

For Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemeteries

"The Price of Freedom is Visible Here"

Please help us preserve the dignity and beauty of the cemeteries by observing the following rules and regulations.

The Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries (MVMC) focus on the adoption and enforcement of policies, procedures, and rules to ensure uniformity, protect the common interest, and preserve the beauty of the final resting places of those entrusted to our care. We thank you in advance for your cooperation in observing our rules and regulations. Copies of Cemetery policies, procedures, and rules regarding, but not limited to, interment, eligibility and floral regulations are available upon request.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts operates two Veterans' cemeteries, in Agawam and Winchendon. Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries will abide by all Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws (GL), Regulations (CMR) and Federal Regulations (FR) that govern the operations of Veterans cemeteries.

For the mutual protection and benefit of veterans and their loved ones and the Veterans Memorial Cemeteries, the following POLICIES, RULES, AND REGULATIONS have been adopted by the Executive Office of Veterans Services. All visitors within the Cemetery and all graves shall be subject to said POLICIES, RULES, AND REGULATIONS, and subject further to such other amendments or alterations as shall be adopted from time to time.

2.0 DEFINITIONS:

Application Form: Application for Interment Registration

Cemetery: Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries located at 1390 Main Street, Agawam, MA 01001, (413) 821-9500, Fax (413) 821-9839 and 111 Glenallen Street, Winchendon, MA 01475, (978) 297-9501, Fax (978) 297-4271.

Chapel: non-denominational building used for committal service only.

Columbarium Wall: a final, above ground resting place for cremated remains made of individual compartments built into the wall which will hold the urn containing cremated remains of up to three (3) individuals.

Committal Service: 15 to 20 minutes in length, which includes the time needed for rendering of military honors. One clergy or family member is allotted 5 to 7 minutes to speak during this service.

Cremains: Cremated remains of a deceased person. Must be the majority of the cremated remains for inurnment with a memento amount to the family, but not an inurnment in any other location.

Dependent Child: If birth certificate, adoption record or court order names the veteran as a parent and the child falls into one of the following categories:

A. Unmarried minor child, under 21 years of age, or 23 if pursuing a course of instruction at an approved educational institution, or

B. Unmarried adult child incapable of self-support with physical or mental disability acquired before age 21, or 23 if pursuing a course of instruction at an approved educational institution and was totally dependent upon the eligible veteran for support. Letter from the Child's doctor or court documentation stating that child is totally dependent on veteran for support is required and must accompany the application.

Documentation of Military Service: Copies of all discharge papers (DD Form 214 or equivalent) for all years served. Copies of detailed pages (listing dates of entry, discharge, medals, and character of service) must be submitted. This includes DD Form 215 if any corrections were made to your discharge papers and/or a notarized affidavit regarding any discrepancies on your discharge (i.e., name spelled incorrectly, date of birth incorrect, Jr., Ill, etc. missing). This also includes all documentation of medals received if they are not listed on the veteran's DD Form 214. If a higher rank was obtained upon discharge from the Reserves/Guard, please provide a discharge letter or certificate. Veteran and veteran's family must provide documentation, but the following are options are possible if the veteran and veteran's family do not have the documentation:

A. If the veteran entered Military Service in Massachusetts, a funeral director or anyone with access to the Massachusetts

National Guard Military Records Online:(<https://www.massnationalguard.org/index.php/resources/military-records-branch.html>)

- B. Local Veterans Service Officer (VSO) can help complete and submit a VA SF-180 to the appropriate records agency: (<https://www.archives.gov/research/order/standard-form-180.pdf>)
- C. If DD214 Forms are not available, the information may be on file in The Military Records Branch. The Military Records Branch may be contacted by phone at (508) 422-1993, by e-mail at military.records@mass.gov, or FAX at (508) 422-1997. Prior to 1940, contact the Massachusetts Archives, 617-727-2816, archives@sec.state.ma.us.
- D. MVMC may email the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) to search through their records. This can only be done after the death of a veteran, spouse or dependent child.

