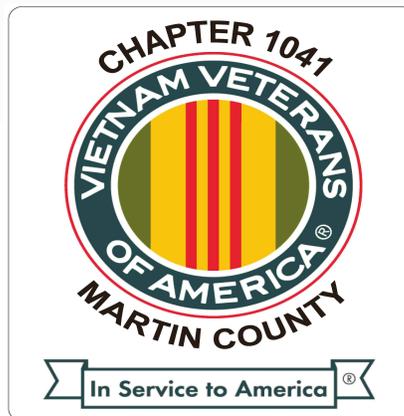


When a Veteran Passes Away: A Planning Guide for the Surviving Family





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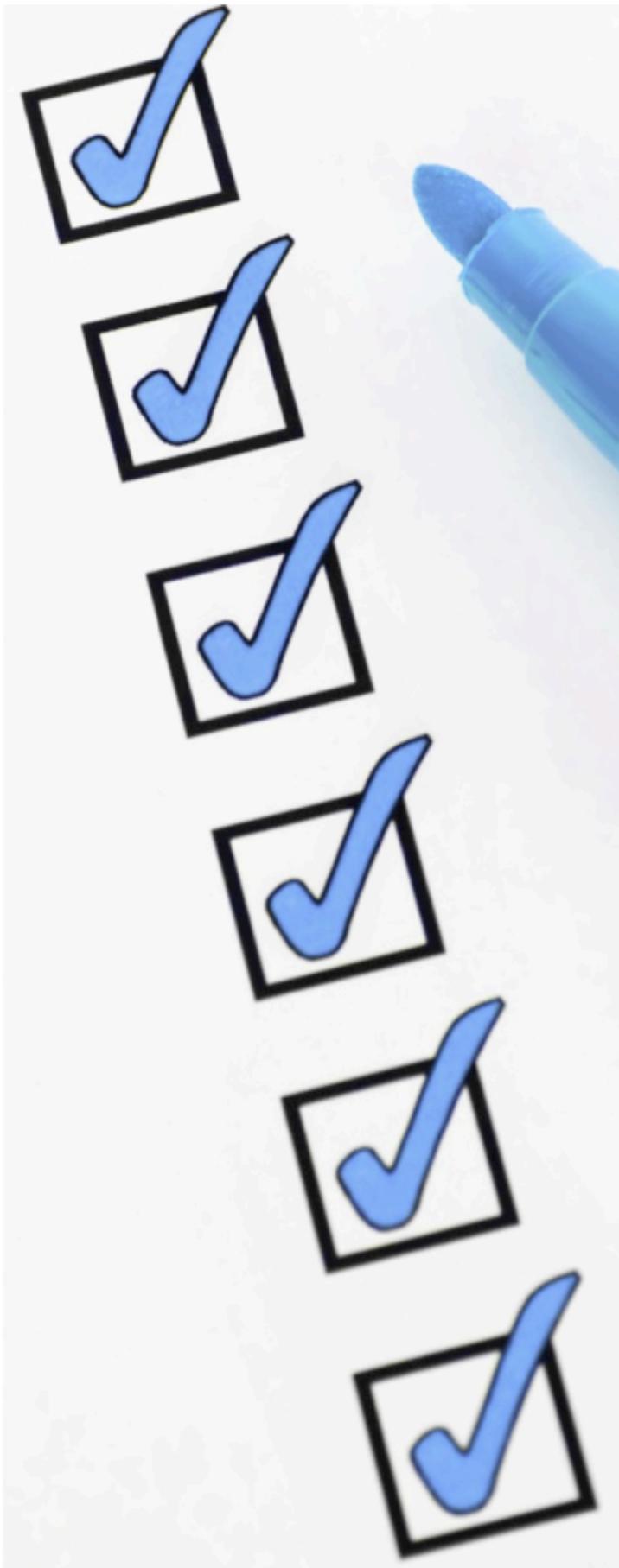


When a Veteran Passes Away

One of the more difficult tasks a survivor may face after the death of a beloved veteran is identifying, securing and completing the numerous claims forms to obtain the VA survivors' benefits. The anxiety and fear of the unknown—who to call, what to do or where to go for help—can be a daunting experience.

