

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

National Cemetery Administration Overview

Advisory Committee for U.S. Outlying Areas
and Freely Associated States
December 14, 2023

Glenn Powers
Deputy Under Secretary

Field Programs and Cemetery Operations
National Cemetery Administration



National Cemetery
Administration



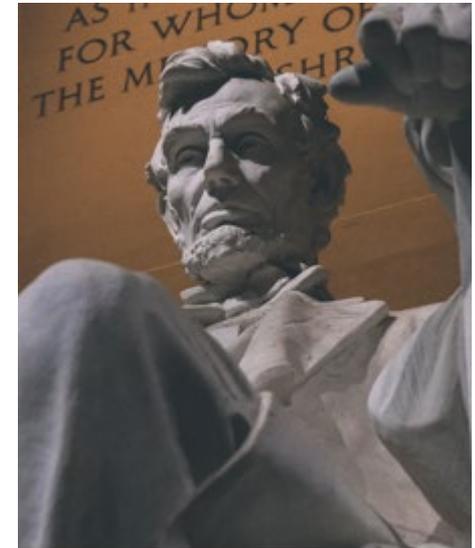
Mission and Priorities

Mission

- The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) honors Veterans and their families with final resting places in national shrines and lasting tributes that commemorate their service and sacrifice to our Nation

Priorities

- Ensure a workplace where every employee is respected and valued
- Properly memorializing our nation's heroes by maintaining our cemeteries as national shrines
- Continue working toward 95% coverage for all Veterans
- Continue cultivating relationships with state, territorial and tribal cemeteries



“To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors.”



Interments, Headstones and Markers

- NCA maintains 4.18 million graves
- 155 National Cemeteries
 - 87 open for all interments
 - 21 open for cremated remains
 - 47 closed to new interments
- 137,895 interments conducted in FY 2023
 - Third most ever behind FY22 and FY21
 - 7,384 at Riverside N.C.
 - 6,035 at Florida N.C.
 - 4,955 at Ft. Snelling N.C.
 - 4,871 at Dallas-Ft. Worth N.C.
 - 4,945 at Calverton N.C.
 - 4,503 at Jefferson Barracks N.C.
- 333,556 headstones and markers furnished in FY23



Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery





Other Federal Veteran and Military Cemeteries

- Armed Forces Cemeteries
 - Army
 - 2 national cemeteries
 - 28 post cemeteries
 - Navy
 - Air Force
- American Battle Monuments Commission
 - 26 overseas American military cemeteries
 - Interments available at Clark Veterans Cemetery (Philippines)
- National Park Service
 - 14 national cemeteries
 - 1 open for new interments



ABMC Manila American Cemetery and Memorial

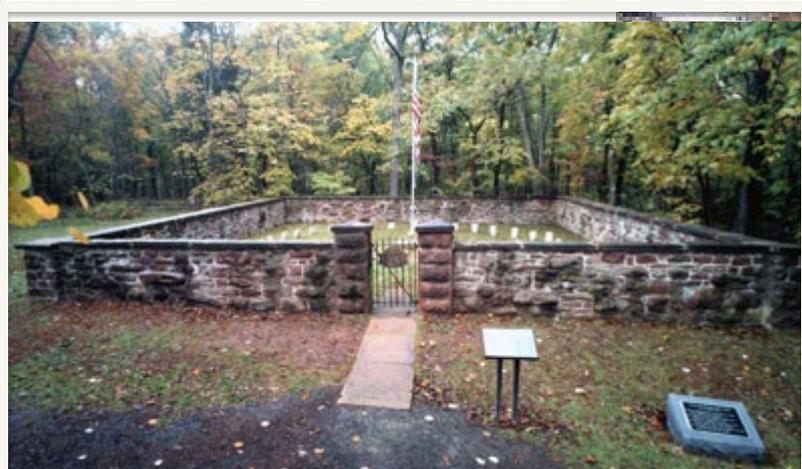


If You've Seen One National Cemetery ...





