

Guide for Valhalla



*Valhalla: Dating back to the 13th Century, Valhalla is a grand hall where only the bravest warriors enter upon their death

Your Sherpa guide:

SFA Chapter 4-24





'GUIDE FOR VALHALLA'

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION

CHAPTER 4-24

THIS GUIDE IS TO INFORM THE VETERAN ON HOW TO EQUIP FAMILY MEMBERS TO EFFICIENTLY HANDLE ACTIONS REQUIRED AFTER YOUR DEATH **WITH YOUR ADVANCED HELP!!** IT'S TAILORED TOWARD RETIRED SF VETERANS, (BUT MOST OF IT APPLIES TO ANY MILITARY RETIREE). IT THEN TRANSITIONS TO FOCUSING ON THE VETERAN'S FAMILY AND THE TASKS AND PITFALLS OF THE 'CLEAN UP' PAPERWORK.

PLAN, PLAN, PLAN

(AND POSSIBLY SAVE YOUR FAMILY HOURS OF SEACHING, CONFUSION, AND REFLECTION)

SECTIONS OF THIS GUIDE

1. 'MUST HAVE' DOCUMENTS, (UP TO 8)

2. DOCUMENTATION OF YOUR WISHES

SERVICE TYPE, CLERGY, PALL BEARERS, SPEAKERS, BURIAL LOCATION, HEADSTONE VERBIAGE, RECEPTION, ETC.

3. GENERIC CHECKLIST OF THE MANY POSSIBLE AGENCIES YOUR FAMILY MUST DEAL WITH

INSTRUCTIONS, HINTS, CAUTIONS!

4. PERTINENT DOCUMENTS:

OWNERSHIP (CAR TITLES, HOUSE, WEAPONS, ETC), FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, PASSWORDS, APS, USERNAMES, WILLS, POWER OF ATTORNEY, ESTATE EXECUTOR, LIFE INSURANCE POLICIES, TAX RETURNS, ETC.

5. APPENDIX/RESOURCES

SECTION 1: 'MUST HAVE' DOCUMENTS

KEEP HARD COPIES IN AN ACCESSABLE FILE AT HOME. KEEP ELECTRONIC COPIES IN YOUR PERSONALIZED AND SECURE SFA FOLDER.

1. DD-214:

NOTES: IF YOU SEPARATED MORE THAN ONCE, INCLUDE ALL DD-214'S RECEIVED TO ENSURE YOU HAVE COMPLETE INFORMATION.

- REVIEW YOUR DD-214 WITH YOUR FAMILY.

- YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE CAN ORDER AN OFFICIAL COPY OF YOUR DD-214 AT archives.gov IT IS FREE AND TAKES 2-3 DAYS TO COME BACK WITH A MESSAGE TO DOWNLOAD IT FROM THEIR SITE.

2. COPY OF MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE.

3. DRAFT OBITUARY:

SEE THE 'FILL IN THE BLANKS' OBITUARY IN APPENDEX/RESOURCES OR YOU CAN GO TO sfa4-24.org/documents FOR A DOWNLOADABLE VERSION. IF YOU NEED SOME HELP THE CHAPTER SECRETARY CAN HELP. CONTACT THEM AT info@sfa4-24.org.

4. DISABILITY RATING LETTER FROM VA.

KEEP THIS UP TO DATE AS YOUR RATING CHANGES.

5. PHOTO SUITABLE FOR OBITUARY AND/OR INTERMENT SERVICE.

6. PHOTO OF RIBBON RACK, WITH DESCRIPTION OF EACH RIBBON, INCLUDING CLUSTERS, ETC.

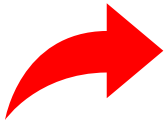
7. MOST RECENT YEAR END MYPAY STATEMENT FROM DFAS. (Include Username and password)

8. CURRENT LIST OF USERNAMES AND PASSWORDS (AVERAGE COMPUTER-LITERATE PERSON HAS 47!)

SECTION 2: DOCUMENT YOUR WISHES

NOTE!! UNDERSTAND THE OPTIONS/BENEFITS PROVIDED FOR VETERANS SUCH AS CEMETERY, HEADSTONE, ON SITE SERVICE, ETC.

IN DEVELOPING THIS MANUAL, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT IN ADDITION TO THE FINAL PREPARATORY PLANNING FOR YOURSELF THAT YOU CAN DO FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME, THERE IS ONE ITEM THAT SUPPLANTS ALL OTHERS, AND THAT IS TO INTERVIEW AND PRE-SELECT A FUNERAL HOME/DIRECTOR. THE VALUE OF THE SERVICES THEY OFFER ARE IMMEASURABLE, PARTICULARLY WHEN YOUR FAMILY IS CONSUMED WITH OTHER TASKS INVOLVING YOUR DEATH.



