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News Release

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VA national cemeteries to host public Memorial Day ceremonies after two years without gatherings

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veteran Affairs' National Cemetery Administration will host its first public Memorial Day ceremonies since 2019.

Ceremonies were not open in 2020 or 2021 to limit the spread of COVID-19.

All visitors this year are encouraged to follow Centers for Disease Control guidelines to ensure their safety while in attendance.

Veterans, families and the public are welcome to attend in-person traditional VA Memorial Day ceremonies held May 28 through May 30 to commemorate the nation's fallen service members. NCA maintains 155 national cemeteries and 34 soldiers' lots and monument sites in 43 states and Puerto Rico.

"There is no more fitting place to reflect upon the service and sacrifice of America's Veterans and service members than in a national cemetery," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "Here lie those who served, sacrificed and — in many cases — gave their lives for us and our country. We are forever in their debt."

McDonough will preside over the wreath laying at the New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery in Boscawen on Memorial Day. VA Deputy Secretary Donald Remy will do the same at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in Texas. Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Matt Quinn will attend the wreath laying at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, known as the Punchbowl, in Honolulu and provide the keynote address at the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery in Kaneohe, Hawaii on the island of Oahu.

All VA national cemeteries will be open Memorial Day weekend from dawn to dusk. Many locations will host volunteers who will place small American flags in front of Veteran headstones in the days leading up to Memorial Day.

As in years past, cemeteries with full staffs will conduct public wreath-laying ceremonies accompanied by patriotic speeches, music, a moment of silence and the playing of Taps. Additionally, VA teams up with Carry The Load as they honor fallen Veterans and service members with a 20,000-mile relay march across the country during the month leading up to Memorial Day.

VA encourages all Americans to honor a fallen servicemember by leaving a tribute on the Veterans Legacy Memorial site. It contains a memorial page for each of the nearly 4.5 million Veterans and service members interred in VA national cemeteries or VA grant-funded state, territorial or tribal Veterans cemeteries.

Live streaming, recorded video and photographs from many ceremonies will be shared on the National Cemetery Administration's Facebook and Twitter pages.

A complete list of Memorial Day events at national cemeteries can found here.

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