To avoid such a situation, and to ensure that those who have proudly served our nation take advantage of all the benefits to which they are entitled, veterans and their families are encouraged to organize their personal and military records as part of their regular estate planning. While your funeral director can assist you with the necessary paperwork, gathering and storing these important documents **now** will help ease the burden and be helpful to your family at the time of need.

Veterans of the United States armed forces may be eligible for a broad range of programs and services provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Eligibility for most VA benefits is based upon discharge from active military service under other than dishonorable conditions. Reservists and National Guard members, as well as their spouses and dependent children, may also be eligible for VA burial and memorial benefits if they were entitled to retirement pay at the time of death, or would have been if they had been over age sixty (60).



IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

The following documents will be needed when applying for benefits related to a veteran's death:

1. Veteran's Discharge Certificate (DD Form 214) or DD Form 1300 "Report of Casualty" (provided by your Service Casualty Office)
2. Veteran's Social Security Number
3. Veteran's Death Certificate, with the cause of death listed (If the veteran did not die in a VA healthcare facility)
4. Veteran's Birth Certificate (to determine parent's benefits)
5. Marriage Certificate
6. Divorce Decree(s) (if any)
7. Each child's birth certificate, adoption and /or custody documents
8. Social Security Numbers/Cards for all family members
9. Wills and Deeds of Trust
10. Government life Insurance policies



FEDERAL (VA) VETERANS' BURIAL BENEFITS

The VA offers certain benefits and services to honor America's deceased veterans. These include:

- **Burial in a VA National Cemetery:** Eligible veterans, their spouses and dependents can be buried in a VA National Cemetery at no cost to the family.
- **Headstones and Markers:** Eligible veterans are provided a headstone or marker at no cost.
- **Presidential Memorial Certificates:** Issued upon request to recognize the military service of honorably discharged deceased veterans.
- **Military Funeral Honors:** At the family's request, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) will provide military funeral honors consisting of folding and presentation of the US flag and the playing of "Taps".
- **Burial Flags:** Funeral directors will provide an American flag, made available by the VA, to drape an eligible veteran's casket.
- **Reimbursement of Burial Expenses:** Generally, the VA will pay a burial allowance up to \$2,000 if the veteran's death is service-related. For certain other veterans, the VA will pay a \$300 burial and funeral allowance and a \$300 plot allowance.

NATIONAL CEMETERIES IN FLORIDA

Additional Information can be found at: <http://www.cem.va.gov/CEMS/listcem.asp>

Barrancas National Cemetery
Naval Air Station, 80 Hovey Road
Pensacola, FL 32508-1054
Phone: (850) 453-4108 or 4846
FAX: (850) 453- 4635

Bay Pines National Cemetery
10,000 Bay Pines Blvd.
St. Petersburg, FL 33708
Phone: (727) 398-9426
FAX: (727) 398-9520

Florida National Cemetery
6502 SW 102nd Avenue
Bushnell, FL 33513
Phone: (352) 793-7740
FAX: (352) 793-9560

Jacksonville National Cemetery
4083 Lannie Road
Jacksonville, FL 32218-1247
Phone: (904) 766-5222
FAX: (904) 766-5980

Sarasota National Cemetery
9810 State Hwy 72
Sarasota, FL 34241
Phone: (941) 922-7200
Toll free: (877) 861-9840
Fax: (941) 922-3457

South Florida National Cemetery
6501 S. State Road 7
Lake Worth, FL 33449
Phone: (561) 649-6489

Saint Augustine National Cemetery (Closed to new interments)
104 Marine Street
St. Augustine, FL 32084
Phone: (352) 793-7740
FAX: (352) 793-9560

HEADSTONES AND MARKERS

Upon request, the VA will provide a government headstone or marker for the grave of any deceased eligible Veteran in any cemetery around the world at no charge. (Note: Headstones and markers are provided for eligible spouses and dependents of Veterans only in a national, military post/base or state Veterans cemetery; spouses and dependents buried in a private cemetery are not eligible for a government-furnished headstone or marker.)

For burials in a National Cemetery, a National Cemetery representative will assist the next-of-kin or authorized representative in ordering the headstone or marker. For burials in a private cemetery the next-of-kin or authorized representative may apply for a headstone or marker at the time of burial; your funeral director can assist you in obtaining the appropriate application form.

PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATES

A Presidential Memorial Certificate honors the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans. The next of kin and loved ones of a deceased veteran are eligible to request a certificate. A copy of the deceased veteran's military discharge document along with a photocopy of the death certificate must be provided when requesting a certificate.

Requests for a Presidential Memorial Certificate may be made via phone, 202-565-4259, or in person at any VA Regional Office. A complete listing of Veteran Service Offices can be found at the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs website:

http://floridavets.org/?page_id=743

In Martin County contact:

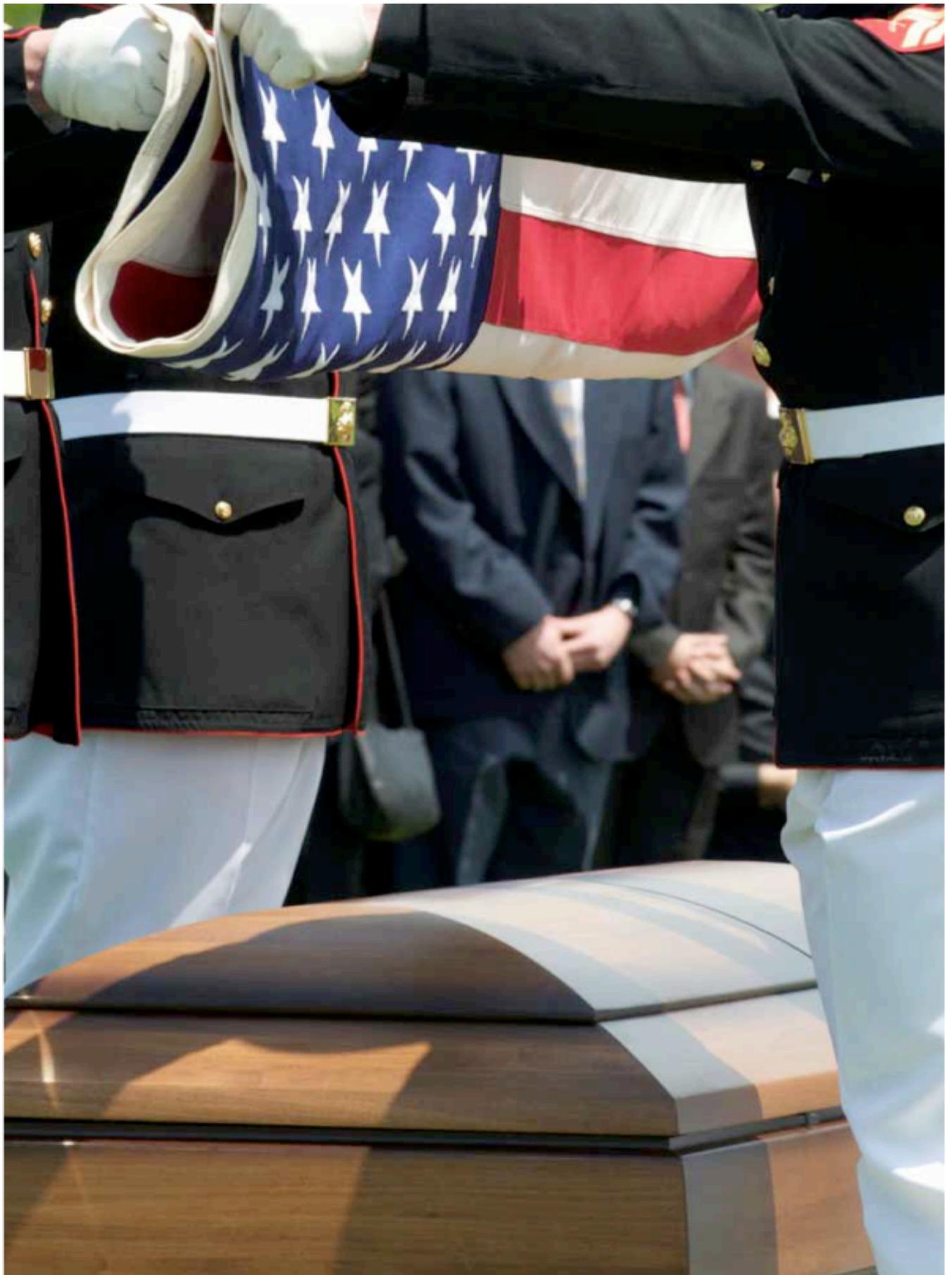
Martin County Veteran Services

435 SE Flagler Avenue

Stuart, FL 34994

Phone: (772) 288-5448

www.martin.fl.us



MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS

"Honoring Those Who Served" is the national program for providing dignified military funeral honors to veterans who have defended our nation. Upon the family's request, every eligible veteran may receive a military funeral honors ceremony, to include folding and presenting the United States burial flag and the playing of Taps. A military funeral honors detail will consist of two or more uniformed military persons, with at least one being a member of the veteran's parent service of the armed forces; veterans' service organizations or volunteer groups may help provide honors.

Your funeral director will request military funeral honors on behalf of the veteran's family from the U.S. DOD, NYS Division of Military and Naval Affairs (DMNA) or the NY National Guard. It is important to advise your funeral director immediately if a Military Honors Ceremony is desired because it often takes 48 hours to process and implement a request for such services.

BURIAL FLAGS

A United States flag is provided, at no cost, to drape the casket or accompany the urn of a deceased veteran who honorably served in the U.S. Armed Forces. It is furnished to honor the memory of a veteran's military service to his or her country. Generally, the flag is given to the next-of-kin, as a keepsake, at the conclusion of the funeral service following its use.

Your funeral director will assist you in obtaining a flag from your regional VA office or local U.S. Post Office.

REIMBURSEMENT OF BURIAL EXPENSES

If a veteran's death was service-related, the VA will pay up to \$2,000 toward burial expenses for deaths on or after September 11, 2001. VA will pay up to \$1,500 for deaths prior to September 10, 2001. If the veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some or all of the cost of transporting the veteran's remains may be reimbursed. There is no time limit for filing reimbursement claims in service-connected death cases.