PLEASE INTERVIEW, VISIT, AND LEARN ABOUT FUNERAL SERVICES AHEAD OF TIME. YOUR FAMILY WILL BENEFIT TREMENDOUSLY FROM YOUR EFFORT.

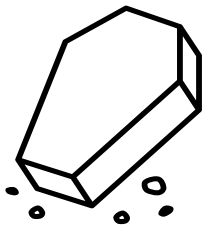
YOUR FUNERAL DIRECTOR CAN HELP IMMENSELY AND WILL ARRANGE MANY DETAILS. CONSIDER INTERVIEWING AND SELECTING A DIRECTOR.... SOON.

MOST FUNERAL HOMES IN THE AREA ARE FAMILIAR WITH MILITARY FUNERALS AND BENEFITS, AND SOME SPECIALIZE IN VETERANS ONLY.

COMMUNICATE YOUR PREFERENCES:

A. REMAINS:

- CREMATION (URN STYLE, BURIAL, SCATTERING, IN-GROUND COLUMBARIUM).
- DIRECT BURIAL (CASKET STYLE, CHOICE OF CEMETERY).
- DONATE TO SCIENCE (INSTITUTION).



B. WAKE: LOCATION, SPEAKERS, HONORARIUMS, ETC.

C. SERVICES:

- CHURCH, GRAVESIDE, OTHER.
- OFFICIANT, MUSIC, PALL BEARERS, HONOR GUARD.

D. CELEBRATION OF LIFE GATHERING:

- LOCATION, SPEAKERS, HONORARIUMS, FOOD, DRINK, MUSIC.

E. HEADSTONE OPTIONS: (SEE APPENDIX).

SECTION 3: GENERIC CHECKLIST OF THE MANY POSSIBLE AGENCIES YOUR FAMILY MUST DEAL WITH



1. DFAS (DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE)

NOTE: UPON NOTIFICATION OF DEATH, DFAS WILL **AUTOMATICALLY** REVOKE THE LAST PAYMENT DEPOSITED TO YOUR ACCOUNT. YOU MUST THEN WAIT FOR DFAS TO SEND PAPERWORK TO SUBMIT YOUR REQUEST FOR THE CORRECT PRO-RATED AMOUNT OF PAYMENT.

MAKE SURE YOUR FAMILY HAS ADEQUATE FUNDS TO COVER THIS UNEXPECTED WITHDRAWAL.

1-800-321-1080

2. SOCIAL SECURITY

NOTE AND CAUTION: ONLY A SPOUSE IS ENTITLED TO A SOCIAL SECURITY, ONE TIME DEATH PAYMENT: SECOND SPOUSE TO PASS OR FAMILY MEMBER IS **NOT**.

HINT: SOCIAL SECURITY HAS EVENING HOURS PHONE SERVICE, WHICH CAN SHORTEN YOUR TIME ON HOLD.

SOCIAL SECURITY WILL CALCULATE IF SURVIVING SPOUSE IS ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS BASED ON THEIR SOCIAL SECURITY STIPEND, OR, THEIR SPOUSE'S AT A HIGHER RATE.

NOTE AND CAUTION: ABSOLUTELY NO SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS ARE PAID IN THE MONTH OF DEATH. PAYMENT WILL NOT BE PRO-RATED.

3. **VA DISABILITY PAY:** WHEN A VETERAN IS RECEIVING VA COMPENSATION, THE SURVIVING SPOUSE IS ENTITLED TO THE **ENTIRE** LAST MONTH PAY. NOTE: YOU MUST ENSURE THE VA KNOWS YOU ARE A SURVIVING SPOUSE TO RECEIVE THIS PAYMENT.

4. **SPOUSE DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION (DIC) BENEFIT:**

WIDOWS OF SERVICE MEMBERS WHO DIED IN THE LINE OF DUTY OR SUCCUMBED TO SERVICE-RELATED ILLNESSES MAY APPLY FOR VA DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION (DIC). THIS BENEFIT IS **TAX FREE**.

CAUTION: YOU HAVE ONLY ONE YEAR TO APPLY OR YOU FORFEIT. DO **NOT** ASSUME THAT YOU MUST BE IMPOVERISHED TO QUALIFY FOR DIC.

WWW.VA.GOV/DISABILITY/DEPENDENCY-INDEMNITY-COMPENSATION/

5. **DEERS OFFICE: UPDATE YOUR MILITARY ID CARD.**

NOTE: THIS IS THE LAST ID CARD YOU WILL NEED: IT IS **INDEFINITE**. THE DEERS OFFICE WILL CONCURRENTLY REVIEW ALL YOUR DATA/STATUS/ETC. INCLUDING TRI-CARE.

6. **TRI-CARE:** CHECK TO VERIFY CONTINUED TRI-CARE COVERAGE. (DEERS OFFICE CAN HELP).

