



Oregon Trail State Veterans Cemetery

PO Box 669
80 Veterans Road
Evansville, WY 82636
(307) 235-6673, FAX (307) 235-6211

Burial Information and Cemetery Procedures

Information as of November 2022

Operated by the State of Wyoming Military Department with partial funding by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Oregon Trail State Veterans Cemetery (OTSVC) must adhere to VA policies and procedures regarding burial, committal and memorial services as well as interment and disinterment procedures and floral regulations.

As a state veterans' cemetery with the sole purpose of honoring veterans and their families, all phases of our operation and of the interment process are open to public viewing; however safety precautions must be adhered to ensure the safety of the deceased's family and cemetery staff.

General Information

The cemetery office and staff are available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. until 5 p.m., except on federal holidays. Visitation hours are seven (7) days a week 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. All committal services held at the OTSVC are conducted in the Committal Chapel. Arrangements for pallbearers, military honors and religious services are to be made by the funeral director or the next of kin. The OTSVC follows the same eligibility guidelines as the National Cemeteries. There are no fees at the OTSVC.

Scheduling of Burials

Although most services are scheduled within 48 hours of eligibility verification, requests for interment at OTSVC can be arranged up to 30 days in advance. In cases where the services of a funeral director are not involved, the next of kin or individual representing the deceased is requested to contact the cemetery for scheduling. **A completed burial application, government headstone application and the discharge document must be provided to the cemetery before scheduling will occur. All services are tentative until approved.**

Services are scheduled at one hour intervals, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. **All services are allotted a 30 minute time limit which begins at the time the service is scheduled.** The Committal Chapel needs to be cleared by 3:30 p.m. so that the cemetery staff can complete the interment before the end of the business day. If the service cannot be completed and the chapel cannot be cleared by 3:30 p.m., the service

will be allowed to be completed and the funeral home will be responsible for taking the remains with them when they leave the cemetery and return the remains the next business day for interment.

Wyoming State law requires a Burial Permit (usually provided by the funeral home) before any burial can take place. The OTSVC requires compliance to state laws.
(BURIAL PERMIT MUST ACCOMPANY CASKETED REMAINS AND CERTIFICATE OF CREMATION MUST ACCOMPANY CREMATED REMAINS)

Determination of Eligibility

Burial in the OTSVC is based on other than dishonorable military service from the United States Armed Forces. Spouses and eligible dependent children are entitled to burial benefits under the veteran's eligibility.

Eligibility is determined only at the time of need; arrangements are **not** made in advance (before a death has occurred); therefore, discharge papers are not necessary until burial is requested.

A burial will not be scheduled until verification is available through our sources or a valid discharge is in possession at the cemetery. The cemetery will contact the funeral home if a problem with verification arises so they may inform the next of kin of the problem and possible delays. **(Sources other than a valid discharge may take 7 to 21 business days).**

Note1: The cemetery uses flat granite markers only. The government furnishes one headstone at no cost. The application should be signed by the next of kin, the person who signed the application is responsible for what is engraved on the marker.

Note2: **The cemetery requires ONLY the VETERANS SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER, both on the Burial Application and Headstone application. We DO NOT need the spouse or eligible dependents Social Security Number.**

Note 3: It is vital that the necessary paperwork is filled out completely and correctly to avoid any unnecessary delays for families trying to schedule a service and avoids any scheduling conflicts for other interments. The funeral home will be contacted if there are any incomplete or incorrect parts to either application. The incomplete form will need to be filled out correctly and returned to us before any service is scheduled.

Burial, Committal & Memorial Services

In order to serve all of our veterans and families, it is imperative that you notify the cemetery if a scheduling change is necessary. Military honors can be provided through the Military Branches and Veteran Service Organizations (VSO). If military service is rendered, this will signify the end of the service. At the completion of the committal service, we ask that the funeral home escorts the family first out the south entrance. Then the dismissal of the rest of the chapel should be row by row from front to back so that they may greet the family as they exit the chapel.

The Chapel will be open 30 minutes before the scheduled service to allow for set up and cemetery staff will arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled service and will be available to play music during the service. The remains will enter through the east door and will be removed through the west door after the service has been completed by either the funeral home, Military Honor Guard, VSO or cemetery staff.

The cemetery and interment facility will not be used for services if the remains are then taken for interment elsewhere.

Only schedule committal services if you plan to inter the casketed or cremated remains directly after the service

Memorial Services:

You may use the interment facility at the OTSVC for memorial services if the remains have been previously interred in the cemetery or the remains have been interred at another facility.

Memorial services are subject to a 15-minute time slot in the interment facility that includes military honors

Storage facilities are not available at the OTSVC to accommodate the holding of cremated remains; therefore, we ask that the cremains arrive with the family or funeral home at the time of the scheduled service.

Note1: Due to unstable soil conditions and to ensure the safety of the deceased's family, we **do not** offer graveside services; the family and public may watch the interment process at a safe distance from the curbside. The gravesite is not opened until after the service and we are ready to do the interment. The casketed remains are removed from the chapel after the service has been completed; they are transported and lowered into a grave box. The casket and grave box are then transported to the gravesite and the interment procedure begins. Cremated remains are taken directly to the gravesite.

