

MONTANA
VETERANS AFFAIRS DIVISION
WEBSITE

<http://montanadma.org>

or

Just type in “Montana veterans services” or
“Montana Veterans Affairs” and press
“search”. We are typically the first listed
option.

Donations to the cemeteries can be sent to:

MONTANA VETERANS AFFAIRS DIVISION
P.O. BOX 5715
HELENA, MT 59604

(406) 324-3740

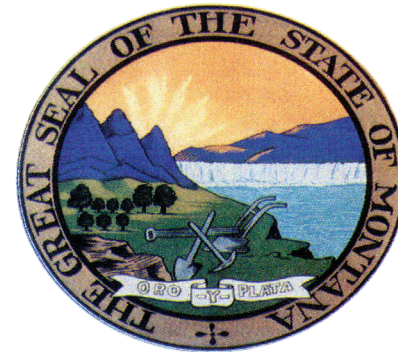
*“No man is entitled to the blessings of freedom unless he be vigilant in its
preservation”. Gen Douglas MacArthur*

3/2014

State of Montana
Veterans Cemetery
Program

*“The people declare that Montana servicemen, service-
women, and veterans may be given special considerations
determined by the legislature”*

Article II, Section 35, Montana Constitution



AN INFORMATIONAL AID

FOR MONTANA'S
VETERANS AND
FAMILY MEMBERS

HISTORY OF MONTANA'S STATE VETERAN CEMETERIES

In 1985, the Montana State Legislature authorized the first state veterans cemetery to be located on Fort Harrison, near Helena. Rule making authority was authorized, and funds were appropriated to support the cemetery.

In 1986, the United States Congress authorized the transfer of 62.5 acres of Federal land to the State of Montana for this new cemetery. Applications were submitted to the federal Department of Veterans Affairs for federal matching funds, which would fund an irrigation system, a well, roads and design a Master Plan. In 1987, the legislature passed a one time revenue check off in the state income tax return to raise funds. This enabled a part-time Cemetery Sexton to be hired. The first burial was a World War I veteran on September 8, 1987.

In 1991, legislation created the "Veteran" license plate. A motor vehicle owner and resident of Montana, who is a veteran or his/her surviving spouse (if not remarried), may be issued a "Veteran" license plate. National Guard and Reserve retirees or those with a "20 year letter", or surviving spouses (if not remarried), may also have the "Veteran" plate. The plate costs \$10 for original issue and all renewals. The entire \$10 supports the State Veterans Cemetery Program.

Legislation was passed for a second state veterans cemetery, which opened in 2002 at Miles City. A third state cemetery—to be located in Missoula County—was legislatively authorized in 2005. The Western Montana State Veterans Cemetery was constructed and became operational October 6, 2008.

In 2013, additional columbaria were added to the Missoula Cemetery through a Federal VA expansion grant. In 2014, a committal shelter and columbaria were added to the Ft. Harrison (Helena) cemetery through a Federal VA improvement grant.

All State veterans cemeteries are operated in accordance with National Shrine Standards—the same standard as Arlington National Cemetery.



Presidential Memorial Certificate Program

A Presidential Memorial Certificate is inscribed with the veteran's name and bears the President's signature to honor the memory of honorably discharged, deceased veterans. Authorized recipients include next of kin and loved ones. Please send your written request to:

Presidential Memorial Certificates
Department of Veterans Affairs
5109 Russell Road
Quantico, VA 22143-3909

The Department of Veterans Affairs is making available a new medallion to be affixed to an existing privately purchased headstone or marker to signify the deceased's status as a veteran. If requested, the medallion will be furnished in lieu of a traditional Government headstone or marker for veterans that died on or after November 1, 1990, and whose grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or currently available in inches, and 1 ½ inches. scribed with the word and the Branch of Service appropriate affixing adhesive, will be provided with the medallion.



marker. The medallion is three sizes, 5 inches, 3 Each medallion will be inscribed with the word VETERAN across the top vice at the bottom. Appropriate instructions and hardware

Important: This benefit is only applicable if the grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. In these instances, eligible veterans are entitled to either a traditional Government-furnished headstone or marker, or the new medallion, but not both. **Note: These medallions are not applicable to headstones or markers located in a state veterans cemetery.**

For more information, call (406) 324-3743.