If You've Seen One National Cemetery





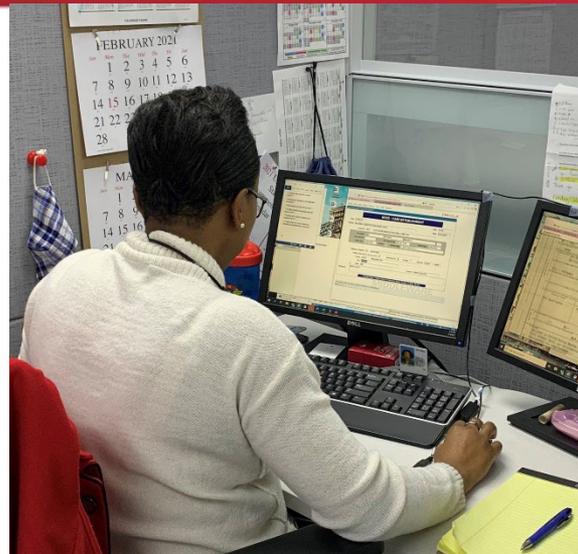
... You've Seen One National Cemetery.





Eligibility and Scheduling

- Any service member who dies on active duty or Veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable
- National Guard members and Reservists who were called to Federal active duty or are entitled to retired pay
- Spouses, dependent children and certain parents
- Pre-Need Eligibility Determinations



The National Cemetery Scheduling Office serves all VA national cemeteries

Toll Free Number



1-800-535-1117
PRESS OPTION 1

https://www.cem.va.gov/burial_benefits/need.asp



Burial and Memorial Benefits

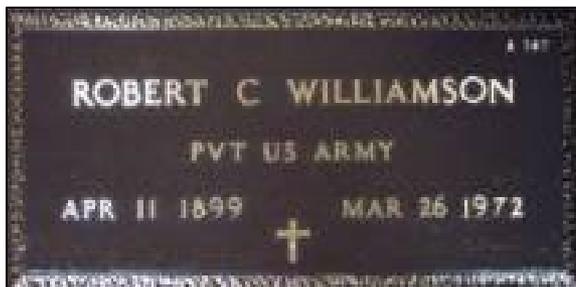


**Upright
Headstone**



Niche Covers

Flat Marker



**“In Memory
of...”**



Burial and Memorial Benefits



Burial Flag

Presidential Memorial Certificate





Burial and Memorial Benefits



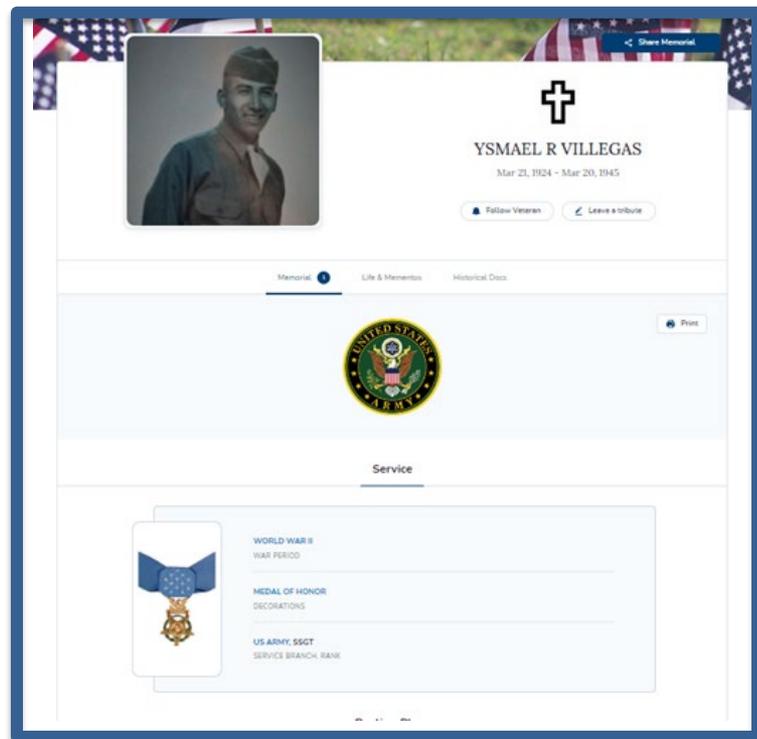
Bronze Medallion





Veterans Legacy Memorial

- Interactive Web Site honoring nearly 10 million Veterans in VA national cemeteries, VA-funded state/tribal/territory Veteran cemeteries, Department of Defense-managed cemeteries, National Park Service cemeteries, and private cemeteries within and outside the United States.
- Veteran pages include birth/death dates, emblem of belief, military service details, and cemetery info
- Users can contribute
 - Tributes (comments)
 - Photos
 - Biographies
 - Word Clouds
 - Career Milestones
 - Historical Documents





NCA Team Members

- 2,340 Team Members
 - 1,822 at Cemeteries and field offices outside of DC
 - 66.3% are Veterans (highest in federal government)





