

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

PROTOCOL

for the

**PROCESSING AND BURIAL OF
UNCLAIMED VETERANS'
CREMATED REMAINS**

Protocol Coordinating Agency:

Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs (CTDVA)

Partnering Organizations:

Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs (CTDVA)

Connecticut Funeral Directors Association (CFDA)

Missing in America Project (MIAP)

Version 1.0

Current as of March 27, 2008

Procedures and Protocols
for the
Processing and Burial of Unclaimed Veterans' Cremated Remains
in the
State of Connecticut

Except for those procedures specifically required under Connecticut General Statutes, the following procedures and protocols are voluntarily agreed to by the stated partnering organizations and are in effect as of March 27, 2008. Each partnering organizations may submit updates and modifications to this document at any time which must be agreed to by all partnering agencies. Each organization may also withdraw from this voluntary agreement at any time by simple written notification to each partner.

The Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs will serve as the lead coordinator/maintainer of these protocols.

A. FOR EXISTING UNCLAIMED CREMATED REMAINS (CREMAINS)

1. Connecticut funeral directors will make every effort to determine if any existing, unclaimed cremated remains (cremains) in their possession may be veterans using all available, on-hand records.
2. If on-hand records are incomplete or unavailable, funeral directors will submit a research request to the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs (CTDVA) Office of Advocacy and Assistance (OAA) containing all available personal information (full name, date of birth, social security number, etc.).
3. OAA staff will research all available databases at the state and federal levels and will report any findings to the requesting funeral director in possession of the cremains.
4. In the event that an unclaimed cremated remain is positively identified as a veteran and the funeral director has completed all required notification to the person designated to take custody and control of the remains in accordance with CGS Sec. 20-230d, the funeral director will then officially notify the CTDVA's Burial Services Coordinator, providing all supporting documentation, and request the pick-up of the cremains.
5. The CTDVA Burial Services Coordinator will confirm eligibility of the deceased veteran and coordinate/schedule the pick-up and transfer of the cremains to the custody of CTDVA's state contracted funeral home, currently Brooklawn Funeral Home, 511 Brook Street, Rocky Hill, CT. The Connecticut Funeral Directors Association, working with CTDVA and Brooklawn, will establish the required documentation to facilitate these transfers and release the originating funeral home from official custody of the unclaimed cremains.
6. Upon the completion of the transfer, the Commissioner, CTDVA, will become the official custodian of the cremains.

7. The CTDVA's Burial Services Coordinator will coordinate a burial plot for the cremains at the State Veterans' Cemetery in Middletown and will schedule a date/time for burial through the contracted funeral home.

8. The CTDVA's contracted funeral home will supply, at CTDVA's cost, a burial urn, and all supporting services, including transportation of cremains to the cemetery, as provided for under their state contract.

9. Upon confirmation of the date/time of the burial, the CTDVA's Burial Services Coordinator will complete the following actions:

- Process a request for military honors through the Connecticut Military Department or an approved Veterans' Service Organization honors provider;
- Place the order for a federal veterans' headstone through the National Cemetery Administration;
- Schedule an officiating clergy with a CTDVA staff Chaplain;
- Notify the State MIAP coordinator of the scheduled burial who will then organize available, fellow veterans to escort the cremains and attend the burial service.

B. FOR FUTURE UNCLAIMED CREMATED REMAINS (CREMAINS)

1. At the time that cremation services are ordered, Connecticut funeral directors and their related facilities will make every effort to pre-identify deceased who are veterans and will request appropriate documentation from family members/remains custodians (e.g. DD214, Certificate of Honorable Discharge, etc.).

2. If the deceased is identified by family members/custodians as a veteran but no documentation is available, funeral directors will process an emergency request for records through the National Personnel Records Center (www.archives.gov; 1-866-272-6272; FAX requests to 314-801-0764). The Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs (CTDVA) will provide technical assistance to funeral home staff, if requested (860-721-5917).

3. Upon receipt of official documentation identifying an individual who has been cremated as a veteran, funeral directors will ensure that those cremains are appropriately labeled/recorded as having veteran status.

4. In the event that the cremated remains of an identified veteran are not accepted by the designated remains custodian, funeral directors will continue to store the remains and make the necessary certified notifications in accordance with CGS Sec. 20-230d (b).

5. If after the required 270-day waiting period the remains are not accepted by the designated custodian, funeral directors will contact the CTDVA Burial Services Coordinator to coordinate the transfer of custody to the CTDVA via the agency's state contracted funeral home **within the subsequent 90 days**. After 365 days from the date of the cremation order, the CTDVA Commissioner cannot accept financial responsibility for the burial of unclaimed cremains.

6. Upon the completion of the transfer, the Commissioner, CTDVA, will become the official custodian of the cremains.

7. The CTDVA will coordinate and provide the final burial support services as outlined in Paragraphs 7, 8, and 9 above.

C. ELIGIBILITY OF UNCLAIMED CREMATED REMAINS (CREMAINS) FOR TRANSFER AND BURIAL

1. Only the unclaimed cremains of veterans who were citizens of the State of Connecticut at the time of death and who meet the statutory definition of veteran contained in CGA Sec. 27-103 are eligible for transfer to the CTDVA and burial in the State Veterans Cemetery.

2. The unclaimed cremains of the following persons are **ineligible** for burial by the CTDVA:

- A person who does not possess an *honorable discharge* from the U.S. Armed Forces or a discharge *under honorable conditions*.
- A person who is convicted of a Federal capital crime and sentenced to death or life imprisonment, or is convicted of a State capital crime and sentenced to death or life imprisonment without parole.
- A person whose only military service is active duty for training or inactive duty training in the National Guard or Reserve Components, unless the individual meets the burial eligibility criteria outlined in Title 38, U.S.C.

D. ORGANIZATION COORDINATORS/SERVICE PROVIDERS

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Name/Title</u>	<u>Contact Information</u>
CTDVA	Donna Meskony, Director Office of Advocacy & Assistance	860-721-5915 donna.meskony@po.state.ct.us
CTDVA	Paul F. Barry Burial Services Coordinator	860-721-5838 paul.f.barry@po.state.ct.us
CFDA	John Cascio Executive Director	860-721-0234 connfda@aol.com
MIAP	Keith Soileau State Director/Coordinator	860-642-7438 boomerct@miap.us