

HB

208

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



Sponsor

Statement

SESSION:
Alaska State Capitol Room 13
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-4457 Office
(907) 465-3519 Fax
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Fairbanks, AK 99701
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Representative David Guttenberg

SPONSOR STATEMENT House Bill 208

Alaskan veterans deserve a cemetery that is located in the Interior which honors their service. Their sacrifices while serving our country, often in less comfortable conditions and many times in harms way, should be recognized.

There are many hardships involved in losing a loved one. Alaska has more residents in the military on a per-capita basis than any other state. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Fairbanks North Star Borough has approximately 11,164 veterans. Forty percent of families in the Fairbanks area have at least one veteran in their household and 16% have at least one woman in the household who is a veteran.

A state veterans' cemetery in the Interior would better serve the needs of veterans and their families, and provide a place that is centrally located, honorable, and well maintained. HB 208 seeks to establish a state cemetery similar to the Fort Richardson and Sitka National Cemeteries. It will provide a place in the Interior for soldiers to be laid with full military funeral honors, pallbearers, rifle team, flag folding, and flag presentation.

HB 208 authorizes the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to establish and maintain a state veterans' cemetery with funds from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, State Cemetery Grants Program. Through the State Cemetery Grants Program, the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs can be awarded up to 100 percent of allowable costs for design, construction and operating equipment for an approved project.

The VA's long-term goal is to provide an operational veterans' cemetery within 75 miles of 90 percent of the veterans in the country. Ft. Richardson National Cemetery, located 350 miles away in Anchorage, is the nearest veterans' cemetery to Fairbanks. According to VA's criterion, a cemetery in Fairbanks would increase the number of veterans served by a veterans' cemetery.

To date, the VA has awarded 137 grants totaling more than \$209 million to establish, expand or improve 62 veterans cemeteries in 32 states plus Guam. Fifty-six cemeteries in 29 states and Guam are now operational.

I urge your support on this legislation.

Representative.David.Guttenberg@legis.state.ak.us
<http://guttenberg.akdemocrats.org>

Ian Laing

From: Tim-Jerri [tim-jerri@gci.net]
Sent: Monday, April 04, 2005 4:38 PM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: HB-208

I urge your support for the passage of HB 208. With Alaska having the highest per capita number of veterans than any other state, people who served their country and Alaska with dedication and pride, I am not alone in feeling it only appropriate that the state show some appreciation by getting behind any effort to provide them a suitable resting place of honor.

Tim Armstrong
8169 Thunder Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801

30 year resident of Alaska
Vietnam Combat Veteran
Past VFW Post Commander
Past American Legion Post Commander
Vice Commander Disabled American Veterans
Life Member Military Order of the Purple Heart

Support

4/4/2005

Opinion

Veterans' cemetery

April 5, 2005

To the editor:

Currently, Alaska has more residents in the military per-capita than any other state in the nation. Just the Fairbanks North Star Borough alone has 11,164 veterans and many more in rural Alaska. As a representative on the Alaska Native Veterans Association Chapter 1 here in Fairbanks, we have been the voice for all veterans in the villages for many years. Let's make House Bill 208 the first step to help our veterans in the Interior.

Yes, there is a cemetery near Anchorage, but how can our people from the Interior travel to this site? The distance from Interior villages to Fairbanks is in the same region and makes good sense for a veterans cemetery here in Fairbanks. The Alaska Native Veterans Association has been encouraging hub villages to start their own chapters to be part of Chapter 1 in Fairbanks. This is how your voices will be heard in Washington, D.C.

Currently for years many of our veterans in the Interior do not utilize the benefits given at Fairbanks and Anchorage. The people of Alaska sooner or later must look to help all our veterans, including the ones coming back to us from Iraq and war on terrorism conflicts. On April 9, at 9:30 a.m., the House State Affairs Committee will consider HB 208. Please call or get with your representatives to support this bill. Any questions may be sent to: AK NVA, 1006 22nd Ave. Fairbanks, AK 99701.

Pete J. Peter
AK NVA administrator
Fairbanks

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

Guttenberg pushes for veterans' cemetery

Friday, March 11, 2005 - By DANIEL RICE

News-Miner Juneau Bureau

JUNEAU--With so many veterans in Fairbanks, state Rep. David Guttenberg believes the area should have a veterans' cemetery.

Guttenberg, D-Fairbanks, has introduced a bill to build a state veterans' cemetery in Fairbanks that would be similar to the national veterans' cemeteries in Sitka and on the Fort Richardson Army Post in Anchorage.

House Bill 208 would create a veterans' cemetery fund within the state budget to pay for maintenance and operation of the new burial grounds.

The start-up money, Guttenberg said, would come from a federal Department of Veterans Affairs cemetery grant program, which to date has paid out more than \$209 million for some 62 cemeteries around the nation. The state would also have to find a suitable site of about 20 acres.

Once established, the cemetery would take about \$80,000 in annual state money to maintain, Guttenberg said.

"There's always a lot of worry about state dollars," he said, "but I think with so many veterans, it's a worthy cause, and if that's what it takes to put one in Fairbanks, then I think it's worth it."

The Fairbanks North Star Borough is home to about 11,164 veterans, according to figures cited by Guttenberg in a sponsor statement for his bill. The 2000 U.S. Census put the number of veterans in the borough at 10,468.

Guttenberg said the widow of a Fairbanks veteran helped convince him to pursue the idea in the Legislature.

"This is just giving them (veterans) one place," he said.

The idea of a state veterans' cemetery in the Interior has been floated off and on in the past within various veteran circles, though there's never been united support for the idea, said Joe Fields, chairman of the Interior Veterans Coalition and a member of the state Veterans Advisory Council.

