

Funeral Services for Veterans



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When planning a loved one's funeral or cremation, it's important to let your funeral director know if they were a veteran. The funeral home will need a copy of the veteran's honorable discharge papers (DD214) to move forward with organizing any veteran benefits. If the veteran or family do not have a copy of this, one can be obtained with the help of the Veteran Services Office



in the county of residence. The question is then asked where the burial of the veteran might take place. If it will be in a veterans' cemetery, a veteran can pre-register themselves, or their family can do so after their passing.

The Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Spooner, WI, is truly a beautiful place. It has a gorgeous lagoon as you enter. They have a chapel with pews and a glass wall. You can see and hear the military honors while inside. All military rites are completed inside. No attendees are allowed at the grave site until it is closed. They also had a very nice columbarium for cremated remains. Each niche is 9"x12"x18" deep, which is important to know when selecting an urn. The services the cemetery provides are no cost for the veteran, but there is a fee for spouses.

If the veteran is buried in a non-veterans' cemetery, the cost of the opening and closing of the grave must be paid by the family. The veteran is entitled to a military plaque or grave marker which is free to the veteran, but does have a cost of mounting or placing the marker on the grave, along with other cemetery fees.

At the family's request, all veterans may receive military honors at their funeral. There is no fee to the family for this service. If burial takes place in a non-veterans' cemetery, a flag staff and small US flag can be provided by the county Veteran Services Office to be placed on the veteran's grave.

A US flag should be ordered by the funeral home assisting the family. In a traditional funeral service, the US flag is often placed on the casket in place of flowers. The flag is removed by the military honor guards, is folded, and then given to the family. The folded flag is often on display at a memorial services.

It is the responsibility of the funeral home to organize military honor guard services, which might be local or from one of the military branches that the veteran served in. The family also may request that honor guards be present during a visitation or service and stand in attention on either side of the casket or urn. The funeral home may also display a flag representing the branch

of service they served in. There is also a Presidential Memorial Certificate available to the members of the family which is signed by the current President. More than one certificate can be requested for family members and other loved ones.

The family needs to be in touch with their local Veteran Services Office to see if there are any other benefits that they may be eligible for. For example, if the veteran had a service related-injury. The local veteran's office quite often reaches out to a family member after the passing of their loved one to answer any questions.

Military service requires a lot of sacrifice by veterans and their families. Some dedicated their entire lives to serving our country. Honoring a veteran at their funeral or memorial service not only shows respect to the veteran, but also to their families and can be part of the healing process.

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