Customer Satisfaction

In 2022, for the 8th consecutive time, NCA achieved the **highest ranking of any participating organization public or private!**





National Cemetery Administration

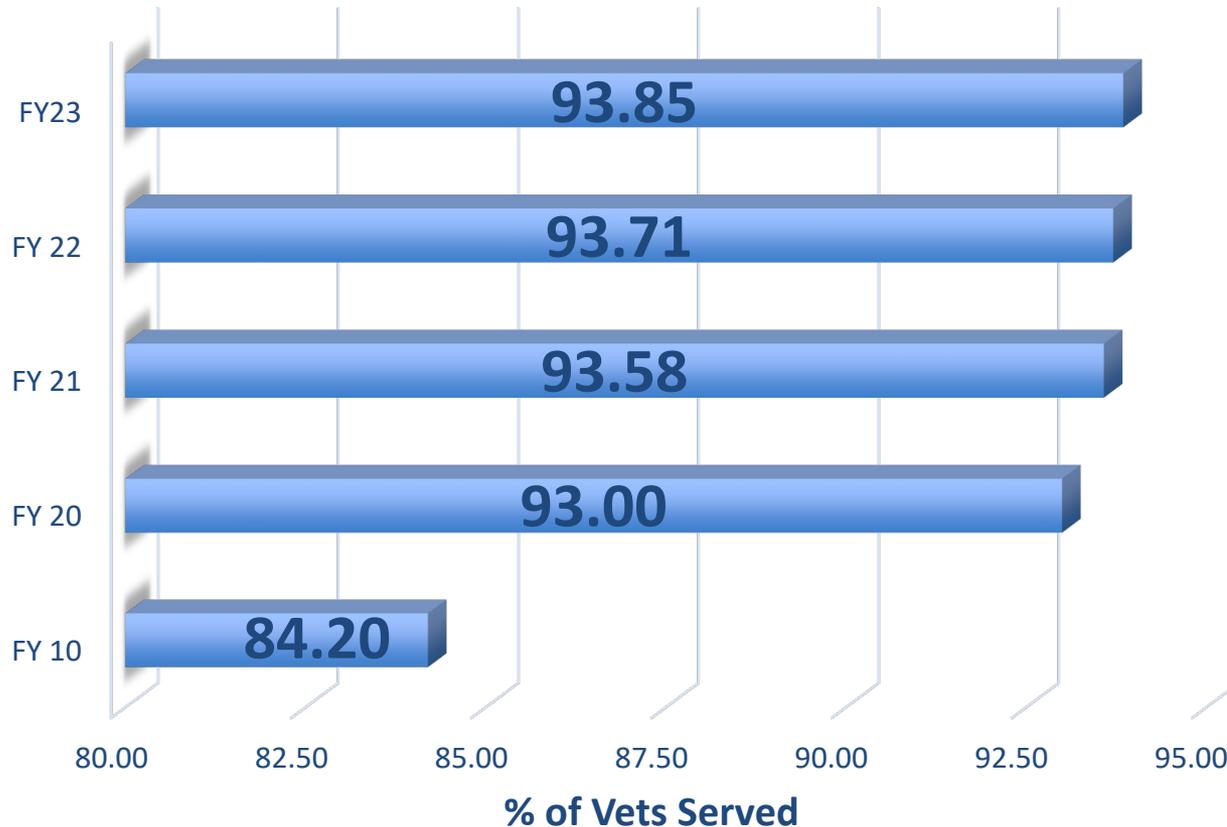
ACCESS





Increasing Access

Burial Access for Veterans (%)



- NCA's goal is to achieve 95%.
- Access is defined as providing the Veteran population with reasonable access to a burial option within 75 miles of their homes.



Veterans Cemetery Grants Program

- Since 1978 - the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program (VCGP)
- Over \$1 Billion in construction grants
- 122 state, tribal, and territory Veteran Cemeteries throughout the country
- 14 tribal Veteran cemeteries operational
- FY 2023, state, territory and tribal Veteran Cemeteries conducted over 43,500 interments



*San Carlos Apache
tribal Veterans cemetery
Arizona
Oct. 22, 2019*



Veterans Cemetery Grants Program

National and State Veterans Cemeteries all must meet NCA's Operational Standards and Measures



