



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

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Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

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## VA National Cemetery Administration partners with Carry The Load to honor Veterans and their families

**WASHINGTON** — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that its [National Cemetery Administration](#) (NCA) is partnering with [Carry The Load](#), a nonprofit organization that provides active ways to connect Americans to the sacrifices made daily by the U.S. military, Veterans, first responders and their families.

NCA will participate in Carry The Load's Memorial May awareness campaign, which covers 40 states, leading up to Memorial Day 2019.

Participants will march or ride bicycles in an 11,500-mile national relay along three routes — East Coast, West Coast and Midwest — handing off an American flag every few miles. Each participant walks or rides to "carry the load" for a deceased military service member or Veteran, remembering them and honoring their sacrifice. Twenty-six VA national cemeteries in 17 states will serve as relay points for Carry The Load memorial marches.

"The VA is delighted to partner with Carry The Load in this important initiative of honoring those who sacrificed for our freedom to ensure no Veteran ever dies," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "It's a mindset that every one of VA's employees emulates. And nowhere is the sacrifice made by our Veterans more evident than in our national cemeteries."

In conjunction with the Carry The Load national relay, each VA national cemetery along the three routes will host a brief ceremony unveiling a commemorative plaque dedicated to America's fallen Veterans and their [families](#). To view the list of the 26 participating VA national cemeteries and the dates and times they will host the Carry The Load relay and "Tribute to the Fallen and Their Families" plaque dedication ceremonies, [download the calendar](#).

VA operates 136 national cemeteries and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites in 40 states and Puerto Rico.

For Veterans not buried in a VA national cemetery, VA provides headstones, markers or medallions to commemorate their service. Information on VA burial benefits is available from local VA national cemetery offices, online at <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/> or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 800-827-1000.

To make burial arrangements at any open VA national cemetery at the time of need, call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117.

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