While many veterans seem to support the emotional appeal of having a veterans' cemetery in the Interior, he said, they also recognize that the state maintenance dollars could take away from funding for programs for living veterans.

Fields said he would personally rather see the money spent on outreach programs for veterans in rural areas of Alaska.

"We certainly have to pay our respects to the dead, but I think you got to do more for the living," he said.

Fields added that Fairbanks already features burial options for veterans. For example, Birch Hill Cemetery and Northern Lights Memorial Park on Yankovich Road both feature plots for veterans.

HB208 has been referred to the House Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. Guttenberg said he has requested a hearing, though one has not yet been set.

Reporter Daniel Rice can be reached at drice@newsminer.com or (907)463-4893.



The Interior needs its own state veterans cemetery

By REP. DAVID GUTTENBERG

Alaska is a great place to live. The vast mountainous landscape and potential for adventure and exploration has drawn people from all walks of life, including a large resident population of military veterans. According to the Dept. of Veterans Affairs, the Fairbanks North Star Borough has approximately 11,164 veterans.

With so many veterans in the Fairbanks area, the creation of a state veterans' cemetery in the Interior would better serve the needs of veterans and their families, as well as provide a respectable place that is centrally located and well maintained.

The Interior region qualifies for a grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) State Cemetery Grants Program to establish a state veterans cemetery. This federal grant would

provide 100 percent of the design and construction costs, which is a wonderful opportunity for the Interior veteran residents. Once established, the Alaska Military and Veterans Affairs would maintain and operate the cemetery similar to the two national cemeteries at Fort Richardson in Anchorage and Sitka.

From Fairbanks, the nearest military cemetery is a six to seven hour, 360-mile drive to Anchorage at the Fort Richardson National Cemetery. I would think you would agree with me that such a drive is unreasonable, especially during the winter months.

There is no reason that friends and families of veterans should be burdened with such a long drive to pay their respects especially when the region qualifies for a federal grant to construct a state veterans cemetery and that is why I spon-

sored HB 208, "a bill that establishes a state veterans cemetery in the Interior".

For more information about HB 208, or any other bills or issues of concern, I want to make sure it is easy to contact me. Your letters, faxes, and emails are always welcome. My address is Rep. David Guttenberg, State Capitol Room 13, Juneau AK 99801. My fax number is (907) 465-3519. You can also reach me by e-mail anytime at Representative_David_Guttenberg@legis.state.ak.us. In addition, I would be happy to add you to my e-mail list to give you updates on issues that you care about.

Rep. David Guttenberg is a Democrat and represents district 8 Fairbanks and Denali Borough in the Alaska State House.



Alaska State Legislature

Representative David Guttenberg

<http://guttenberg.akdemocrats.org>

Representative David Guttenberg

Telephone: 907-465-4457

Fax: 907-465-3519

Year Round from Fairbanks: 456-8172

Toll Free from Denali Borough: 1-800-928-4457

guttenberg@akdemocrats.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE · March 7, 2005

Guttenberg Files Bill For Veterans' Cemetery ***Bill establishes burial ground in Interior Alaska***

JUNEAU - Representative David Guttenberg, D-Fairbanks, introduced a bill today to establish a state veterans' cemetery in the Interior.

"Forty percent of families in the Fairbanks area have at least one veteran in their household and 16 percent have at least one woman in the household who is a veteran," Representative Guttenberg said. "Alaska Natives have the highest per capita service record of any ethnic group in the country. Alaskan veterans deserve a cemetery that is located in the Interior that honors their service. Their sacrifices while serving our country, often in less-than-comfortable conditions and many times in harm's way, should be recognized."

Representative Guttenberg's bill establishes a state cemetery similar to the Fort Richardson and Sitka National Cemeteries. It will provide a place in the Interior for soldiers to be laid to rest with full military funeral honors, pallbearers, rifle team, flag folding, and flag presentation.

House Bill 208 authorizes the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to establish and maintain an Alaskan veterans cemetery with funds from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' State Cemetery Grants Program. Through the State Cemetery Grants Program, the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs can be awarded up to 100 percent of the development costs for an approved project.

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 http://www.akdemocrats.org/Documents/030705_guttenberg_dignified_veterans_resting_place.pdf

Additional information: [Representative David Guttenberg](#)

 Print  Forward this page

Putting Alaskans First · Moving Alaska Forward 2005

3/25/05

REP. DAVID GUTTENBERG
119 N. CUSHMAN ST. SUITE 211
FAIRBANKS, AK 99701

(907) 451-9293 (FAX)

RE: HB 208 STATE VET CEMETERY

DEAR REP GUTTENBERG

DAVID,

I AM IN SUPPORT OF HB 208.

IT'S TIME IS OVERDUE. BOTH

FT RICH & SIKKA'S MILITARY

CEMETERIES ARE TOO FAR

AWAY FOR INTERIOR VETERANS

USE. MY CONCERNS ABOUT

CEMETERY
MAINTENANCE OF COMPLETED HEADS

BEING ADDRESSED. "CORKY"

L.D. "CORKY" CORKRAN - FAIRBANKS

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By: Luke Hopkins
Hank Bartos
Introduced: 03/24/05
Adopted: 03/24/05

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH
RESOLUTION NO. 2005 - 15

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF A STATE VETERANS' CEMETERY IN THE INTERIOR THROUGH LEGISLATION THAT ESTABLISHES AN ALASKAN VETERANS CEMETERY WITH FUNDS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) STATE CEMETERY GRANTS PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, Alaskan veterans deserve a cemetery that is located in the Interior that honors their service; and