Alexandria National Cemetery



Western Montana Veterans Cemetery



NCA Benefits

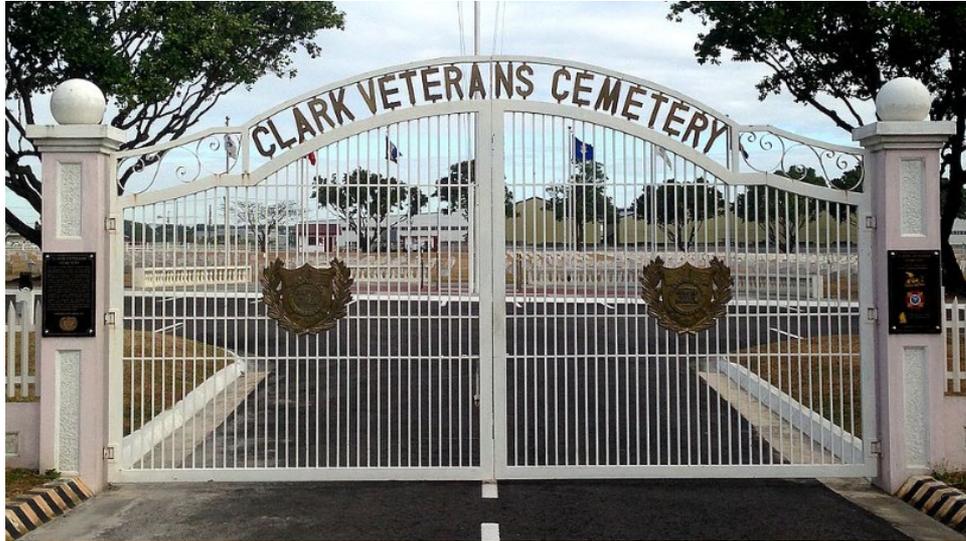
		Interment in VA National Cemetery	Interment in VA Funded State/Tribal Veterans Cemetery	Headstone/Marker in Any Cemetery	Medallion outside of Veterans Cemetery	Presidential Memorial Certificate	Veterans Legacy Memorial Page	Has National Cemetery	Has VA Funded State/Tribal Veterans Cemetery	
	Hawaii	US State	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
	Philippines	Foreign Nation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No*	No	
COVERED AREAS	Puerto Rico	U.S. Territories	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
	Guam		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No	
	CNMI		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No	YES <small>Has 2 Conforming Preapplications</small>
	Virgin Islands of U.S.		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No	No <small>Has Conforming Preapplication</small>
	American Samoa		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No	No
	Micronesia	Freely Associated States	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No	No
	Marshall Islands		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No	No
	Palau		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	No	No

*Veterans living in the Philippines may be buried at Clark Veterans Cemetery - Administered by the American Battle Monuments Commission





Clark Veterans Cemetery



Clark Veterans Cemetery Island of Luzon in the Philippines

Administered by the
American Battle Monuments
Commission

Open to U.S. Veterans living
in the Philippines and WWII
Filipino Scouts

Not open to spouse or
dependent burial

<https://www.abmc.gov/Clark>



NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION



Thank You

www.cem.va.gov



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5 YEARS
1973-2023

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Intergovernmental Affairs – Pacific Update

VA Advisory Committee for US Outlying Areas and FAS

14 Dec 2023

Vivian T. Hutson

Senior Advisor for Pacific Strategy

US Department of Veterans Affairs, IGA



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Agenda

- Overview of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA)
- Secretary's Conversation
- Indo-Pacific Strategy
- Challenges faced by Veterans in the Pacific
- Hawaii and the Pacific Territories
- Selected Legislative Updates
 - VA Provision & COFA
 - PACT Act
- Interagency Collaboration



Team IGA Leadership

- Ms. Zaneta Adams, Deputy Assistant Secretary, IGA
- Ms. Vivian Hutson, Senior Advisor for Pacific Strategy
- Mr. Henry Huntley, Director, State, Local, International Engagements
- Mr. Conrad Washington, Director, Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships
- Mr. Clay Ward, Rural Engagement
 - Acting Director, Tribal Government Relations



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qifxIRael-g>



Conversations with Kai Episode 3 - U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough

282 views • Jun 28, 2021

7 0 SHARE SAVE ...



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VA Pacific Strategy

- In 2021, SECVA appointed a career SES to be Senior Advisor for Pacific Strategy for a period of 3 years
- Focuses on synchronization across Veterans Benefits Admin (VBA), Veterans Health Admin (VHA), National Cemetery Admin (NCA) to better serve and support the needs of Veterans in the Pacific region
 - Build stakeholder/interagency relationships
 - Seek federal, state, territorial and private partnership opportunities to increase benefits and services to eligible Veterans
- DEPSEC's Site Visit/Listening Tour to the Pacific, August 2022



VA Pacific Strategy (cont.)

