

VA



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VA national cemeteries resume committal and memorial services halted by the COVID-19 pandemic

WASHINGTON — U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries will resume committal services starting June 9 in all but two VA national cemeteries.

VA national cemeteries will contact families who were unable to hold a committal service due to the COVID-19 pandemic to arrange memorial services for their loved ones beginning in July.

"During the last 10 weeks VA national cemeteries have continued performing our essential mission — to inter Veterans and eligible family members," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "We believe we have a robust set of measures in place that will allow us to conduct committal and memorial services while protecting the health and safety of Veterans, their families and our team members who serve them."

While VA is eager to resume normal operations, the department's national cemeteries have remained open for interments and visitation throughout the pandemic. However, as a matter of health and safety, committal services and military funeral honors have been deferred since March 23.

Interments scheduled on or after June 9, will be offered the option of a committal service at the time of interment. At Calverton and Long Island national cemeteries, that option will be available starting June 22, provided state and local guidance permit. Military funeral honors, customarily provided by the Department of Defense and volunteer honor guards, will be based on local availability.

VA national cemeteries will continue adherence to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by limiting the number of individuals attending committal services, practicing physical distancing between individuals not from the same household, ensuring all attendees and employees wear face coverings, encouraging frequent use of hand sanitizer and asking sick individuals to stay home. The number of permitted attendees will vary based on state and local guidelines for gathering sizes provided the facility can accommodate increased attendees while maintaining physical distancing. Families may continue to choose direct interment and opt for a memorial service later when all restrictions have been lifted.

Memorial services for Veterans and eligible family members who were interred without a committal service between March 23 and June 8 will commence in July.

For more information, visit the [National Cemetery Administration \(NCA\)](#). Media should contact NCA Public Affairs chief Les' Melnyk at Les.Melnyk@VA.gov. To make burial arrangements at any VA national cemetery contact the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at (800) 535-1117.

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