

## **VA Burial Medallions**

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs recently announced that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is offering bronze medallions to attach to existing, privately purchased headstones or markers, signifying a deceased's status as a Veteran. The new medallions can be furnished instead of a traditional government headstone or marker for Veterans whose death occurred on or after Nov. 1, 1990, and whose grave in a private cemetery is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker.

The medallion is available in three sizes: 5 inches, 3 inches and 1 ½ inches in width. Each bronze medallion features the image of a folded burial flag adorned with laurels and is inscribed with the word "Veteran" at the top and the branch of service at the bottom. Next of kin will receive the medallion, along with a kit that will allow the family or the staff of a private cemetery to affix the medallion to a headstone, grave marker, mausoleum or columbarium niche cover.

Under federal law, eligible Veterans buried in a private cemetery are entitled to either a government-furnished grave marker or the new medallion, but not both. Veterans buried in a national or state Veterans cemetery will receive a government headstone or marker of the standard design authorized at that cemetery.

Veterans with a discharge issued under conditions other than dishonorable, their spouses and eligible dependent children can be buried in a VA national cemetery. Other burial benefits available for all eligible Veterans, regardless of whether they are buried in a national cemetery or a private cemetery, include a burial flag, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and a government headstone or grave marker.

Contact Joe Wright if you would like to receive veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office website at [www.countyofkings.com](http://www.countyofkings.com).

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call 582-3211, ext. 2662; or e-mail [joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us).