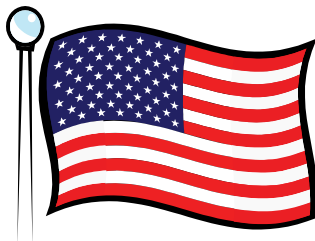
Arranging Burial

The next of kin or the family's funeral director of choice can make arrangements directly with the cemetery. Before burial can take place, cemetery staff must verify the veteran's eligibility. To enable the staff to do this, the next of kin or funeral director must provide the cemetery staff with a copy of the veteran's discharge papers; or the veteran's service, social security or VA claim numbers



Burial Flag Program

The VA provides a U.S. Flag to drape the casket. After the funeral service, the flag may be given to the next of kin. The flag is typically furnished by the mortuary.



MONTANA STATE VETERANS CEMETERY GUIDELINES

Any veteran with an "Honorable or "Under Honorable Conditions" discharge is eligible for interment in one of Montana's state veterans cemeteries. To confirm your eligibility for burial benefits, contact a veterans service officer (see back of pamphlet). A copy of the discharge form, (DD Form-214) is necessary to determine this eligibility.

Spouses and minor children under the age of 21 are also entitled to burial in the state veterans cemetery, as long as the veteran has been or will also be buried in the same cemetery. If the spouse is a veteran, he/she is entitled to his/her own plot and headstone. This is the only time plot reservations are made, and enable the veteran husband and wife to be side by side.

Veterans are entitled to a government provided headstone for the gravesite, whether it is in the state veterans cemetery or in a private cemetery. Certain basic information will be inscribed on the headstone or marker at government expense, such as the name of the deceased, years of birth and death, and branch of service. Optional items that may also be included at government expense are military service component, rank, period of war service, religious emblem, valor awards received, and the Purple Heart. The government also provides a headstone for the spouse if they are laid to rest in a state veterans cemetery where their spouse, the veteran, is already buried or will be buried upon demise. The government does not provide a headstone for the spouse in a private cemetery.

There is no charge for the plot in a state veterans cemetery; nor is there a charge for the opening and closing of the grave for the veteran. Should the spouse pass away before the veteran or after the veteran has been buried in the state cemetery, they may also be interred with the veteran, however, the family would be responsible for a \$500 opening and closing charge. The headstone will be updated when both veteran and spouse are deceased, it will include both names.

Documents Required for Burial

VETERAN:

- <> Copy of the death certificate.
- <> Discharge papers. (DD Form-214 or equivalent)
- <> Burial transit permit for full burial and cremation burial and a cremation certificate for cremation burial. These will be provided by the mortuary.

The headstone is furnished by the government as a benefit to the veteran, at no cost. A headstone application will be filled out by the Cemetery Sexton. There is a \$115.00 charge to set the headstone. The veteran's county of residence in Montana will pay \$70.00 of this amount. The family is responsible for the remaining \$45.00.

Out Of State residents and spouses must pay the full \$115.00.

SPOUSE:

- <> Copy of death certificate.
- <> Veteran spouse's discharge papers. (DD-Form 214 or equivalent)
- <> \$500.00 fee for opening and closing the grave.
- <> Burial transit permit for full burial and cremation burial and a cremation certificate for cremation burial. These will be provided by the mortuary.

The headstone is furnished by the government as a benefit to the veteran/spouse, at no cost. However, the family will be responsible for the \$115.00 setting fee cost. The Cemetery Sexton will complete the headstone application.



**Montana State
Veterans Cemetery**

(406) 324-3742



**Eastern Montana
State Veterans
Cemetery**

(406) 951-1325



**Western Montana
State Veterans
Cemetery**

(406) 721-2995