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration, Alaska has more residents in the military on a per-capita basis than any other state. There are approximately 11,164 veterans living in the Fairbanks North Star Borough; and

WHEREAS, the nearest officially designated military cemetery is located in Anchorage at Fort Richardson Army base; and

WHEREAS, the VA National Cemetery Administration follows a 6-step process to build a new state veterans cemetery: site selection; environmental assessment; land acquisition; master planning and design development; construction documents preparation; and construction award and completion; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs can be awarded up to 100 percent of the development costs from the VA State Cemetery Grants Program for an approved project and the VA has awarded 137 grants to establish and improve veterans cemeteries around the country; and

WHEREAS, a State Veterans' Cemetery in the Interior would better serve needs of the veterans and their families, and provide a place that is centrally located, honorable, and would provide a place in the Interior for soldiers to be laid with full military funeral honors, pallbearers, rifle team, flag folding, and flag presentation; and

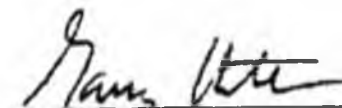
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly supports the creation of a State Veterans' Cemetery in the Interior and recognizes veterans' sacrifices while serving our country.

MAR 29 11:04 AM '05

46 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be
47 forwarded to The Honorable Governor Frank Murkowski, the Alaska Interior Delegation,
48 members of the House Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, Major General Craig E.
49 Campbell Adjutant General/Commissioner, Military and Veterans Affairs, The Honorable
50 Senator Ted Stevens, the Honorable Senator Lisa Murkowski, the Honorable
51 Congressman Don Young.

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PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 24th DAY OF MARCH 2005.



Garry Hutchison
Presiding Officer

ATTEST:



Mona Lisa Drexler, CMC
Municipal Borough Clerk

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Ayes: Romans, Bartos, Sattley, Rex, Williams, Hopkins, Aldridge, Frank, Hutchison
Noes: None

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number _____
 Bill Version: HB 208
 () Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. affected: Military and Veterans Affairs
 Title: An Act authorizing DMVA to establish and RDU: Military and Veterans Affairs
maintain an Alaskan veterans' cemetery Component: Veterans Services
 Sponsor: Representative Gultenberg
 Requester: Military and Veterans Affairs Component No: 471

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personal Services
Travel
Contractual
Supplies
Equipment
Land & Structures
Grants & Claims
Miscellaneous
TOTAL OPERATING

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type- Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	.	.	.	.	.	.

Estimate of any current year (FY2005) cost: 00

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2006 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time	.	.	.	.	.	.
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

At this time the Department is unable to determine the fiscal impact of maintaining a Veterans' Cemetery in Fairbanks, Alaska. Further information, such as the location of where the cemetery will be, the size of the cemetery, the amount that would be developed each year from inception, the approximate number of plots per year used, the size of cremains section if one will be included, how many structures built, etc. This is all necessary in order to calculate annual supplies, equipment, personal services, and other maintenance costs.

Prepared by: John Cramer Phone: (907) 465-4602
 Division: Division of Administrative Services Date/Time: 3/11/05 11:51 AM
 Approved by: Commissioner Craig E. Campbell Date: 3/11/2005
 Agency: Military and Veterans Affairs

-Original Message-----

From: Jayne, Bill [<mailto:bill.jayne@va.gov>]

Sent: Friday, March 04, 2005 12:55 PM

To: Danielle Brown

Subject: RE: Ft. Wainwright

Danielle,

The State Cemetery Grants Program in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is able to provide grants to states to establish, expand and improve state-owned and state-operated veterans cemeteries. Current law authorizes us to provide 100 percent of allowable costs for design, construction and operating equipment in the case of a grant to establish a new cemetery. The state is entirely responsible for the land and for operations and maintenance.

VA's long-term goal is to provide an operational veterans' cemetery—either a national or state facility—within 75 miles of 90 percent of the veterans in the country. Ft. Richardson National Cemetery, located 350 miles away in Anchorage, is the nearest veterans' cemetery to Fairbanks. According to VA's criterion, a cemetery in Fairbanks would increase the number of veterans served by a veterans' cemetery.

A very rough, ballpark estimate of the total grant cost for design, construction and operating equipment for the Interior would be about \$3.5 to \$4.0 million. My estimate is based on the total grant cost of some recent, comparable projects (in terms of the number of veterans to be served). My estimate includes a minimal amount for allowable administrative costs such as some travel, legal fees for land transfer, etc. It has \$300,000 for "A/E", which is architect/engineer; that is, design work. There's another \$50,000 for "other A/E" which would account for consultants such as environmental, historic, etc. Plus I have \$50,000 for inspection. The actual construction cost is \$3 million. Equipment needed to operate the cemetery is estimated at \$300,000. Finally, we factor in a "contingency" allowance of 5% of the construction cost, which amounts to \$150,000 in this case. The grand total is \$3,855,000.

If this model is accurate, the state would need about \$350,000 "front" money to accomplish the necessary planning. That money would be reimbursed when the grant is awarded.

I've tried to quickly factor in an allowance for increased construction costs in Alaska, but I don't have any data to go on. This estimate is about 15% higher than the cost of a grant we awarded to Kansas two years ago to build a cemetery in Dodge City.

Background

The \$300 VA plot allowance would be paid to the state to help off-set the cost of operating and maintainin, the cemetery (i.e., making interments). In every case that I know of, the plot allowance payments are put toward the cemetery budget. The allowance is payable for each veteran buried at no cost. So, if 100 veterans were buried, VA would pay the state \$30,000.