Interment: Permanent disposition of the remains of a deceased person by burial.

Inurnment: Permanent disposition of the cremated remains of a deceased person by burial.

Monument Inscription Authorization Form: lists what will appear on the monument.

Military Service:

- A. The veteran was discharged or released from active-duty service under honorable conditions, *
- B. The veteran served at least 20 years in the National Guard or United States Reserves and is in receipt of a military pension or has documentation verifying he/she will receive retirement pay at age 60, in accordance with Title 10, Chapter 1223,
- C. Any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who dies on active duty, or
- D. Any veteran with a Veterans Affairs rated service-connected disability.

*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 months OR the full period for which the person was called to active duty. (Examples include those serving less than 24 months in the Gulf War or Reservists who were federalized by Presidential Recall).

MVMC: Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries

NCA: National Cemetery Administration

Pre-Registration: Establishes eligibility for interment at MVMC Winchendon in advance at no cost and no obligation to be interred there. The purpose is to simplify the process for the veteran's next-of-kin at the time of death, but pre-approved applications will still be reviewed at the time of death to re-ensure burial eligibility.

Spouse: An individual specified as being married to a veteran and still legally married at the time of death. An individual may be considered a spouse if they are legally separated but not legally divorced at the time of death. An individual may be considered a spouse if they are considered as being in a legally recognized common law marriage by the jurisdiction in which they reside.

Widowed person: A veteran's spouse who has not remarried. If spouse did remarry, but the subsequent marriage subsequent ended in death or divorce, this death or divorce of the subsequent marriage may restore the previous marriage to the veteran for purposes of burial eligibility.

3.0 ELIGIBLE PERSONS

A veteran who satisfies the definition of Military Service or a veteran's spouse, widowed person or dependent are eligible for burial in the Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries.

4.0 INELIGIBLE PERSONS

Individuals who are excluded from eligibility according to Title 38, United States Code, Section 2411 and other applicable federal laws, which prohibit burial in a National or State Cemetery of anyone, convicted of a federal or state capital crime and sentenced to death or life imprisonment are not eligible for internment at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

Individuals who were only performed active military service for training purposes are not eligible for interment at the Veterans' Memorial Cemetery unless they meet one of the other definitions of military service.

Individuals whose only separation from the armed forces was under dishonorable conditions or whose character of service results in a

bar to Veterans benefits are not eligible for internment at the Veterans' Memorial Cemetery.

5.0 PRE-REGISTRATION PROCESS

Due to space limitations, only MVMC at Winchendon accepts pre-registration. Either the veteran, spouse or next of kin may request, complete, and sign the Pre-Registration Form and send it to the MVMC at Winchendon along with the following documentation:

- A. Documentation of Military Service (i.e., DD 214)
- B. Marriage certificate (if appropriate) if one cannot be obtained example i.e., married in another country the death record indicating the spouses name, signed by the city or town will suffice.
- C. Birth certificate(s) for veteran, spouse, and dependent child(ren) (if appropriate) a legal driver's license is also acceptable to verify date of birth.

No application will be approved until all documentation is received.

If both spouses are veterans, each spouse should complete an individual Application for Interment Registration to ensure that all pertinent military service will be documented in full for both spouses.

If the veteran's address, phone number, marital status, or desire to be interred in the Veterans' Cemetery changes, please notify the Cemetery in writing.

6.0 PRE-NEED ELIGIBILITY

MVMC Agawam provides a "How to Prepare" packet with eligibility information to those interested in being interred in Agawam and will review a veteran's discharge documentation. MVMC Agawam will not retain any records connected to this determination. This is not the same as being pre-registered and will still need to be re-approved at the time of need with all required documentation submitted.

Pre-need eligibility for National Cemeteries may be done on-line at: <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/pre-need-eligibility/>

7.0 FEES

There is no charge for a Veteran for initial burial.