- Area includes U.S. Territories, Freely Associated States, and other Countries
 - US territories - Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands
 - COFA (Compact of Free Association) island nations - Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau
 - Philippines*, South Korea, Five Eyes (Australia, NZ, UK, Canada), etc.
 - * *only foreign-located VA facility*

- ❖ VBA conducts regular outreach and visits to Veterans living in COFA nations (Micronesia, Palau, the Marshall Islands) to inform them about the benefits available to them that they earned through their service

- ❖ VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System (PIHCS) currently provides services at 12 locations in Hawaii and Pacific territories (American Samoa, Guam, and CNMI).



Indo-Pacific

Figure 1. The Indo-Pacific



Source: Map prepared by Hannah Fischer and Amber Wilhelm with CRS.



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Strategic Landscape

- U.S. has continuing strategic interest in Pacific island region
- US Indo-Pacific Strategy, published by the White House, Feb 2022
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>
- Fact Sheet: Enhancing the US-Pacific Islands Partnership – The White House, 25 Sep 2023
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/09/25/fact-sheet-enhancing-the-u-s-pacific-islands-partnership/>
- Freely Associated States (FAS) under the Compact of Free Association (COFA)
 - FAS receive U.S. economic assistance while granting the U.S. prerogatives to operate military bases on their soil and make decisions that affect mutual security
 - FAS citizens may serve in the U.S. Armed Forces
 - The U.S. will provide roughly \$5.6 billion in COFA funding to the RMI and FSM by 2023 and \$1.06 billion to Palau by 2024, under the previous negotiated Compacts. Compact agreements have been signed.



Challenges / Limitations

- 38 USC 1724 – VA generally may not furnish medical care outside the U.S.
 - Exceptions for service-connected disabilities, vocational rehab program
 - Specific authority for care of Veterans in Philippines
 - Foreign Medical Program (FMP) reimburses expenses of service-connected Veterans overseas
 - FMP has very low usage in FAS
 - Special authorizations may not apply outside U.S. (e.g., Save Lives Act)
- Travel challenges between islands and to Guam/Hawaii/Mainland



Indo-Pacific Selected Highlights

- Compact of Free Association (COFA) Amendments Act of 2023 – VA provision
- Advisory Committee on US Outlying Areas and FAS
 - Inaugural meeting, 12-14 Dec 2023, Puerto Rico
- VA Center for NH, PI, and US-Affiliated PI Health
- Pacific Veteran Journey Map
- Veteran Experience Action Center Events
- Office of Health Equity publications
- White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI)
 - Interagency Workgroups
 - Agency Equity Plan

Region 9 Northern CA WH Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders Roundtable



PACT Act

- PACT Act expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances
- The PACT Act:
 - Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and post-9/11 eras
 - Adds more than 20 new presumptive conditions for burn pits and other toxic exposures. This change expands benefits for Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veterans.
 - Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation
 - Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA health care
 - Helps us improve research, staff education, and treatment related to toxic exposures
- [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT)

PACT Act - cont

- PACT Act: added 2 new Agent Orange presumptive conditions:
 - High blood pressure (hypertension)
 - Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)
- Added 5 new locations to the list of presumptive locations:
 - Any U.S. or Royal Thai military base in Thailand from January 9, 1962, through June 30, 1976
 - Laos from December 1, 1965, through September 30, 1969
 - Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province from April 16, 1969, through April 30, 1969
 - Guam or American Samoa or in the territorial waters off Guam or American Samoa from January 9, 1962, through July 30, 1980
 - Johnston Atoll or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll from January 1, 1972, through September 30, 1977
- If Veteran served on active duty in any of these locations, we'll automatically assume (or “presume”) that they had exposure to Agent Orange

Proposed COFA Amendments Act of 2023

- Sec. 8. (a) Authorization for Veterans' services
 - Amend 38 USC § 1724
 - Secretary may furnish hospital care and medical services in FAS to a Veteran who is otherwise eligible to receive hospital care and medical service
 - May include Pharmacy
 - Beneficiary travel to/from FAS may be provided
- Outreach and assessment of options



Comments / Questions

Thank You!

Mahalo iā 'oe

Si Yu'os Ma'āse'

Ke kmal mesaul

Kinisou chapur

Fa'afetai

Salamat

Komṃool

Gracias



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