

# VETERAN news & notes

## The Thanks Of A Grateful Nation

(NAPSA)—America has one last accolade in store for many members of the greatest generation—a veteran's funeral with military honors.

For many veterans, such a funeral is a solemn last wish, and it is available upon request, courtesy of the U.S. government.

The three basic elements of a veteran's funeral are a flag-draped casket, the playing of Taps and folding the flag for presentation to next of kin. Each act is a ritual of deep historic and emotional significance commemorating patriotism and service that for many veterans is the defining experience of their lives.

By law, the Department of Defense (DOD) is responsible for providing military funeral honors to veterans upon request. The honors are conducted by two or more uniformed military personnel, at least one of whom represents the deceased veteran's branch of service.

The funeral home director, on behalf of the family, normally makes the request for DOD military funeral honors. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery staff can also assist with arranging military funeral honors at VA National Cemeteries and veterans service organizations may assist in providing the honors.

VA provides the United States burial flag that drapes the veteran's coffin. The funeral director can help submit the necessary application form to VA. Flags are available at U.S. Post Offices and VA Regional Offices and are automatically provided for burials at national and state veterans' cemeteries.

VA also provides a Presidential Memorial Certificate honoring the veteran's service to the United States. The gold embossed certificate is inscribed with the veteran's name and bears the presi-



**The families of deceased veterans are entitled to a burial flag and the playing of Taps at the funeral.**

dent's signature. The certificate may be requested in person at any VA Regional Office or through the mail by writing to the Memorial Programs Service (402E), VA National Cemetery Administration, 810 Vermont Ave., NW, Washington, DC, 20420. Requests must include a copy of the veteran's military discharge papers.

VA also furnishes upon request, at no charge to the applicant, a government headstone or marker for the grave of an eligible deceased veteran at any cemetery around the world. Any deceased veteran discharged from the U.S. armed forces under other than dishonorable conditions is eligible, based upon length of active duty service. These headstones and markers are shipped free of charge. Most private cemeteries charge for setting the headstone or marker. National cemeteries do not.

For information about veterans' burial honors and benefits, call the VA at 1-800-827-1000 or go to the National Cemetery Administration Web site at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov). For information about DOD military funeral honors, check the DOD Web site at [www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil](http://www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil).