

# A Guide for When Your Veteran Dies



## I Prior to Death- Discussion to Have and Action Items Prior to Death

1. Designate a “battle buddy,” a go-to friend or family member who will provide support:
  - a. Assist with calls and gathering information
  - b. Reach out to local Veteran Service Group Chapter Personal Affairs
2. Locate servicemember’s DD Form-214 - Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty. No DD-214? Request a DD-214 in any of these ways:
  - a) Contact your state or county Veterans agency
    - i. For North Carolina county veterans offices you can locate closest office at link: [https://files.nc.gov/ncdmva/documents/files/DMVA\\_Resource\\_Guide-2020.pdf](https://files.nc.gov/ncdmva/documents/files/DMVA_Resource_Guide-2020.pdf)
    - ii. For veterans in other states please refer to other state directory for veteran service offices closest to you: <https://www.va.gov/statedva.htm> or refer Appendix A
  - b) Mail or fax a Request Pertaining to Military Records (Standard Form SF 180) to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC); download SF 180 <https://www.milvets.nc.gov/request-dd-form-214-certificate-release-or-discharge/open> (mailing addresses are included on the form) Be sure only one SF 180 is sent in or it can cause delays. Contact NPRC if veteran has already passed after sending in SF 180 to request it be expedited.
  - c) Get an eBenefits account with the VA: [Home - VA/DoD eBenefits](#)
3. Connect with Veterans Service Officer (VSO) [Benefits & Claims | Department of Military & Veterans Affairs \(nc.gov\)](#) or call (844-624-8387); Complete Form VA 21-22 (Appointment of VSO as Claimant’s Representative): [21-22 \(va.gov\)](#), and Form VA 21-0845 (Third Party Disclosure): [21-0845 \(va.gov\)](#); VSO

guides veterans and or surviving spouse through the benefit process, and provides entitled benefit information during final days, for example:

- a. Home skilled nursing (VA eligibility check)
  - b. VA state nursing home (Discuss)
  - c. Durable Medical Equipment (Wheelchair, ramps, etc. check)
  - d. Have VSO check for any possible service-connected conditions or pension eligibility
4. Obtain Military Bio if available



5. Make/Review Funeral arrangements/disposition of remains:
- a. Local Mortuary
  - b. Arlington National Cemetery (877) 907-8585 [www.arlingtoncemetery.mil](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil)
  - c. VA -contact closest local County Veteran Service Officer
  - d. Order flag [VBA form 27-2008](#) for burial from VA if meets criteria
6. Know what the veteran's service-connected disability rating is and for what (if applicable):
- a. Contact local VA VSO for support
  - b. VSO will provide information on VA support for interment
    - i. Payment for interment varies on level of disability and if death is service-connected, or varies by location at time of death.
    - ii. Ceremony support (this is provided usually by funeral home directors)
7. Additional data needed: Complete forms from MOAA or other Veteran service organizations -in preparation of a death:
- a. Computer/phone passwords
  - b. Banking/ online passwords for bank accounts
  - c. Properties

- d. CPA
- e. Financial Advisor
- f. Insurance (Property, Life, Extended Home Health Care)
- g. Online passwords (utilities, any direct deposits, deposit box key locations)
- h. Check for VGLI or SGLI (life insurances contact number (800) 669 8477)
- i. Check for Survivors Benefit Plan “SBP” (call DFAS (800) 321-1080)

## **II After Death Occurs**

1. Connect with “battle buddy” or go-to friend
2. Speak with attending physician or medical support:
  - a. Discuss cause of death
  - b. Share VA disability rating with MD. Important note: To get certain survivor VA benefits (such as Dependents and Indemnity Compensation, DIC), a VA service-connected disability must be recorded on the death certificate as either part of the primary cause of death or additional/secondary/other causes)

## **III Day One**

1. Contact VA to report death of veteran (800) 623 1000
2. Reach out to Veteran Service Organization Chapter Chaplain (insert contact information here)
3. Have pertinent information ready: DD 214, date of death, place of death, Social Security Number
4. Notify agencies of veteran’s death - all that apply
  - a. VA- work with Veterans Service Officer
    - i. Connect with county VSO or Veteran Service Organization (must have VSO)
    - ii. Is death service connected?
    - iii. Does the disability rating need to be adjusted?
    - iv. Start paperwork for DIC or survivor’s pension if applicable (note: the federal VA will need a copy of the death certificate before they grant anything, this is why it is key to talk to coroner or attending physician before they sign off on death certificate.)
    - v. VSO will apply for other benefits/certificates
      1. DD-214
      2. Pay in arrears

3. Possible appeals
  4. Survivor Pensions
  5. Aid and attendance
  6. Fiduciary if appropriate
- b. DFAS (Defense Finance and Accounting Office) (800) 469-6559 (contact if veteran retired or received medical retirement from service)
    - i. Notify
    - ii. Request Survival benefit Plan claim
  - c. Prudential (VGLI/SGLI) (800) 669 8477- Prudential (if VGLI/SGLI in effect)
    - i. Notify (find out if the veteran was paying to receive VGLI/SGLI)
    - ii. Request paperwork to file
  - d. Privately issued insurance
  - e. Social Security (800) 772-1213
    - i. Notify
    - ii. Request appointment to file for death benefits
  - f. Arlington National Cemetery (ANC)
    - i. (877) 907-8585 [www.arlingtoncemetery.mil](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil)
    - ii. Arlington requirements- must meet criteria
    - iii. Review on ANC web or speak with ANC support staff
    - iv. To schedule must have
      1. DD214
      2. Copy of Death Certificate
      3. Copy of cremation certificate
    - v. Funeral Home – Communicate that death is of a veteran
5. Reach out to [TAPS](http://www.taps.org) - Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors if needed (grief counseling) [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org) (800) 959 8277, or closest [Vet-center](http://www.vetcenter.com) 1-877- 927-8387)

## IV Day Two+

1. Continue with list above
2. Contact lawyer where the will or living trust is filed to inform of death
3. Contact USAA (or other auto insurance) check if there is a gratuity payment

4. Speak with attending physician regarding Cause of death. (Note: this might eliminate the surviving spouse from being eligible for DIC if the cause of death/other causes of death part of the death certificate does not include a service-connected disability)
5. Receive/Review Death Certificate from Mortuary
6. Communicate with attending physician
  - a. Cause of death
  - b. VA disability language should be included if applicable
  - c. Request death certificate be sent electronically
  - d. Talk with signer of death certificate if amendments are needed
7. File paperwork with the above agencies as directed to receive benefits
8. Obituary
  - a. Use military bio to help
  - b. Mortuary provides service as needed
9. Interment
  - a. Announcements
  - b. Location
  - c. Reception



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