 are open to all interments; 20 can accommodate cremated remains and the remains of family members interred in the same gravesite as a previously deceased family member; and 40 will perform only interments of family members in the same gravesite as a previously deceased family member.
- Since 1973, annual interments in VA national cemeteries have increased by more than 175 percent, from 36,400 to nearly 100,200 in 2007. Interments are expected to increase annually through 2009.
- More than 656,000 veterans in the U.S. and Puerto Rico died in 2007. Historically, more than 12 percent of U.S. veterans choose burial in VA national and state veterans cemeteries. As new veterans cemeteries open, this percentage is expected to increase.
- The nation's most famous national cemetery – Arlington National Cemetery – is administered by the Army, rather than VA, and the National Park Service maintains 14 historical cemeteries.

*Note: References to 2007 are for fiscal year 2007 (Oct.1, 2006 – Sept.30, 2007).*

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## VA National Cemeteries 2/2/2

- Of the 100,200 interments conducted in 2007, nearly 69 percent were in the 20 busiest national cemeteries: Riverside, Calif.; Florida, in Bushnell; Calverton, N.Y.; Fort Snelling, Minneapolis.; Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis; Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio; Fort Logan, Denver; Willamette, Portland, Ore.; Dallas-Fort Worth; National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona, Phoenix; Houston; Tahoma, Kent, Wash.; Fort Rosecrans, San Diego; Abraham Lincoln, Elmwood, Ill.; Massachusetts, in Bourne; Long Island, N.Y.; Indiantown Gap, Annville, Pa.; Ohio Western Reserve, Rittman, Ohio; Great Lakes, Holly, Mich.; and Sacramento Valley, Dixon, Calif.
- As of Sept. 30, 2007, eight national cemeteries each contained more than 100,000 occupied gravesites, collectively accounting for 40 percent of all VA gravesites maintained: Long Island, Calverton, Riverside, Fort Snelling, Jefferson Barracks, Golden Gate, Calif., Willamette, and Ft. Sam Houston National Cemeteries.
- Largest national cemetery: Calverton, N.Y., 1,045 acres.
- Smallest national cemetery: Hampton (Va.) at the VA Medical Center, .03 acres.
- Oldest national cemeteries: 14 established in 1862 (12 maintained by VA).
- Newest national cemetery: South Florida National Cemetery, Lake Worth, opened April 16, 2007.
- Since 1973, VA has provided more than 9.9 million headstones and markers. In 2007, VA provided more than 361,000 headstones and markers.
- VA provided more than 423,000 Presidential Memorial Certificates to the loved ones of deceased veterans in 2007.
- Since 1980, the State Cemetery Grants Program has obligated more than \$312 million to 35 states, Saipan and Guam to establish, expand or improve 69 state veterans cemeteries. In 2007, VA-supported state veterans cemeteries provided more than 23,000 interments.
- Volunteers donated approximately 366,000 hours at national cemeteries during 2007.
- More than 8.1 million people visited VA national cemeteries in 2007.
- With laws passed in 1999 and 2003, Congress directed VA to establish 12 new national cemeteries. One opened in each of these states: Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Georgia, California and Florida. The rest – one each in Alabama, California, Pennsylvania and South Carolina, and two in Florida – will be located near large populations of veterans who currently do not have access to a burial option.

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