7. EL PASO/TELLER COUNTIES

- a. **VEHICLE TITLE:** IF YOUR CAR TITLES HAVE A SINGLE OWNER, CONSIDER ADDING A SECOND NAME **NOW** TO AVOID PAPERWORK UPON YOUR DEATH.



- b. **PROPERTY REAL ESTATE TAX RELIEF VIA SENIOR EXEMPTION.** REAL ESTATE TAX RELIEF FOR SENIORS IS ONLY PROVIDED IN ONE PERSON'S NAME. IF IT IS IN YOUR NAME, THE EXEMPTION WILL REQUIRE TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER WHO MUST MEET THE MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENT.



- c. **ADDITIONAL DEATH CERTS. AVAILABLE FROM THE CORONER'S OFFICE. NOTE: VERY FEW INSTITUTIONS REQUIRE AN ORIGINAL DEATH CERTIFICATE. COPIES ARE USUALLY SUFFICIENT.**

SECTION 4: PERTINENT DOCUMENTS

IDENTIFY TO YOUR FAMILY THE LOCATION OF **ALL** PERSONAL, PERTINENT ITEMS TO SETTLE YOUR ESTATE, AND TO ALLOW THEM TO ASSESS STATUS OF EACH.



TO SETTLE AN ESTATE, HERE IS A GENERAL LISTING OF DOCUMENTS, ACCOUNTS, FILES, ETC THAT MAY BE NEEDED. PLEASE ANNOTATE WHERE EACH CAN BE FOUND.

IN ADVANCE, CONSIDER MAKING ALL ACCOUNTS JOINT TENANCY OR “PAY ON DEATH” TO AVOID POSSIBLE PROBATE OR ACCESS DELAYS. ALSO CONSIDER ADDING A SECOND OWNER (IF YOU ARE THE SOLE OWNER) ON YOUR HOUSE TITLE. OR CONSIDER THE APPROPRIATENESS OF A BENEFICIARY DEED. THE COUNTY CLERK’S OFFICE CAN ASSIST YOU WITH THIS IN ADVANCE. CONSIDER MAKING ALL ACCOUNTS JOINT TENANCY OR ‘PAY ON DEATH’.

-COMPUTER PASSWORDS AND USERNAMES.

-HOME SAFES AND COMBOS.

-FILES: BANKS, CREDIT CARDS, INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS, INSURANCE POLICIES, RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS, BROKERAGE ACCOUNTS, SAVINGS BONDS, AMERICAN ARMED FORCES MUTUAL AID ASSOCIATION, WILLS, POWER OF ATTORNEY, FAMILY TRUST, TAX RETURNS, VEHICLE TITLES, DOCTORS AND MEDICAL RECORDS.

-LISTING OF MAJOR PROPERTY

-DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONAL ITEMS

PROVIDE LAST WISHES REGARDING BELONGINGS TO LOVED ONES AND/OR FAMILY FRIENDS AND/OR CHARITIES.

NOTE! ENSURE THIS DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH ANY INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED IN YOUR WILL, IF APPLICABLE.

SUGGEST THESE FILES BE KEPT IN A SINGLE LOCATION FOR EASE OF ACCESS BY FAMILY....NO TIME FOR SCAVENGER HUNTS NOW!



SECTION 5: APPENDIX AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

**SCAN THROUGH THIS SECTION AND BECOME MORE AWARE OF
THE PAPERWORK OF DEATH!!!**



- 1. GENERIC OBITUARY OUTLINE**
- 2. FIRST WEEK AFTER DEATH**
- 3. HEADSTONE**
- 4. HANDY CONTACTS**



GENERIC OBITUARY

(FILL IN THE BLANKS, THEN ADD YOUR FLOURISHES!)

_____, US Army, Special Forces (Retired) died on _____, from _____. He was born on _____ in _____, _____ to mother and father. _____.

He attended _____ (schools), where he excelled at _____. He joined the Army on _____ and was assigned to _____. He then became a member of the elite Special Forces in _____, with specialties in:

_____ He was initially assigned to _____ XX Group at _____. Follow-on assignments and job descriptions included:

His decorations and awards include:

He retired from the Army in XXXX, when he began a second Career as _____.