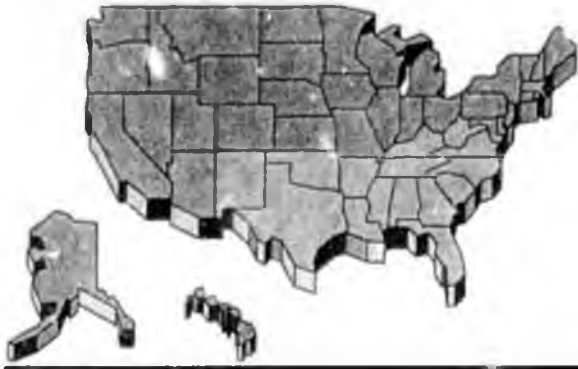
Bill Jayne

Director, State Cemetery Grants Service (41E) National Cemetery
Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
State Cemetery Grants Program
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 565-6152

FAIRBANKS VETERANS CEMETERY WORKSHEET OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE COSTS

Demographic Factors	Data	Notes
Veterans in four areas	11,164	Fairbanks/North Star and 3 adjoining areas
Avg. annual death rate	149	2005-2026 VA figures
Usage factor	0.50 ¹	50% of veterans will use cemetery
Dependents factor	1.50	1 dependent per 2 veterans
Annual burial rate	112	[Death rate x usage] x dependents facto.
Graves per acre (gross)	600	Rule of thumb
Min. gravesites needed (20 yr.)	1,676	[Annual burials x 0.75] x 20
Min. burial acreage needed	2.79	Min. gravesites/600
Gross acreage recommended	20.00 ²	see note below
Personnel Factors		
		Data
Admn. Workers (230 inter. Per FTE)	0.49	Based on NCA estimates
Field workers		Cumulative
Interments (250 per FTE)	0.45	Includes PT, temp., etc.
Gravesites (7,844.4 per FTE)	0.21	Rises over time
Acres Maint. (10.7 per FTE)	0.26	Burial acres used/developed acres may vary
Field Workers Subtotal	0.92	
Employees	1.41	Admn. & field workers
Cem. Director		NCA Costs
(GS 9--\$36.7 x 1.3 for fringes)	\$47,652.80	1.0 Full Time Equivalent Employee (FTEE)
Equip. Operator		
(WG-8--\$28 x 1.3)	\$36,142.60	1.0 FTEE
Total Salary	\$83,795.40	
Operations Factors		
		Data
Utilities & communications	\$1,117.50	Phone, water, electricity, gas (\$400 x acres)
Supplies & materials	\$2,095.31	Fuel, fertilizer, etc. (\$750 x acres)
Contractual services	\$1,187.34	Janitorial, security, irrigation (\$425 x acres)
Subtotal	\$4,400.16	
Total Annual Operations \$88,195.56		
<i>Maintenance and Repairs</i>		<i>extra</i>
<i>Equipment Replacement</i>		<i>extra</i>

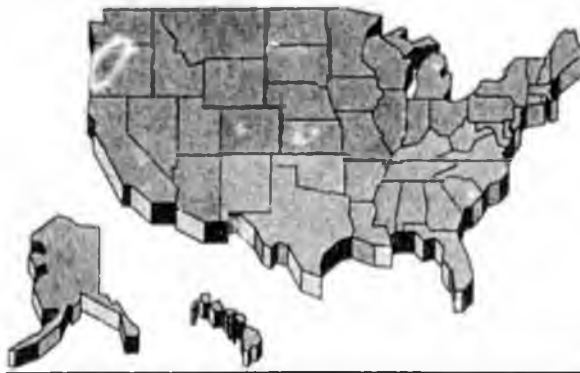
- ¹ The standard usage factor is 25% but we have increased the factor to 50% in this case because of the difficulty in projecting usage in this area. While 50% usage may be high, it would be better to estimate a higher number at this point rather than a lower number.
- ² The model assumes a suitable site with easily developed cemetery land. In this case, it would be better to acquire as large a parcel as possible in order to assure suitable land and the ability to buffer surrounding land uses. At least 20 acres should be considered.



STATE CEMETERY GRANTS
National Cemetery Administration
(41E)
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 565-1152

State Cemetery Grants Program Facts

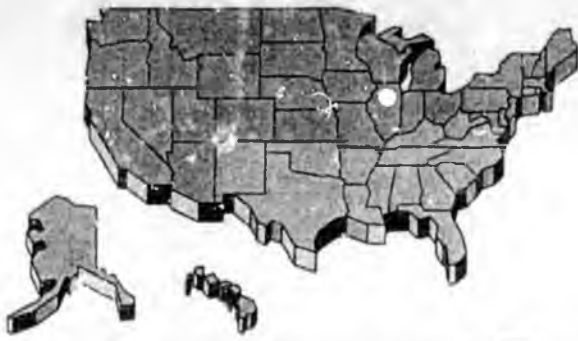
- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) State Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978 to complement VA's network of national cemeteries.
- The program assists states in providing gravesites in those areas where the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) cannot fully satisfy their burial needs.
- Grants may be used only for the purpose of establishing, expanding or improving veterans cemeteries that are owned and operated by the state. Aid can be granted only to states or territories. VA cannot provide grants to private organizations, counties, cities or other government agencies.
- VA can now provide up to 100 percent of the development cost for an approved project. For establishment of new cemeteries, VA can provide for operating equipment. VA does not provide for acquisition of land.
- Cemeteries established under the grant program must conform to VA-prescribed standards and guidelines for site selection, planning and construction.
- Cemeteries must be operated solely for the interment of service members who die on active duty, veterans, and their spouses and minor children. States may impose residency requirements for eligibility.
- The administration, operation and maintenance of a VA-supported state cemetery is solely the responsibility of the state. Applicants must assure VA that they will operate and maintain cemeteries built with grant funds according to the standards of the National Cemetery Administration.
- VA is authorized to pay a "plot allowance" of \$300 to a state for expenses incurred if the veteran's burial is provided without charge to the next-of-kin.
- VA has awarded 137 grants totaling more than \$209 million to establish, expand or improve 62 veterans cemeteries in 32 states plus Guam. Fifty-six cemeteries in 29 states and Guam are now operational.



