

**DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Memorandum

Date: December 11, 2024
From: Director, National Cemetery Scheduling Office (NCSO)
Subj: Unclaimed Veteran Remains process
To: Missing In America Project (MIAP)

This letter is to inform you of changes the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) made to the Unclaimed Veteran Remains process.

Effective Monday, December 2, 2024, NCA, in coordination with other VA departments, introduced a next of kin search within VA systems. This search is to identify potential family members of a decedent identified as unclaimed and provide the family an opportunity, if identified, to claim the remains of their deceased family member.

The next of kin search does not change the process for establishing a burial case, as outlined below, but it does impact the length of time before MIAP receives a response back to enable the case to be scheduled. We appreciate your patience as we implement this process.

For burial in a National Cemetery:

MIAP Coordinators will follow the national procedure for requesting burial services via the National Cemetery Scheduling Office (NCSO) (Online Link for reference: <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/schedule-a-burial/>):

- Providing military documents, requestor will:
 - Fax discharge or military documents to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 866-900-6417 **Or**,
 - Scan and email documents to NCA.Scheduling@va.gov with the person's name you're requesting burial benefits for in the subject line.

- Initiating a burial request case, requestor will:
 - Call the NCSO at 800-535-1117 (TTY: 711) option 1 for English/ 2 for Spanish
 - NCSO Operational Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ET, and/or Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. ET.

NOTE: Due to high volumes of immediate burial requests on Mondays, we ask that MIAP Coordinators call Tuesday through Saturday.

- NOTE 2: Please provide **no more than 3** burial requests per phone call.
- Scheduling Agents will provide a case number for each request. Please refer to this case number for future inquiries or status checks.

For burial in a VA funded State or Tribal Veteran Cemetery:

MIAP Coordinators shall contact the state/tribal cemetery directly to initiate burial request(s). The State/Tribal cemetery will contact NCA for assistance as needed.

NCA Responsibility:

- NCA will determine eligibility of decedent.
 - If records need to be requested, this may take **up to 7 working days or longer to receive.**
 - If eligibility determination results in denial, MIAP will be notified via e-mail of denial.
 - If eligibility determination results in approval, NCA will initiate a next of kin search by VA personnel.
 - NOK searches may take **up to 14 days or longer.**
 - If VBA reports negative next of kin contact, NCA Eligibility will contact MIAP Coordinator and proceed with scheduling process.
 - If VBA reports positive next of kin contact, NCA Eligibility will contact MIAP Coordinator for next steps.

NOTE: The 14-day NOK search time is in addition to the initial case research required for eligibility determination.

NOTE 2: It may take 21 days or more to complete the case activities BEFORE a case can be scheduled for burial.

- NCA Reporting and Follow-up:
 - NCA will produce monthly reports identifying open, eligible cases where burial has not been scheduled or completed.
 - NCA employees will provide case information to the representative who called to establish the case and will make contact via telephone to request a status update on each case.

- NCA will request the representative provide a justification as to why the burial has not been scheduled.
- NCA will also request the representative provide a date to follow up to schedule the burial.

Details Specific to MIAP:

- 1) All deaths under 1 year need to be submitted by the original custodian of the remains i.e., Funeral Home, Mortuary, Coroner, Morgue, etc., and not MIAP.
- 2) The prior *National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) Request for Verification of Military Service* worksheet is **no longer valid**, please **delete** from your computers, and **do not use** for VA burial requests.
- 3) eligibility.miap@va.gov, e-mail inbox will be decommissioned and no longer a valid e-mail in the coming weeks.
- 4) Send any status checks for cases pending longer than 1 month to eligibility1@va.gov.
- 5) Future denial e-mails will come from eligibility1@va.gov.

Questions or concerns can be directed to:

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