If the death was non-service-related, the VA will pay up to \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses and a \$300 plot-interment allowance for deaths on or after December 1, 2001. The plot-interment allowance is \$150 for deaths prior to December 1, 2001. If the death happened while the veteran was in a VA hospital or under VA contracted nursing home care, some or all of the costs for transporting the veteran's remains may be reimbursed. ***In non-service-related death cases, claims must be filed within two years of burial or cremation.***

To apply for reimbursement of burial expenses, complete VA Form 21-530 (Application for Burial Benefits), which is available for download at <http://www.va.gov/vaforms1>. You will need to attach a copy of the veteran's military discharge document (DD 214 or equivalent), death certificate, and funeral and burial bills marked "paid in full."

MISCELLANEOUS BENEFITS

Veteran Administration service representatives can answer questions about benefits eligibility and application procedures. A veteran's family may be entitled to benefits such as:

- Dependency & Indemnity Compensation (DIC) for spouse or dependent child(ren)
- Death Pension for spouse or dependent child(ren)
- VA Burial Benefits
- National Service VA Life Insurance

Contact the nearest VA benefits office at 1-800-827-1000 for more information.

VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS

If your loved one was a member of a veterans' organization such as the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), or Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), ask your funeral director to contact the organization's service representative to arrange for a ritual service and casket bearers. The post representative should also be informed if the family wishes to have the flag presented to the next-of-kin during the graveside service.

MILITARY RECORDS

Veterans and next-of-kin of deceased veterans have the same rights to full access to military records. Next-of-kin are the widow or widower, who has not remarried, son or daughter, father or mother, brother or sister of the deceased veteran. You may now use vetrecs.archives.gov to order a copy of your military records.

BEREAVEMENT COUNSELING

The VA offers bereavement counseling to parents, spouses and children of Armed Forces personnel who died in the service of their country. Family members of reservists and National Guard personnel who die while on duty are also eligible for this program. VA's bereavement counseling is provided at no cost in community-based Vet Centers located near the family or can oftentimes be made available in the family's home or where the family feels most comfortable.

Families may request this service by calling 202-273-9116 or via email at vet.center@va.gov.

TIMING IS IMPORTANT

Any claim for VA benefits should be filed as promptly as possible to ensure the earliest effective date of awarding benefits. There is no specific time limit for claiming reimbursement of burial expenses for a service-related death. In other cases, claims must be filed within two (2) years of the veteran's burial.