A fee of \$300 for full casket burial, or \$150 for a cremation burial will be charged for burial of spouse and qualified dependent(s).

A \$200 fee will be charged for all dis-interments and/or re-interments. A fee may also be charged for the replacement cost to any damaged concrete crypt.

All MVMC fees are subject to change.

8.0 SERVICES PROVIDED

The Cemetery provides a dignified final resting place for veterans and their families.

Cemetery grounds are open from 7:00 a.m. until dusk every day. Cemetery grounds may be closed for Committal Services based on weather conditions.

Office Hours are 8:00am through 4:00pm Monday – Friday, except for State and Federal holidays.

A veteran, spouse or next of kin may review a file or request military records from a burial file only after providing proper photo identification in person. The next-of-kin must provide a marriage certificate (if the spouse of the veteran) or long-form birth certificate (if a child of the Veteran). A Power of Attorney and proper photo identification may also be accepted. Records are confidential and may not be shared unless authorized by the next of kin.

Committal Service and interments are held by appointment only, Monday through Friday, except on legal holidays.

MVMC will work with the legal next of kin to arrange a Committal Service, Internment and/or Inurnment. Upon receiving all necessary documentation, will schedule the date and time of a Service if desired and provide a checklist of items that need to be brought to the Service.

MVMC will provide a Monument Inscription Authorization Form to the legal next of kin to approve and sign, but if the next of kin requests any change to the Monument Inscription Authorization form, the family has three days to provide written proof to substantiate the change.

With written permission from the next of kin, a representative may bring cremated remains to the Cemetery at a scheduled date and time and sign a Monument Inscription Authorization form.

On the day of the Committal Service, upon your arrival at the cemetery, a cemetery representative will provide the deceased's burial documents. Once the casket or urn and up to 3 floral arrangements are in place, the family may enter the Chapel.

The Cemetery will sound "Taps" through the sound system.

Upon completion of the Committal Service, visitors are kindly asked to pay their final respects and then leave the cemetery grounds to allow cemetery staff to complete burial procedures.

The casket or cremated remains will be removed from the Chapel for immediate burial after the committal service and once the family has left the Cemetery grounds.

The Cemetery staff may place one small object with an urn in the Columbarium, to be buried beside an urn in-ground or inside the casket vault on top of the casket.

Government concrete vaults are preinstalled for full body burials. Double depth vaults will be used for veteran and spouse, with first decedent interred in the bottom of the vault and subsequent decedent interred in the top-half of the double depth vault with a shelf between.

Gravesites are assigned and cannot be selected in advance. Assignments are made without regard to rank, ethnic or religious background, branch of service or other factors.

Cemetery staff will not open caskets or urns.

Veterans and spouses must be interred in the same plot, with only a single headstone or niche cover allowed. Veteran's information will be on the front of the headstone and spouse's information on the back. If spouse pre-deceases the veteran, the spouse's information will be on the front of the headstone and after the death of the veteran, a new headstone will be engraved to place the veteran's information on the front and spouse's on back. Columbarium niche covers have veteran's and spouse's information on the front.

If both spouses are eligible veterans, they may request two different gravesites located side by side or have the option of burial in the same plot. Cremated remains options to inurn into the ground in designated sections of the cemetery or in our above ground columbaria.

Cemetery staff will order a headstone/niche cover immediately after the committal service. Upright (granite) markers will be provided for in-ground (full casket or cremation) burials, granite niche covers will be engraved for the Columbarium wall. Private markers will not be allowed to be placed in the Cemetery. The Cemetery staff will handle the ordering of headstone/niche covers. Headstones/niche covers will only be ordered after interment. Inscriptions will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the Cemetery. After the Committal Service, a headstone will be installed within 60 days if the Committal Service was held during growing season; burials that take place throughout the winter months headstones are held for install in the spring. Niche covers may be installed all year. Once the monument is installed, a postcard will be mailed to the next of kin with the grave location.

