

Monthly Newsletter



Honoring Our Nation's Heroes

In remembrance of 9-11, the Togus Regional Office (RO) joined thousands of volunteers to help clean headstones and beautify over 60 VA National Cemeteries across the Nation, including one of the cemeteries located on the Togus campus.



This event was organized by Carry the Load through their partnership with the National Cemetery Administration. Over 40 volunteers from VBA, VHA, and community groups participated in a ceremonial washing of the headstones in the Togus East Cemetery.



Do you know someone who is looking for a challenging, fulfilling career that focuses on serving Veterans and their family members?

If so, please direct them to www.usajobs.gov or you may share the below QR Code to see positions as they are announced.



Stuff the Trailer

In support of the National Feds Feed Families initiative, Togus RO employees partnered with the South Parish Congregational Church to stock their local food bank. Employees worked to “stuff” our VBA Outreach Trailer with needed food items. South Parish Congregation Church actively provides assistance with food and housing for those in need to include some of our local Veterans . On Thursday, September 28, 2023, we dropped off over 550 pounds of food items to the food bank! They were extremely grateful, and look forward to partnering with us in the future.



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Special Point of Interest

- Maine Veterans may call 207-621-6938 to ask questions about benefits or to schedule an in-person or video call for assistance with claim related matters.

Effective July 7, 2014, VA changed its monetary burial benefits regulations to simplify the program and pay eligible survivors more quickly and efficiently. These regulations authorized VA to pay, without a written application, most eligible surviving spouses basic monetary burial benefits at the maximum amount authorized in law through automated systems rather than reimbursing them for actual costs incurred.

- Under the older regulations, VA would pay for burial and funeral expenses on a reimbursement basis, which required survivors to submit receipts for relatively small one-time payments that VA generally paid at the maximum amount permitted by law.
- Effective July 7, 2014, burial regulations permitted VA to pay, at a flat rate, burial and plot or interment allowances thereby enabling VA to automate payment of burial benefits to most eligible surviving spouses and more efficiently process other burial benefit claims.

The burial allowance for a non-service-connected death is \$300, and \$2,000 for a death connected to military service.

Benefit

Service-related Death

VA will pay up to \$2,000 toward burial expenses for deaths on or after September 11, 2001, or up to \$1,500 for deaths prior to September 11, 2001. If the Veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some or all of the cost of transporting the deceased may be reimbursed.

Non-service-related Death

VA will pay up to \$796 toward burial and funeral expenses for deaths on or after October 1, 2019 (if hospitalized by VA at time of death), or \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses (if not hospitalized by VA at time of death), and a \$796 plot-interment allowance (if not buried in a national cemetery). For deaths on or after December 1, 2001, but before October 1, 2011, VA will pay up to \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses and a \$300 plot-interment allowance. For deaths on or after April 1, 1988 but before October 1, 2011, VA will pay \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses (for Veterans hospitalized by VA at the time of death).

An annual increase in burial and plot allowances for deaths occurring after October 1, 2011 began in fiscal year 2013 based on the Consumer Price Index for the preceding 12-month period.

Eligibility Requirements

- Eligible survivors paid for a Veteran's burial or funeral, **AND**
- Eligible survivors have not been reimbursed by another government agency or some other source, such as the deceased Veteran's employer, **AND**

Burial Benefits

- The Veteran was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, **AND**
- The Veteran died because of a service-related disability, **OR**
- The Veteran was receiving VA pension or compensation at the time of death, **OR**
- The Veteran was entitled to receive VA pension or compensation, but decided not to reduce his/her military retirement or disability pay, **OR**
- The Veteran died while hospitalized by VA, or while receiving care under VA contract at a non-VA facility, **OR**
- The Veteran died while traveling under proper authorization and at VA expense to or from a specified place for the purpose of examination, treatment, or care, **OR**
- The Veteran had an original or reopened claim pending at the time of death and has been found entitled to compensation or pension from a date prior to the date of death, **OR**
- The Veteran died on or after October 9, 1996, while a patient at a VA-approved state nursing home.
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NOTE: VA does not pay burial benefits if the deceased:

- Died during active military service, **OR**
- Was a member of Congress who died while holding office, **OR**
- Was a federal prisoner

Evidence Requirements:

Acceptable proof of death as specified in 38 CFR 3.211, **AND**

- Receipted bills that show that eligible survivors made payment in whole or part, **OR**
- A statement of account, preferably on the printed billhead of the funeral director or cemetery owner.

The statement of account must show:

- The name of the deceased Veteran for whom the services and merchandise were furnished, **AND**
- The nature and cost of the services and merchandise, **AND**
- All credits, **AND**
- The amount of the unpaid balance, if any

How to Apply

Eligible survivors can apply online at [How To Apply For A Veterans Burial Allowance | Veterans Affairs \(va.gov\)](#) **OR**

To submit a paper application, download and complete [VBA-21P-530EZ-ARE.pdf \(va.gov\)](#) and mail it to the [Pension Management Center](#) that serves your state, **OR**

Work with an accredited representative **OR**

Eligible survivors may also go to their local regional benefits office and turn in their application for processing.