STATE CEMETERY GRANTS
National Cemetery Administration
(41E)
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 565-6152

VA Share of State Cemetery Grants is Up to 100%

- The Veterans Benefits Enhancement Act of 1998, Public Law 105-368, went into effect on January 11, 1999. Codified at 38 U.S.C., Section 2408, the law improved VA's State Cemetery Grants Program.
- Originally proposed by VA, the measure authorizes the federal government to pay up to 100 percent of the cost of establishing, improving or expanding state-owned and -operated veterans cemeteries.
- The legislative change was backed by \$32 million in funding for each of FY 2003 and FY 2004. VA requested the same amount for FY 2005. VA now also provides funding for equipment needed to operate new cemeteries.
- Under the original State Cemetery Grants law, VA provided up to 50 percent of the total cost. The law, however, did not provide for the cost of equipment needed to operate the cemetery. Neither the original law nor the current change allows VA to provide operational support to the cemetery.
- Under the old law, the value of the land could be counted toward the state's matching share, with certain limitations. With the new, 100 percent formula, the value of the land will not be included as an allowable cost under the grant award. States are solely responsible for acquisition of the land needed.
- States continue to be responsible for operation of these cemeteries. The program envisions a real, working partnership between the federal government and the states to honor our nation's veterans and help provide for dignified burial.
- There is strong demand for grant funds. Louisiana, Nebraska, Maine, New Mexico, South Carolina, Arizona, Texas, Iowa, Montana, Puerto Rico, Missouri and the U.S. Virgin Islands have applied for grants to establish new cemeteries.



**STATE CEMETERY GRANTS
National Cemetery Administration
(401C)
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 565-6152**

Site Selection Standards

- **Location**—The site should be located as closely as possible to the veteran population center to be served with minimal overlap of areas served by existing veterans cemeteries. Primary consideration should be given to the highway network that would serve the site. The grant cannot fund access roads.
- **Surrounding Land Use**—The site should avoid nearby man-made features such as factories that produce a great deal of noise, visual intrusion or other inappropriate developments. The aesthetic quality of surrounding development should also be considered. Nearby deteriorated manmade development should be avoided.
- **Manmade Constraints**—The site should also avoid easements such as pipelines and roads. Visual intrusions such as power lines should also be avoided. Regularly shaped parcels are most conducive to cemetery development. Irregular parcels and long, narrow parcels can produce undue constraints on the design of the cemetery. Potentially negative impacts on historic sites should be avoided.
- **Surrounding Natural Landscape**—Thought should be given to natural, undisturbed or rural views available from the site. A site with attractive views would be more desirable than one without such scenic qualities if other factors are equal.
- **Natural Constraints**—The State should avoid sites with extensive wetlands, shallow rock, unstable earth and sites that have a negative impact on natural resources such as endangered species. The state must prepare an environmental assessment of the site.
- **Topography**--The land should range from comparatively level to rolling and moderately hilly. Burial areas must have a minimum slope of two percent but cannot exceed 15 percent. Road grades should not exceed ten percent.
- **Utilities**—The site should have reasonable access to utilities including potable water, storm and sanitary sewer, electricity, etc. Public utilities are not required but the cemetery must have an approved means to dispose of storm flow and sewage and must also have an adequate supply of potable water.
- **Size**—Sufficient acreage must be available to provide gravesites for **at least 20 years**. Twenty years is the **minimum** period of service. If the site cannot provide at least 20 years of service, VA cannot award a grant. It is recommended that a site be large enough to **provide for more than 20 years of service**. Buffer areas should also be considered in determining the necessary size of a cemetery.

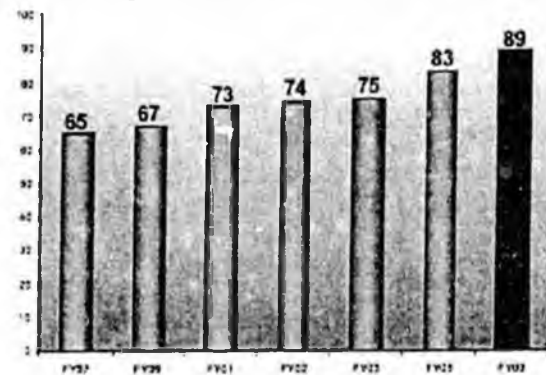


NATIONAL CEMETERY DEVELOPMENT

One of the National Cemetery Administration's (NCA) goals is to provide eligible veterans reasonable access to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) burial options. Experience and recent historical data show that over 80 percent of persons interred in national cemeteries resided within 75 miles of the cemetery at time of death. NCA considers reasonable access to burial benefits to mean that a first interment option, for casketed or cremated remains in a national or state veterans cemetery, is available within 75 miles of the veteran's place of residence.

To meet the burial needs of veterans, NCA builds new national cemeteries in areas where veterans do not have reasonable access to burial options. NCA also manages the State Cemetery Grants Program that encourages states to build state veterans cemeteries in areas unserved by a national veterans cemetery. The percentage of veterans with reasonable access to burial benefits has increased from 65 percent in 1995 to 75 percent today. By 2009, 89 percent of veterans will have reasonable access to a national or state veterans cemetery.