9.0 SERVICES NOT PROVIDED

Cemetery staff are available during operating hours and not available for afterhours to schedule services or answer requests.

To preserve privacy and protect Veterans information, visitors and family members are not permitted in the Administration Offices. Cemetery staff are instructed to not provide personal information over the telephone except for confirming whether a required document is missing.

Completion and approval of any MVMC Form does not automatically qualify or reserve a plot in the National Cemetery in Bourne or any other National, State or Tribal cemetery.

Specific gravesites or niches may not be reserved except for a spouse who is also a veteran or a dependent child of whom predeceases a parent or a parent of whom predeceases the child provided all required documentation is received and approved.

The Cemetery does not remove a body from their place of death. When a death has occurred, contact your funeral director to remove a body from their place of death.

The Veterans' Cemetery does not provide caskets, cremation urns or vaults, cremation of decedent or any other funeral costs. The Cemetery Staff is only responsible for the interment process on MVMC grounds. In certain cases, with MVMC approval, urns may not be shipped to the Cemetery.

In-ground burial of cremated remains must be in an urn that will not deteriorate or must be placed in an urn vault. The funeral director will handle the urn vault ordering for you. The Veterans Cemetery/Staff does not offer any endorsement or suggestions on cremation vaults. No cardboard boxes allowed for either in-ground cremation or Columbarium Wall inurnments.

The Cemetery does not provide viewing facilities.

The Cemetery does not hold funeral services.

The funeral or other service is held at the decedent's place of worship or at the funeral home.

It is the responsibility of the funeral director and/or family to provide clergy.

It is the responsibility of the funeral director to arrange military funeral honors, but if the funeral home is out of state, or the family is arranging the Service, MVMC may request the Veterans branch of service honor guard.

No graveside services are allowed.

No private funeral/committal services are allowed on Cemetery grounds at any time.

No receptions after services allowed on Cemetery grounds.

10. CEMETERY VISITORS

Visitors to the Cemetery are requested to use only the avenues, roads and paths, and should not walk on or across gravesites or lawns unless it is necessary to gain access to a particular grave. The Cemetery cannot be responsible for any injuries or damages sustained by any person who has not obeyed this instruction or as a result of another visitor not obeying this instruction.

- All vehicles shall respect posted speed limits, be kept to the right side of the roadways, follow the direction of the roadways, and shall not be driven or parked on the lawns or on the Columbarium (Wall) brick area. All drivers are to follow all instructions from Cemetery staff.
- Florists are permitted to deliver flowers to a gravesite provided all boxes, wrapping paper or other packaging material is removed.
- Please be respectful of others. All persons on Cemetery grounds will conduct themselves in a manner respectful of a hallowed place. Improper behavior will not be tolerated. Persons violating reasonable standards of behavior will be subject to removal from the Cemetery. The following activities are not an exhaustive list of unacceptable behavior:
 - No alcoholic beverages.
 - No drug use.
 - No smoking.
 - Any form of sport or recreation, including jogging, bicycle riding or riding of any motorized recreational vehicle, is prohibited.
 - No public gatherings of a partisan nature.
 - No littering, sunbathing, or picnicking.
 - No cutting, breaking, injuring, or otherwise altering trees, shrubs, grass, or other plantings.
 - No marking, defacing, or damaging headstones and/or niche covers in any way.
 - No display and/or sale of goods, wares, and merchandise.
 - No discharge of firearms, explosives or other dangerous or deadly weapons.
 - No act that prevents a Cemetery employee from performing official duties.
 - No conducting of memorial service, ceremony, or tour without prior authorization from Cemetery.
 - No broadcast audio unless Cemetery approved.
 - With the exception of service animals, pets are not allowed on cemetery grounds. The primary mission of Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemeteries is to lay to rest those who have served the United States with dignity and honor. While we know that pet owners intend no disrespect to veterans and military families, non-service-related animals

on cemetery grounds have impacted the decorum of funeral services and funeral ceremonies. This policy was deemed necessary to alleviate these impacts, so that Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemeteries can provide a respectful and contemplative space for all guests. The policy does not pertain to approved service animals or military working dogs.