DEPENDENT AND SURVIVORS BENEFITS

Spouses, children, and parents of Servicemembers and Veterans who are deceased or totally and permanently disabled by a service-connected disability may be eligible for VA dependent and survivor benefits. These benefits include compensation, pension, health care, education, home loans, and burial. Details of this information can be found on the VA website:

http://benefits.va.gov/persona/dependent_survivor.asp

The primary Dependents and Survivors benefits are listed below. Please see the VA website for eligibility details.

- **Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)** — a monthly tax-free benefit paid to a surviving spouse, including additional payments for dependent children.
- **Parents' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)** — Parents' DIC is an income-based monthly tax-free benefit, and may be available if your child was a Servicemember or Veteran who died from a service-related cause.
- **Survivors' Pension** — a monthly income-based tax-free benefit payable to a surviving spouse and/or child(ren) of a deceased Veteran with wartime service.
- **The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)** — a benefit that provides reimbursement for most medical expenses to certain surviving spouses and dependents of Veterans with permanent and total service-connected disabilities who are not eligible for TRICARE.
- **Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA)** — a benefit that provides assistance to obtain a degree and pursue other eligible education and training.
- **Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship** — The Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship provides children with financial support for tuition and fees, books and supplies, and housing. Download the [Fry Scholarship Brochure \(PDF\)](#) for more information.
- **Home Loans** — a benefit that may be used to help purchase, construct, or improve a home. It may also be used to refinance a mortgage.
- **Burial** — a benefit that includes furnishing a headstone, marker, or medallion, a burial allowance, a Presidential Memorial Certificate, and an American flag to drape over the deceased's casket, as well as the option of burial in a VA national cemetery.

ADDITIONAL DEPENDENTS & SURVIVORS BENEFITS

Dependents and survivors may also be eligible for the following programs, in addition to the benefits and programs described on the previous page.

- **Educational and Vocational Counseling**– is available to help decide how best to use VA dependents' educational assistance benefits. VA can also provide assessment and rehabilitation planning for dependents with disabilities to help identify the resources needed to achieve a successful outcome.
- **Beneficiary Financial Counseling Service** – is a personalized service offered to beneficiaries of SGLI and VGLI VA Life Insurance policies that can help you make smart financial decisions. Services include, but are not limited to, budgeting assistance, debt reduction assistance, and college/retirement planning.
- **Bereavement Counseling** – is a counseling service available at community-based Vet Centers to parents, spouses, and children of Servicemembers, National Guard members, and Reserve members who die in service.
- **Civil Service Preference** – is a hiring preference for jobs within the Federal government. An unmarried surviving spouse of certain deceased Veterans may also qualify. VA provides an eligibility certification upon request.
- **Commissary and Exchange Privileges** – are provided by the Department of Defense to an un-remarried surviving spouse of a Servicemember or Veteran who died during active duty, or due to a service-connected disability. Dependents are also eligible for privileges. VA provides an eligibility certificate upon request.
- **Children of Vietnam Veterans with Certain Birth Defects** - Children who have spina bifida or certain other birth defects and are biological children of Veterans with qualifying service in the Republic of South Vietnam or Republic of Korea may be eligible for various VA benefits, including monthly monetary compensation, health care and vocational training.

MARTIN COUNTY FUNERAL SERVICES

<http://www.funeralhomesguide.com/county/FL/MartinCounty.html>

All County Funeral Home & Crematory

1010 NW Federal Highway
Stuart, FL 34994

Aycock Funeral Homes And Crematory

950 NE Jensen Beach Boulevard
Jensen Beach, FL 34957

Aycock Funeral Homes And Crematory

505 SW Federal Highway
Stuart, FL 34994

Edgley Cremation Services & Funeral Home

312 Southwest Ocean Boulevard
Stuart, FL 34994

Fernhill Memorial Gardens & Mausoleum

1501 S Kanner Highway
Stuart, FL 34994

Forest Hills Memorial Park & Funeral Home

2001 SW Murphy Road
Palm City, FL 34990

Martin Funeral Home & Crematory

961 S Kanner Hwy
Stuart, FL 34994

Thorne's Mortuary, Inc.

420 SE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd
Stuart, FL 34994

Treasure Coast Seawinds

950 SE Monterey Road
Stuart, FL 34997

Young And Prill Funeral Home

6801 SE Federal Highway
Stuart, FL 34997