Percentage of Veteran Population Served



Population within 75 miles of a national cemetery or state veterans cemetery

NCA has built six new national cemeteries since 1997 and is currently directed to build 11 new national cemeteries to serve veterans. NCA also seeks to increase the long-term burial capacity of current national cemeteries by acquiring adjacent land, building columbaria where feasible and using innovative designs that maximize the burial space available.

NCA follows a 6-step process to build a new national cemetery: site selection; environmental assessment; land acquisition; master planning and design development; construction documents preparation; and construction award and completion.

Site Selection

NCA identifies a geographic area with a large veteran population that is unserved by a

national or state veterans cemetery. The cemetery size and number of gravesites are determined by current and future demographic forecasts. NCA canvases the local area for sites of the size needed to meet demographic forecasts. These sites are evaluated for their suitability for cemetery development and the top two to five sites advance to the next step in the process.

Environmental Assessment

To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the top sites are assessed to determine the impact of cemetery development and operations on the environment. An Environmental Assessment document is prepared, identifying the VA preferred site. The site's assessment must result in a "Finding of No Significant Impact" (FONSI) in order to be considered for acquisition. If the NEPA evaluation results in a FONSI, then NCA makes the results available to the general public for a 30-day comment period. After the comment period, NCA makes a final recommendation to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, who decides whether to purchase the property.

Land Acquisition

In some instances, land is donated to VA. Federal and state lands have also been transferred to VA at no cost to establish some national cemeteries. Otherwise, land is purchased at the fair market value established by a real property appraisal. Before the final sales contract is signed, the Department of Justice, acting on behalf of VA, reviews all documents to ensure that the contract and title meet all the requirements for a legal transfer of ownership.

Master Planning and Design Development

Once VA takes title to the land, bids are solicited from architectural and engineering (A/E) firms. NCA selects an A/E firm and a contract is negotiated with the firm to design the new cemetery. A master plan for developing all phases of the cemetery on the entire site is prepared, followed by more detailed design development for the first phase of construction. The first phase usually includes the first active burial section and the requisite infrastructure to operate the cemetery. Subsequent phases generally include new burial sections and associated infrastructure in the new section. Typically, each phase of construction is designed to provide sufficient burial space to last 10 years.

Construction Document Preparation

Under a second negotiated contract, the A/E prepares plans and specifications that detail all aspects of phase one construction: active burial sections, administrative buildings, maintenance buildings, public information center, committal shelters, roads and other infrastructure. These documents provide the basis for contractors to bid on constructing the project.

Construction Award and Completion

Finally, NCA solicits bids and awards a contract for construction of the new cemetery. The bid and award process takes about three months; actual construction of phase one takes about 24 months.

Funds approved by Congress must be available in order to complete the various steps. Land purchases and construction require multiple appropriations, over several years of budgets, to complete each phase. Site selection, NEPA compliance, master planning, design and phase one construction require more than five years to complete.



Burial and Plot-Interment Allowances

What Is A VA Burial Allowance ?

A VA burial allowance is a partial reimbursement of an eligible veteran's burial and funeral costs. When the cause of death is not service-related, the reimbursement is generally described as two payments: (1) a burial and funeral expense allowance, and (2) a plot interment allowance.

Who Is Eligible ?

You may be eligible for a VA burial allowance if:

- ❖ you paid for a veteran's burial or funeral **AND**
- ❖ you have not been reimbursed by another government agency or some other source, such as the deceased veteran's employer **AND**
- ❖ the veteran was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

In addition, at least one of the following conditions must be met:

- ❖ the veteran died because of a service-related disability **OR**
- ❖ the veteran was receiving VA pension or compensation at the time of death **OR**
- ❖ the veteran was entitled to receive VA pension or compensation but decided not to reduce his/her military retirement or disability pay **OR**
- ❖ the veteran died in a VA hospital or while in a nursing home under VA contract, or while in an approved state nursing home.

How Much Does VA Pay ?

Service-Related Death. VA will pay up to \$1,500 toward burial expenses for deaths prior to September 10, 2001. For deaths on or after September 11, 2001, VA will pay \$2,000. If the veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some or all of the cost of moving the deceased may be reimbursed.

Non-service-Related Death. VA will pay up to \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses, and a \$150 plot interment allowance for deaths prior to December 1, 2001. The plot-interment allowance is \$300 for deaths on or after December 1, 2001. If the death happened while the veteran was in a VA hospital or under contracted nursing home care, some or all of the costs for transporting the deceased's remains may be reimbursed.

How Can You Apply ?

You can apply by filling out VA Form 21-530, Application for Burial Allowance. You should attach proof of the veteran's military service (DD 214), a death certificate, and copies of funeral and burial bills you have paid.

Related Benefits

Burial in VA National Cemeteries
Presidential Memorial Certificates

Headstones and Markers
Burial Flags

For More Information Call Toll-Free 1-800-827-1000
Or Visit Our Web Site At <http://www.vam.va.gov>



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Burial & Memorial Benefits

Veterans Benefits & Services

*State will mirror
the National requirements*

Burial Benefits Eligibility

To confirm your eligibility for burial benefits, please call a Veteran's Benefits Counselor at:

1-800-827-1000

Persons Eligible for Burial in a VA National Cemetery

VA national cemetery directors have the primary responsibility for verifying eligibility for burial in VA national cemeteries. A determination of eligibility is usually made in response to a request for burial in a VA national cemetery. VA Regional Offices will also assist in determining eligibility for burial in a VA national cemetery. The toll-free number for the nearest VA Regional Office is 1-800-827-1000.

a. Veterans and Members of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard)

(1) Any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who dies on active duty.