- A service animal must be under the control of its handler.
- We ask that service animal owners be respectful of the grounds and gravesites when walking around the grounds with their service animals.
- Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.

11. DECORATIONS

Floral arrangements are permitted, may be delivered to the office on the day of the Service or brought at the time and day of the Service to the Chapel. The Cemetery staff will bring the floral arrangements to the gravesite after the committal service. Cemetery staff will have full discretion to remove floral tributes when they become withered, faded, or otherwise unsightly. Weather affects how long floral tributes remain in good condition. All authorized and unauthorized items placed on gravesites become the property of the Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemetery and will be removed and disposed of at the discretion of Cemetery personnel. The Cemetery is not responsible for any item damaged, lost or stolen. (Glass vases are allowed in the Chapel; however, all glass must be removed and will not be placed at gravesite).

The placement of floral items on graves, other than on the day of interment, is subject to the following conditions:

- Fresh cut natural flowers are permitted at any time and must be placed in the provided plastic cone vase, which are not to be removed from the cemetery grounds. Flowers may be removed at any time at the discretion of cemetery staff if they have become unsightly.
- All Religious Observances, as well as Mother's Day and Father's Day-A potted plant, no larger than 8 inches round, will be permitted on the gravesite 5 days before through 5 days after the following Mother's Day,-Father's Day, Memorial Day and religious observances or holidays.
- Memorial Day- The Cemetery will place a United States Flag on each gravesite, traditionally, the Wednesday before the holiday and will remove flags the Wednesday after Memorial Day.
- Veterans Day- Individuals may place United States, POW/MIA or Armed Forces Service Branch flags no larger than 12 x 17 inches on individual gravesites from November 6th to November 12th. Any flags not picked up by the end of the day

on November 12th will be picked up by Cemetery staff and will remain the property of the Cemetery.

- Freshly cut evergreen arrangements (containing no more than one bow) are allowed from November 1st through January 15th. Evergreen arrangements are not to be attached in any way to the headstone. Evergreen arrangements should be placed at the base of headstones and/or columbarium walls.
- Funeral flowers may be removed within three days following the funeral at any time of the year.
- Flowers placed on gravesites on a Friday or weekend may be removed on a Monday if they are unsightly, withered, or when it becomes necessary to facilitate cemetery operations such as mowing.

To ensure the safety of all who visit, the following are always prohibited on Cemetery grounds:

- No artificial flowers at any time of year.
- No cemetery logs, window boxes, or potted plants (except as stated above).
- No pinecones, branches, berries, palms, potted plants/dirt in cone vases.
- No permanent plantings, floral containers, balloons, pinwheels, beverage containers, commemorative items, coins, pictures, statues, candles, flammable items of any sort, vigil lights and breakable objects.
- Prohibited items include, but are not limited to ammunition, alcohol, knives or sharp objects, statues, vigil lights, flags, glass objects of any nature, and any type of commemorative items.
- No grave blankets or grave pillows.
- No flags (other than those placed by Cemetery personnel or subject to the Veterans Day exemption) are permitted, including placement in the provided plastic cone vases. The large United States, POW/MIA, and Branch of Service Flags flown at the Cemeteries provide year-round honor to all veterans buried in the cemeteries.
- No flag standards or grave medallions.
- No decorations of any type are allowed to be attached to, lean against, or placed on top of a headstone or niche cover.

12. CORRECTION OF ERRORS:

The Cemetery reserves the right to make corrections to inscriptions on monuments; interment, disinterment, or removal of a veteran or dependent in which findings result in the correction. All monuments are the property of the Cemetery and will not be released.