_____ is survived by his family members:

_____ He will be laid to rest at _____.



FIRST WEEK AFTER DEATH

COORDINATE THESE ACTIONS WITH SECTION 3: (DEPARTMENTS TO DEAL WITH)

1. CONTACT THE 10TH SFG (at Fort Carson). THE COMMANDER HAS OFFERED TO PROVIDE A CASUALTY ASSISTANCE OFFICER TO THE NEXT OF KIN OF THE DECEASED TO HELP WITH PAPERWORK, ETC, FOR **10th SF ALUMNI ONLY.**
2. NOTIFY FAMILY AND FRIENDS.
3. CONTACT DFAS AND SOCIAL SECURITY TO REPORT DEATH.
4. CONTACT DEERS TO VERIFY SURVIVOR'S COVERAGE.
5. VISIT THE CHOSEN CEMETERY, IF APPLICABLE.
6. CONTACT A FUNERAL DIRECTOR, WHO WILL HANDLE MUCH OF THE PAPERWORK DEATH AND BURIAL REQUIREMENTS. THEY ARRANGE TRANSPORT OF REMAINS, PREP OF REMAINS, PAPERWORK WITH DD-214, DEATH CERTIFICATE, CEMETERY, SCHEDULE CEREMONY, FLAG, CERTIFICATE, HONOR GUARD, AND OTHER VETERAN VA BURIAL BENEFITS.

IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL IF THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR IS CHOSEN AHEAD OF TIME. THERE ARE MANY IN TOWN COLORADO SPRINGS THAT ARE 'VETERAN CENTRIC', OR GENERIC AND WILL ARRANGE YOUR BURIAL AT A NATIONAL OR PRIVATE CEMETERY. CHOSING A DIRECTOR OF YOUR LIKING, AND INTERVIEWING, WILL LIFT A GREAT TIME AND EMOTIONAL BURDEN OFF YOUR FAMILY.

FIRST WEEK AFTER DEATH (CONTINUED)

7. DESIGN PROGRAM AND ARRANGE PRINTING. INCLUDE SERVICE TIME(S), DATE(S), LOCATION(S), HONORS, OBITUARY, PARTICIPANTS, ETC.
8. ARRANGE RECEPTION: CHOOSE A TIME, DATE, LOCATION, REFRESHMENTS, CATERER, ETC.



HEADSTONE

THE HEADSTONE IS A VETERAN'S BENEFIT AND THERE ARE 3 DISTINCT SECTIONS.

TOP SECTION: DISPLAYS YOUR DESIRED EMBLEM OF BELIEF (EOB). CHOICES FOR THIS EMBLEM ARE LIMITED TO BELIEFS, AND CHOICES ARE ON THE NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION WEBSITE. DISCUSS YOUR EOB CHOICE WITH YOUR FAMILY. (Military insignia are prohibited by law, however, legislation has been submitted to Congressman Lamborn's office to allow use of military insignia.)

MIDDLE SECTION: DISPLAYS NAME, RANK, SERVICE, CONFLICT, BIRTH AND DEATH DATES AND AWARDS. YOU HAVE AN OPTION TO ELIMINATE THE DESIGNATED CONFLICT IN ORDER TO HAVE MORE ROOM FOR YOUR DECORATIONS.

THERE IS ALSO A POSSIBILITY THAT AFTER THE NAMED SERVICE (ARMY), THE LETTERS 'SF' MAY BE ACCEPTED.

BOTTOM SECTION: IS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, OR ENDEARMENTS. ABBREVIATIONS, SUCH AS 'DOL' ARE PROHIBITED. AS SEEN HERE, 'DE OPPRESSO LIBER' TAKES UP 1 ½ LINES. (Legislation to allow the abbreviation DOL for De Oppresso Liber has been submitted to Congressman Lamborn's office to allow use of this specific abbreviation.)



DOUGLAS H
MATZ
CW3
US ARMY
VIETNAM
FEB 7 1945
MAY 9 2021
SILVER STAR
BSM PH MSM
DE OPPRESSO
LIBER LOVE YOU

HANDY CONTACTS

FORT CARSON CASUALTY ASSISTANCE OFFICE: 719-526-5613/5614

DFAS: 1-800-321-1080

SOCIAL SECURITY: 1-800-772-1213

DEERS: 1-800-538-9552

MEDICARE: 1-800-633-4227

TRI-CARE (COLORADO): 1-844-866-9378

TRICARE FOR LIFE: 1-866-773-0404

VA BURIAL AND MEMORIAL BENEFITS: <https://www.cem.va.gov>

PIKES PEAK NATIONAL CEMETERY: 719-391-6920

SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN:

<https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement/survivor:benefit-plan>

DD-214: YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE CAN ORDER AN OFFICIAL COPY OF YOUR DD-214 AT: [archives.gov](https://www.archives.gov). It is free and takes about 2-3 days to send you a download message that you can now download it.

The Leadership of SFA Chapter 4-24 would like to thank Diann (Matz) Butlak, with the assistance of Manuela Rikard and CW3 Nate Tiffany, for compiling this information and developing this document to help our members and their families! We truly appreciate their efforts to help our families deal with the passing of a loved one. This information will help immensely. THANK YOU!

DISCLAIMER: THIS INFORMATION WAS ASSEMBLED IN 2024. PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THE GOVERNMENT CHANGES POLICY OFTEN.