

Delays in Obtaining Military Documents for Eligibility Determinations

Dear Funeral Directors:

We are asking for your assistance. As you may be aware, the government's primary repository for military personnel records, the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), is currently in a location identified by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to be in the **HIGH** level of community transmission rate for COVID-19. Due to the high transmission rate risk, NPRC has taken preventive safety measures and has returned to COVID Phase 0 levels, therefore significantly reducing available services for processing Veteran discharge document requests. This decision negatively impacts our ability to obtain documents to determine eligibility for interment in national cemeteries.

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) is asking our funeral home partners to encourage families to work directly with funeral homes for assistance with burial in our VA national cemeteries. We will continue to make every attempt to assist Veterans and their families, but if a service member's records cannot be obtained through any source other than NPRC, we may not be able to make a timely eligibility determination.

We ask you to inform family members of this issue and ask them to search for any additional military documents which may be in their possession. Documents kept by the Veteran may be the only documents available at this time to verify his or her eligibility for burial.

We also encourage you to ask family members to check the following:

- Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) or the American Legion. These organizations may have discharge documents on file for members.
- Any orders the service member may have received or any documents showing a military service number would be helpful.
- County clerk of the county where the service member would have returned from service. The service member may have filed their documents with the county upon discharge from military service.
- If the service member has a set of dog tags, please send a clear photograph of them to our agency.

We thank you for your assistance.

Jay Dalrymple

Director, National Cemetery Scheduling Office