Additional Information

Other information regarding VA burial benefits such as flags, headstones and markers is provided by the [National Cemetery Administration](#).

If you or your organization is hosting an event and you want Togus to participate, please contact Christina Smith at vavbatog.engage@va.gov.

Look for a Togus Representative at one of the following locations:

- ◆ **October 7, 2023**– Fryeburg Fair, 1154 Main St. Fryeburg, ME Time: 10am to 5pm
- ◆ **October 8, 2023**– Fryeburg Fair, 1154 Main St. Fryeburg, ME Time: 10am to 5pm
- ◆ **October 14, 2023**– American Legion 19 Reynolds Ave, Livermore Falls, ME Time: 7:30am to 9:30am
Open to Veterans and their spouses
- ◆ **October 18, 2023**– House in the Woods, 217 Skunk Hill Rd, Lee, ME Time: 8am to 11am Open to Veterans and their families
- ◆ **October 19, 2023**- Maine Hire-A-Vet Campaign 2023, The Pont Café, 345 Clarks Pond Parkway, South Portland, ME Time 11am to 3pm Open to the Public
- ◆ **October 21, 2023**– VA Maine Breast Health Awareness Walk, 1 VA Center, Augusta, ME, In front of Building 207 Time: 10am to 12pm Open to the Public
- ◆ **October 25, 2023**– Homeless Stand Down, Togus 1 VA Center, Augusta, ME Time: 10am to 2pm
Open to Veterans

Claims Clinics

To schedule an appointment at one of the Claims Clinics near you, please call 207-621-6938.

- ◆ **October 3, 2023**– Lewiston VA Clinic, Lewiston ME Time: 9:30am to 2:30pm
- ◆ **October 5, 2023**– Rumford VA Clinic, Rumford, ME Time: 10am to 2pm
- ◆ **October 10, 2023**– Portland VA Clinic, Portland, ME Time: 10am to 2pm
- ◆ **October 12, 2023**– Bangor VA Clinic, Bangor, ME Time: 10am to 2:30pm
- ◆ **October 13, 2023**- Caribou Vet Center, Caribou, ME Time: 8:00am to 11:30am
- ◆ **October 17 2023**– Bangor VA Clinic, Bangor, ME Time: 10am to 2:30pm
- ◆ **October 19, 2023**– Bangor Vet Center, 615 Oldin Rd. Suite 3, Bangor ME Time: 10am to 2pm
- ◆ **October 24, 2023**- Portland VA Clinic, Portland, ME Time: 10am to 2pm
- ◆ **October 26, 2023**- Sanford Vet Center, Springvale, ME Time: 10am to 1pm
- ◆ **October 27, 2023**- Mid-Coast Veterans Council (MCVC), Brunswick, ME Time: 9:30am to 2:30pm

Togus Regional Office

The Togus Regional Office (RO) is assigned to the Northeast District of the Veterans Benefits Administration. The RO is authorized 349 full time employees to support a State Veteran population of more than 100,000 Veterans. The Regional Office administers a variety of services and benefits including Compensation and Veteran Readiness and Employment.

Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day

Columbus Day, also called **Indigenous Peoples' Day**, in the United States, a holiday (originally October 12; since 1971 the second Monday in October) to commemorate the landing of Christopher Columbus on October 12, 1492, in the New World. Columbus was a native of Genoa, Italy, and over the years Italian Americans took up the cause of honoring his achievement. In 1937 it became a national holiday by proclamation of U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Indigenous Peoples' Day is a holiday in the United States that honors the Native populations of America, most of whom were violently uprooted and exploited beginning with the arrival of Christopher Columbus. Depending on the state government, local government, or institution, Indigenous Peoples' Day is celebrated in place of Columbus Day or alongside it.

Contact the Regional Office

Togus Regional Office

1 VA Center

Augusta, ME 04330

207-626-4788

DIR.VBATOG@VA.GOV

Jennifer A. Bover, Executive Director

Michael J. Brawn, Assistant Director

Timothy R. Hum, Veterans Service Center Manager (VSCM)

Thomas C. Whitney, Assistant Veterans Service Center Manager (AVSCM)

Philip S. Black, Assistant Veterans Service Center Manager (AVSCM)

Christopher V. Smith, Staff Assistant

Allison D. Bubier, Veteran Readiness and Employment Officer

Tracy L. Sinclair, Support Services Division Chief

Christina M. Smith, Public Affairs Officer

Contact Your Congressional Liaison

David Poulin

Email: CIC.VBATOG@VA.GOV

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Helpful Websites

- ◆ Access the latest information on the PACT Act: www.va.gov/PACT
- ◆ View the impact of this legislation: [VA PACT Act Performance Dashboard](#)
- ◆ Access the Togus Regional Office website: www.benefits.va.gov/togus
- ◆ Refer Veterans to www.va.gov or the [VA: Health and Benefits App](#) for self-service options