(2) Any veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. With certain exceptions, service beginning after September 7, 1980, as an enlisted person, and service after October 16, 1981, as an officer, must be for a minimum of 24 continuous months or the full period for which the person was called to active duty (as in the case of a Reservist called to active duty for a limited duration). Undesirable, bad conduct, and any



other type of discharge other than honorable may or may not qualify the individual for veterans benefits, depending upon a determination made by a VA Regional Office. Cases presenting multiple discharges of varying character are also referred for adjudication to a VA Regional Office.

(3) Any citizen of the United States who, during any war in which the United States has or may be engaged, served in the Armed Forces of any Government allied with the United States during that war, whose last active service was terminated honorably by death or otherwise, and who was a citizen of the United States at the time of entry into such service and at the time of death.

b. Members of Reserve Components and Reserve Officers' Training Corps

(1) Reservists and National Guard members who, at time of death, were entitled to retired pay under Chapter 1223, title 10, United States Code, or would have been entitled, but for being under the age of 60. Specific categories of individuals eligible for retired pay are delineated in section 12731 of Chapter 1223, title 10, United States Code.

(2) Members of reserve components and members of the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard, who die while hospitalized or undergoing treatment at the expense of the United States for injury or disease contracted or incurred under honorable conditions while performing active duty for training or inactive duty training, or undergoing such hospitalization or treatment.

(3) Members of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps of the Army, Navy, or Air Force who die under honorable conditions while attending an authorized training camp or on an authorized cruise, while performing authorized travel to or from that camp or cruise, or while hospitalized or undergoing treatment at the expense of the United States for injury or disease contracted or incurred under honorable conditions while engaged in one of those activities.

(4) Members of reserve components who, during a period of active duty for training, were disabled or died from a disease or injury incurred or aggravated in line of duty or, during a period of inactive duty

training, were disabled or died from an injury or certain cardiovascular disorders incurred or aggravated in line of duty.

c. Commissioned Officers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

(1) A Commissioned Officer of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (formerly titled the Coast and Geodetic Survey and the Environmental Science Services Administration) with full-time duty on or after July 29, 1945.

(2) A Commissioned Officer who served before July 29, 1945, and,

(a) Was assigned to an area of immediate military hazard as determined by the Secretary of Defense while in time of war, or in a Presidentially declared national emergency; or,

(b) Served in the Philippine Islands on December 7, 1941, and continuously in such islands thereafter.

d. Public Health Service

(1) A Commissioned Officer of the Regular or Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service who served on full-time duty on or after July 29, 1945. If the service of the particular Public Health Service Officer falls within the meaning of active duty for training, as defined in section 101(22), title 38, United States Code, he or she must have been disabled or died from a disease or injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

(2) A Commissioned Officer of the Regular or Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service who performed full-time duty prior to July 29, 1945:

(a) In time of war;

(b) On detail for duty with the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard; or,

(c) While the Service was part of the military forces of the United States pursuant to Executive Order of the President.

(3) A Commissioned Officer serving on inactive duty training as defined in section 101(23), title 38, United States Code, whose death resulted from an injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

e. World War II Merchant Mariners

(1) United States Merchant Mariners with oceangoing service during the period of armed conflict, December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946. Prior to the enactment of Public Law 105-368, United States Merchant Mariners with oceangoing service during the period of armed conflict of December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945, were eligible. With enactment of Public Law 105-368, the service period is extended to December 31, 1946, for those dying on or after November 11, 1998. A DD-214 documenting this service may be obtained by submitting an application to Commandant (G-MVP-6), United States Coast Guard, 2100 2nd Street, SW, Washington, DC 20593. Notwithstanding, the Mariner's death must have occurred on or after the enactment of Public Law 105-368.

(2) United States Merchant Mariners who served on blockships in support of Operation Mulberry during World War II.

f. The Philippine Armed Forces

(1) Any Philippine veteran who was a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States at the time of their death; and resided in the United States at the time of their death; and,

(a) Was a person who served before July 1, 1946, in the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, while such forces were in the service of the Armed Forces of the United States pursuant to the military order of the President dated July 26, 1941, including organized guerilla forces under commanders appointed, designated, or subsequently recognized by the Commander in Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, or other competent authority in the Army of the United States, and who died on or after November 1, 2000; or,

(b) Was a person who enlisted between October 6, 1945, and June 30, 1947, with the Armed Forces of the United States with the consent of the Philippine government, pursuant to section 14 of the Armed Forces Voluntary Recruitment Act of 1945, and who died on or after December 16, 2003.

g. Spouses and Dependents

(1) The spouse or surviving spouse of an eligible veteran is eligible for interment in a national cemetery even if that veteran is not buried or memorialized in a national cemetery. In addition, the spouse or surviving spouse of a member of the Armed Forces of the United States whose remains are unavailable for burial is also eligible for burial.

(2) The surviving spouse of an eligible veteran who had a subsequent remarriage to a non-veteran and whose death occurred on or after January 1, 2000, is eligible for burial in a national cemetery, based on his or her marriage to the eligible veteran.

(3) The minor children of an eligible veteran. For purpose of burial in a national cemetery, a minor child is a child who is unmarried and:

(a) Who is under 21 years of age; or,

(b) Who is under 23 years of age and pursuing a full-time course of instruction at an approved educational institution.

