



Locating Veterans Gravesites

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Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced today that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made the gravesites of more than 6.7 million Veterans easier to locate using handheld devices with Internet capability, such as "smart phones."

"This innovative program continues VA's commitment to use the latest technology to provide Veterans and their families with information they need," said Secretary Shinseki. "It will simplify and enhance the experience of many who visit our national cemeteries."

The latest improvement builds upon a service begun in 2004, when VA introduced an online nationwide gravesite locator, linked to its electronic burial records, that helps people find the cemetery in which their loved one is buried. The grave locations of Veterans and eligible family members buried in national cemeteries, or whose graves are marked with a government headstone, can already be found with desktop computers and at national cemetery kiosks.

The original gravesite locator -- <http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov> -- online since April 2004, continues to help Veterans' families and others find the cemeteries where relatives, ancestors or friends are buried. The new Web site - <http://m.va.gov/gravelocator> -- is enhanced for viewing and browsing on "smart phone" devices.

Users enter a name to search and click "Locate" to find where the loved one is buried. Users can limit the search to a specific cemetery if that information is known.

The Web site will provide the name of the cemetery and a grave location, offer a link to a Google map and driving directions to the cemetery and, if the deceased is buried in a national cemetery or state Veterans cemetery, provide a link to a cemetery map to help find the section where the grave is located.

In addition to the more than 6.7 million records now available, VA continues to add approximately 1,000 new records to the database each day.

In 2005, VA added to its database of national cemetery burial records the locations of 1.9 million veterans whose graves were marked with a government headstone since 1997. These are mostly private cemeteries. Burial records with cemetery maps available are for burials in VA national cemeteries, state Veterans cemeteries and Arlington National Cemetery if the burials occurred since 1999.

Veterans with a discharge issued under conditions other than dishonorable, their spouses and eligible dependent children can be buried in a VA national cemetery. Other burial benefits available for all eligible Veterans, regardless of whether they are buried in a national cemetery or a private cemetery, include a burial flag, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and a government headstone or marker. Families of eligible decedents may also order a memorial headstone or marker when remains are not available for interment. In the midst of the largest expansion since the Civil War, VA operates 130 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. More than three million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict, are buried in VA's national cemeteries on more than 18,000 acres of land.

Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the Internet at www.cem.va.gov or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at (800) 827-1000.