Note2: Grave boxes are provided by the cemetery at no cost to the family for casketed remains.

Viewing of the Remains

VA Regulations prohibit the viewing of the remains on cemetery property; therefore caskets cannot be opened within the cemetery grounds for any reason. If it should become necessary to open a casket after its arrival at OTSVC, the funeral director will be required to transport the remains to non-cemetery property.

Military Honors

Eligible veterans are entitled by law to military honors at their funeral services. This includes burials, cremations, or memorial services. Honors can only be given once. The law provides for folding and presenting of the U.S. Flag and the playing of "Taps". These honors are provided free of charge to the families of all entitled veterans.

Only burial teams from veteran service organizations or military personnel will be allowed to provide military honors.

When firing details provide the firing of three volleys, only ceremonial rifles using blank ammunition will be used. The use of side arms, shotguns and live ammunition is strictly prohibited. The use of ceremonial cannons with blank ammunition will be approved in advance by the Cemetery Director and must conform to the U.S. military protocols for cannon salutes.

Wyoming funeral home directors, next of kin or individuals representing the deceased are able to request Military Funeral Honors for services at the OTSVC at any of the numbers listed below. The cemetery **does not** arrange for military honors.

The Cemetery Director has the authority to excuse a burial team or military unit should their performance of military honors be substandard

ARMY:

ng.wy.wyarng.list.all-mfh@mail.mil

Ph: 307-262-7370

NAVY:

navyfuneralhonors.cnrw@navy.mil

Ph: 360-315-3275 or 360-315-3273

MARINE CORPS:

funeral.honors@usmc.mil

Ph: 866-826-3628

AIR FORCE:

90mw.honorguard@us.af.mil

Ph: 307-773-2686

COAST GUARD:

HQS-Honor_Guard-OPS@uscg.mil

Ph: 703-313-5411

VETERANS TRIBUTE AND RIFLE SALUTE:

Natrona County United Veterans Council

Hank Laurenz: hlaurnez@yahoo.com 307-277-5701

Disinterment Procedure

The cemetery and staff will unearth down to the top of the interment container. The funeral home or **bonded** contractors are required to carryout the disinterment from this point.

Note: The proper care will be shown to the grounds and an adjacent graves while the disinterment is taken place; therefore padding material is suggested; however any repair to damaged existing turf or graves is the responsibility of the party doing the disinterment. The walls of the grave must be shored up to OSHA standards for safety measures.

Grounds and Gravesite

The spreading of cremated remains is strictly prohibited

Fresh cut flowers may be placed on the graves at any time. Only temporary flower containers that are provided by the cemetery are permitted. The flowers will be removed when they become faded or unsightly and discarded by cemetery personnel.

Artificial flowers are permitted on the graves from November 1 through March 31. Christmas wreaths and blankets are permitted from Dec. 10 through Jan. 15.

Permanent plantings are not permitted on the graves at anytime. Potted plants and/or artificial flowers are permitted on the graves 5 days before to 5 days after Easter Sunday and/or Memorial Day.

Statues, vigil lights, glass objects, commemorative items and disrespectful items of any nature are not permitted on the graves at any time.

U.S. flags are allowed on individual graves on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Flags are not permitted any other time.

The cemetery may not be used as a picnic ground or for recreational purposes.

Only service animals are allowed on the grounds all other animals need to be on a leash and remain on cemetery roadways.

Chapel Policies

There is no smoking, alcohol, open flame, food or drink allowed in the chapel.

Only service animals are allowed inside the building.

Due to limited space at the podium in the chapel and for safety reasons, we are limiting the floral items to no more than six (6) to accompany the remains. The cemetery

provides six (6) floral stands that may be used for placing the arrangements. The floral items that are left after the service will be taken to the gravesite. If further clarification is needed please contact the cemetery.

Interment Viewing

The Oregon Trail State Veterans Cemetery allows the family to view the interment process if you choose to after the service has been completed in the chapel. For liability and the safety of you, your family and the guests, the cemetery **does not** allow anyone to be at the graveside during the interment process. Anyone that wishes to view the interment may do so at a safe distance from the grave and those distances are as follows:

Full Burial Viewing

You may watch the opening/closing of the grave and placement of the casket and vault from the Chapel parking lot.

In Ground Cremations

You may watch the placement of the urn into the grave previously opened from the sidewalk in whichever section the cremation is to be buried.

Column Barium

You may watch the placement of cremations into the column barium wall and must stay back a minimum of 20 feet to allow staff to work.

The cemetery strives to complete the interment in a timely manner so that you may visit the grave before the end of business hours. Everyone's assistance in staying at a safe distance allows the cemetery staff to complete the interment safely and in that timely manner. Due to unstable soil conditions, the cemetery **does not** open a full burial site until we are ready for the interment.

If you have questions please contact the cemetery.

Cemetery Officials

Darrin Brahaney, Cemetery Director

darrin.brahaney@wyo.gov

Travis Beckman, Asst Cemetery Director

travis.beckman1@wyo.gov

Darrin Brahaney; Director