(4) The unmarried adult child of an eligible veteran. For purpose of burial in a national cemetery, an unmarried adult child is:

Of any age but became permanently physically or mentally disabled and incapable of self-support before reaching 21 years of age, or before reaching 23 years of age if pursuing a full-time course of instruction at an approved educational institution. Proper supporting documentation must be provided.

g. Others

Such other persons or classes of persons as designated by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (38 U.S.C. § 2402(6)) or the Secretary of Defense (Public Law 95-202, § 401, and 38 CFR § 3.7(x)).

Persons NOT Eligible for Burial in a VA National Cemetery

a. Former Spouses

A former spouse of an eligible individual whose marriage to that individual has been terminated by annulment or divorce, if not otherwise eligible.

b. Other Family Members

Family members of an eligible person except those defined as eligible in Section III, paragraph g.

c. Disqualifying Characters of Discharge

A person whose only separation from the Armed Forces was under dishonorable conditions or whose character of service results in a bar to veterans benefits.

d. Discharge from Draft

A person who was ordered to report to an induction station, but was not actually inducted into military service.

e. Person Found Guilty of a Capital Crime

Under 38 U.S.C. § 2411, interment or memorialization in a VA cemetery or in Arlington National Cemetery is prohibited if a person is convicted of a Federal capital crime and sentenced to death or life imprisonment, or is convicted of a State capital crime, and sentenced to death or life imprisonment without parole. Federal officials are authorized to deny burial in veterans cemeteries to persons who are shown by clear and convincing evidence to have committed a Federal or State capital crime but were not convicted of such crime because of flight to avoid prosecution or by death prior to trial. The Secretary is authorized to provide aid to States for the establishment, expansion and/or improvement of veterans cemeteries on the condition that the State is willing to prohibit

interment or memorialization in such cemeteries of individuals convicted of Federal or State capital crimes, or found by clear and convincing evidence to have committed such crimes, without having been convicted of the crimes due to flight to avoid prosecution or death prior to trial. (38 U.S.C. § 2408 (d)(2)). This prohibition is also extended to other burial benefits, including furnishing a Presidential Memorial Certificate, a burial flag, or a headstone or marker.

f. Subversive Activities

Any person convicted of subversive activities after September 1, 1959, shall have no right to burial in a national cemetery from and after the date of commission of such offense, based on periods of active military service commencing before the date of the commission of such offense, nor shall another person be entitled to burial on account of such an individual. Eligibility will be reinstated if the President of the United States grants a pardon.

g. Active or Inactive Duty for Training

A person whose only service is active duty for training or inactive duty training in the National Guard or Reserve Component, unless the individual meets the eligibility criteria listed in Section III.1.b. of this information sheet.

h. Other Groups

Members of groups whose service has been determined by the Secretary of the Air Force under the provisions of Public Law 95-202 as not warranting entitlement to benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

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Marine Corp League

Detachment #674

PO Box 73324

Fairbanks, AK 99707-3324

The Marine Corps League Detachment # 674 is at last count 100% in favor of a veteran's cemetery in Fairbanks, Alaska. We believe that this is a good move that will honor our many veterans in the Interior. Instead of having to drive or fly at the families' expense to the Anchorage area, especially at the price of gas, vehicle use and or plane fare.

On a personal note I thoroughly believe that there should be a veteran's cemetery in every County, Borough and Parish through out the United States. Simply because in my opinion it is ridiculous to expect a veteran, or their family members to travel half way or totally across their state of residence to visit the site of their past friends and loved ones.

Please pass this bill we are all registered voters.

Dana Nachtrieb Past Commandant

Marine Corps League #674

Fairbanks, Alaska



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the David Gutterberg
 Committee on HB 208 ^{In honor of AK} vet cemetery Dated 4 09 05
 DIII / Subject

Representative

I would like to ask for HB 208 which seeks to establish a state veterans' cemetery in the interior of Alaska.

It is my concern that our veterans has to travel over 300 miles to the nearest state veterans cemetery. In other states it is not that much of a hardship to travel to those state veterans cemetery.

I feel it is our duty to help our veterans in any way possible to help honor our military that protect our America. The Land of the Free May God Bless us always.

SIGNED:

Margaret Mantel

Testifier

I am a member of the D.A.R.

Representing

506 Sprucewood Rd Fairbanks, AK 99709

Address / Phone Number

907 479 5384



April 8, 2005

The Honorable Paul Seaton, Chair
House State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Chair Seaton:

RE: HB 208 (Guttenberg) – Support

On behalf of the AARP members in Alaska, we encourage your colleagues on the House State Affairs Committee to support HB 208, authored by Representative David Guttenberg and co-sponsored by Representatives Nancy Dahlstrom and your Committee member Jay Ramras.

HB 208 would establish a new veterans' cemetery in the Interior. As you know, the closest military cemetery is in Anchorage yet the Fairbanks area alone has over 11,000 veterans, many of whom are AARP members.

Burial in a veterans' cemetery is one of the last honors we can offer our fellow citizens who have served in the Armed Forces. We think it is a well-deserved tribute to these men and women who served our country and a veterans' cemetery in the Interior simply makes sense. It is a proper thank you to the veterans and their families.

Undoubtedly there may be some costs associated with a new cemetery. Our veterans didn't weigh the costs when they joined the armed services. Surely we can bear the costs of this final thank-you to them.

AARP recommends an "AYE" vote on HB 208.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marie Darlin

Marie Darlin, Coordinator
AARP Capital City Task Force
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506
Juneau, AK 99801
586-3637 (voice)
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Representative Jim Elkins
Representative Berta Gardner
Representative Carl Gatto
Representative Max Gruenberg
Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Jay Ramras
Representative David Guttentberg