

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Allowance for Private Purchase of an Outer Burial Receptacle in Lieu of a Government-Furnished Graveliner for a Grave in a VA National Cemetery

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.
ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Public Law 104–275 was enacted on October 9, 1996. It allows the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide a monetary allowance towards the private purchase of an outer burial receptacle for use in a VA national cemetery. Under VA regulation (38 CFR 38.629), the allowance is equal to the average cost of Government-furnished graveliners less any administrative costs to VA. The law provides a veteran's survivors with the option of selecting a Government-furnished graveliner for use in a VA national cemetery where such use is authorized.

The purpose of this Notice is to notify interested parties of the average cost of Government-furnished graveliners, administrative costs that relate to processing and paying the allowance, and the amount of the allowance payable for qualifying interments that occur during calendar year 2009.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joan Jefferies, Budget and Finance Service (41B1), National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. Telephone: 202–461–6742 (this is not a toll-free number).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under 38 U.S.C. 2306(e)(3) and (4) and Public Law 104–275, Section 213, VA may provide a monetary allowance for the private purchase of an outer burial receptacle for use in a VA national cemetery where its use is authorized. The allowance for qualified interments that occur during calendar year 2009 is the average cost of Government-furnished graveliners in fiscal year 2008, less the administrative costs incurred by VA in processing and paying the allowance in lieu of the Government-furnished graveliner.

The average cost of Government-furnished graveliners is determined by taking VA's total cost during a fiscal year for single-depth graveliners that were procured for placement at the time of interment and dividing it by the total number of such graveliners procured by VA during that fiscal year. The calculation excludes both graveliners procured and pre-placed in gravesites as part of cemetery gravesite development

projects and all double-depth graveliners. Using this method of computation, the average cost was determined to be \$263.00 for fiscal year 2008.

The administrative costs incurred by VA consist of those costs that relate to processing and paying an allowance in lieu of the Government-furnished graveliner. These costs have been determined to be \$9.00 for calendar year 2009.

The allowance payable for qualifying interments occurring during calendar year 2009, therefore, is \$254.00.

Approved: December 16, 2008.

Gordon H. Mansfield,

Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans; Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) gives notice under Public Law 92–463 (Federal Advisory Committee Act) that the Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans will hold a meeting on January 14–15, 2009. The Committee will meet on January 14 in Building 100, Room BB108 at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System, 1660 South Columbian Way, Seattle, Washington.

The purpose of the Committee is to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on issues that are unique to veterans who served in the Southwest Asian theater of operations during 1990–1991 period of the Gulf War.

On January 14, the Committee will meet in open session from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. and will hear from healthcare officials from the Post-Deployment Integrated Care Initiative and the Multiple Sclerosis Centers of Excellence as well as neurologists specializing in Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. A representative from the Washington State Military Department Joint Headquarters and the President of the Veterans of Modern Warfare will also speak with the Committee.

Additionally, the Committee will meet with a panel of Gulf War veterans who reside in the Seattle area. Gulf War veterans living in Seattle and the surrounding area who served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during 1990–1991 wishing to participate in the panel should contact Lelia Jackson at (202) 461–5758 or via e-mail at lelia.jackson@va.gov. The meeting will be closed to the public from 4 p.m.

until 5 p.m. in order to protect patient privacy as the Committee tours the VA Puget Sound Health Care System facility. Closing the meeting is in compliance with requirements of 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(6).

On January 15, the Committee will visit the Seattle VA Regional Office, Seattle Vet Center and one of the homeless shelters in the grant and per diem program. This session will be closed to the public to protect patient privacy. Closing the meeting is in compliance with requirements of 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(6). The Committee will reconvene in the Carlsbad Room at the Crowne Plaza Seattle, 1113 Sixth Avenue, Seattle, Washington, from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. in an open session to review and discuss the Committee's activities.

Public comments will be received on January 14 from 2:15 p.m. until 2:45 p.m. Individuals wishing to speak must register not later than January 8 by contacting Ms. Jackson and by submitting 1–2 page summaries of their comments for inclusion in the official record. Public comments will be limited to five minutes each. A sign-in sheet will be available. Members of the public may also submit written statements for the Committee's review to the Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420.

Interested parties may also listen in by teleconferencing into the meeting. The toll-free teleconference line will be open from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. (Pacific Standard Time) on January 14. To register for the teleconference, please contact Ms. Jackson.

Any member of the public seeking additional information should contact Laura O'Shea, Designated Federal Officer, at (202) 461–5765.

Dated: December 11, 2008.

E. Philip Riggan,

Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. E8–30422 Filed 12–19–08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Rehabilitation Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board; Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs gives notice under Public Law 92–463 (Federal Advisory Committee Act) that the Rehabilitation Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board will meet from 8 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. each day as indicated

below: January 27–28, 2009—Hilton Garden Inn Hotel, Washington, DC., March 2–3, 2009—Marriott Crystal Gateway, Arlington, VA.

The purpose of the Board is to review rehabilitation research and development applications for scientific and technical merit and to make recommendations to the Director, Rehabilitation Research and Development Service, regarding their funding.

The meetings will be open to the public for the January 27 and March 2 sessions from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. for the discussion of administrative matters, the general status of the program and the administrative details of the review process. The meetings will be closed as follows for the Board's review of research and development applications: January 27 from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.;

January 28 from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; March 2 from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; March 3 from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The reviews involve oral comments, discussion of site visits, staff and consultant critiques of proposed research protocols, and similar analytical documents that necessitate the consideration of the personal qualifications, performance and competence of individual research investigators. Disclosure of such information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. Disclosure would also reveal research proposals and research underway which could lead to the loss of these projects to third parties and thereby frustrate future agency research efforts. Thus, the closing is in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(6),

and (c)(9)(B) and the determination of the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs under Sections 10(d) of Public Law 92–463 as amended by Section 5(c) of Public Law 94–409.

Those who plan to attend the open sessions should contact Terrilynn Carlton, Designated Federal Officer, Portfolio Manager, Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (122P), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20420, at (202) 461–1757.

Dated: December 16, 2008.

By direction of the Secretary.

E. Philip Riggan,

Committee Management Officer.

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