



**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**  
**BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY**  
**NAVAL OFFICE OF MEDICAL DENTAL AFFAIRS**  
PO BOX 886999  
GREAT LAKES, ILLINOIS 60088-6999

IN REPLY REFER TO  
5360  
Code 03B2

**BURIAL AT SEA**

SUBJ: Burial at Sea

Burial at sea is not just an ancient tradition practiced by mariners of old, it is a means of final disposition of cremains and intact remains that is offered to and still utilized by active duty members, retirees, and honorably discharged veterans of all branches of the United States military. Burial at sea services are performed on Naval vessels while deployed on official maneuvers. Therefore, it's impossible for the family to be present. The family will be notified by the commanding officer of that vessel of the date, time, longitude, and latitude of the committal service.

**Deceased individuals eligible** for this program are (1) members and retirees of the uniformed services; (2) veterans discharged under honorable conditions; (3) U.S. civilian marine personnel of the Military Sealift Command; and (4) dependents of members, retirees, and veterans of the uniformed services.

**To initiate a Burial At Sea** for both cremated and intact remains, the enclosed Burial at Sea Request/Authorization Form must be completed and signed by the primary next of kin or other person legally responsible for arranging the final disposition of the cremains or remains. In lieu of the request form, a hand written or typed letter, containing the same information may be used. Additionally, the following supporting documents must accompany this form: (1) a photocopy of the death certificate; (2) the burial transit permit or cremation certificate; and (3) a copy of the DD Form 214, discharge certificate, or retirement orders.

**The Veterans Affairs burial flag**, obtained from the U.S. Post Office is necessary for all committal services performed aboard Naval surface vessels. Following the services at sea, the flag that accompanied the cremains/remains will be returned to the next of kin (*additional flags will not be provided to dependents by the Navy*). However, if the next

of kin does not wish to send the VA burial flag, the flag supplied by the Navy for the committal service will not be sent to the family afterwards.

**In the case of cremation,** the cremains, Request/Authorization Form, the supporting documents listed previously and the VA burial flag are to be forwarded to the Burial At Sea Coordinator at the Naval Hospital or Clinic serving the desired major port of embarkation (list enclosed). *Cremains will not be accepted unless they are in an urn or, plastic or metal box to prevent spillage in shipping.* The phone number of these coordinators, plus state permit requirements is also provided. Before these items are forwarded, it is recommended that a phone call be made informing the coordinator of the pending request. It is also recommended that the packaged cremains be sent via *certified mail, return receipt requested.*

**For intact casketed remains,** forward the Request/Authorization Form, supporting documents listed above, VA burial flag, and casketed remains to a receiving funeral home that has been employed by the next of kin or shipping funeral home at one of the major ports of embarkation. Enclosed is an Inspection Checklist for Prepared Intact Remains that will be completed by the port coordinator. Please check with the port coordinator as to these requirements. Also enclosed is a diagram indicating how the casket is to be prepared by the receiving funeral home at the port of embarkation.

**Burial At Sea Coordinators and  
Major Ports of Embarkation**

**EAST COAST PORTS**

**NORFOLK, VA**

Commanding Officer  
Naval Medical Center  
620 John Paul Jones Circle  
Portsmouth, VA 23708-5100  
ATTN: CODE 0210C  
Phone: (804) 398-5573/5585

**NEWPORT, RI**

Commanding Officer  
Naval Hospital  
Code 35  
Newport, RI 02841-5003  
Phone: (401) 841-4128

**JACKSONVILLE, FL**

Officer in Charge  
Naval Hospital Branch Clinic  
Naval Station  
Mayport, FL 32228  
Phone: (904) 270-5303/5305

**WEST COAST PORTS**

California ports require a \$7 check or money order  
to file for a California Disposition Permit made  
payable to the counties indicated.

**SAN DIEGO, CA**  
County of San Diego

Commanding Officer  
Naval Medical Center  
San Diego, CA 92134-5000  
ATTN: CODE 22-BAS  
Phone: (610) 532-8323

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA**  
County of Alameda

Commanding Officer  
Naval Medical Center  
Oakland, CA 94627-5000  
ATTN: CODE 31K-DA  
Phone: (510) 633-5692

**LONG BEACH, CA**  
County of Los Angeles

Officer in Charge  
Branch Medical Clinic  
Long Beach, CA 90822  
ATTN: CODE 105-BAS  
Phone: (310) 521-4332

**BREMERTON, WA**

Commanding Officer  
Naval Hospital  
Bremerton, WA 98312-5008  
ATTN: CODE 015-DA  
Phone: (206) 478-9388/9303

**HAWAII**

Navy Liaison Unit  
Tripler Army Medical Center  
Tripler AMC, HI 96859-5000

Phone: (808) 433-6611

## Burial At Sea REQUEST/AUTHORIZATION FORM

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

To whom this may concern:

This is to certify that I am sole person having legal right to direct the disposition of the

\_\_\_\_\_  
(cremains/remains) of my \_\_\_\_\_,  
(relationship) \_\_\_\_\_  
(full name of the deceased)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(rank), \_\_\_\_\_,  
(service) \_\_\_\_\_,  
(status) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
(SSN)

I request and authorize the United States Navy to commit the \_\_\_\_\_  
(cremains/remains)  
at sea from a Naval \_\_\_\_\_.  
(ship/aircraft)

The dates of military service were from \_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_  
(date) (date)  
As attested to in the attached documentation. \_\_\_\_\_ died on \_\_\_\_\_ in  
(first name) (date)  
\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_  
(place of death) (cause of death)

It is requested that a \_\_\_\_\_ committal service be performed.  
(Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Other – specify)

**SPECIAL REQUESTS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

As next of kin, I will defray all expenses incurred in the preparation, the metal casket, inurnment, and delivery to the assigned port of embarkation.

This request is made with the understanding that the Navy will meet all requirements for committal at sea of intact remains. If, however, intact remains are accidentally recovered after proper committal. I understand that the Government cannot be held responsible if all published committal requirements have been met.

Signature of Witness	Signature of Requester
Printed Name of Witness	Printed Name of Requester
Address:	Address:

Telephone ( )	Telephone ( )

**Inspection Checklist  
For Prepared Intact Remains  
For Burial At Sea**

*(To be filled out by a Naval Hospital or Clinic Representative)*

Name of Deceased: \_\_\_\_\_

Rate/Rank: \_\_\_\_\_ Svc Branch/Status: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Preparing Mortuary: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ POC: \_\_\_\_\_

**The Inspector**

Name:	Rank:	Phone:
Command:	Date:	DSN:

**The Inspection**

AREAS OF INSPECTION	DATE	INITIALS
1. The remains are in a state of preparation that allows no odorous emissions for at least 60 days prior to the committal.		
2. The remains are in a metal casket.		
3. The casket and remains weigh more than 300 pounds ( <i>additional weights may have to be placed in the foot of the casket to ensure feet-first sinking</i> )		
4. All seals have been removed from inner seal or protective type casket.		
5. A minimum of 20, equally spaced two-inch holes (5.0 cm) have been drilled in the casket; 8 in the base; 4 in each lid panel (if there is a head in foot panel lid), 8 in a single lid, and 2 in each end panel.		
6. Casket is banded with a minimum of 5 metal or nylon bands, not less than ¾ inch (1.875 cm) wide. Then bands are equally spaced with 2 bands around each lid and 1 band around the casket lengthwise, head to foot.		
7. Casket is secured to a sheet of plywood to be used as a tilt-board. The bottom of an airtray is acceptable.		
8. Commemorative burial flag is secured to casket with fabric or elastic band.		

**Signatures**

Signature of the Funeral Director	Signature of the Navy Inspector

***Preparation requirements for intact remains are as follows:***

***The Remains.*** To preclude odorous emissions emanating from the casket during any waiting period prior to the committal, accomplishment of complete preservation is imperative. It is strongly recommended that waterless embalming be performed as a means of preparation of the remains. Remains to be committed should be in a state of preservation that will allow them to be stored for at least 60 days. Due to the nature of fleet operations at the port of embarkation, remains occasionally must be held for long periods until a ship is scheduled to get underway.

***The Casket.*** A representative from the Naval Hospital or Clinic serving the geographical area of the port of embarkation will perform an official inspection of the remains and the preparation of the casket. This inspector will ensure that the casketed remains are in a metal casket, and that any seals normally designed to inhibit the penetration of external elements into the casket are removed. The enclosed diagram will assist the consignee funeral home in preparing the casket for committal services.

We hope that this information has been helpful to you and will assist you in setting up a Burial At Sea. If you have any questions or specific desires regarding Burial At Sea, please feel free to contact this office at 1-800-876-1131 extensions 645 or 629.

Sincerely,

Chief Hospital Corpsman  
United States Navy  
By direction of the  
Officer in Charge

## CASKET PREPARATION FOR BURIAL AT SEA

### BANDING

A TOTAL OF 6, 1 INCH BANDS ARE TO BE PLACED AROUND THE CASKET. 2 ON THE HEAD, 2 ON THE FOOT, 1 LENGTHWISE HEAD TO FOOT, AND 1 AROUND THE SIDES.

\*\*MATERIAL WILL BE NYLON BANDS NOT LESS THAN  $\frac{3}{4}$  OF AN INCH.

### HOLES

A TOTAL OF 20, 2 INCH HOLES ARE TO BE DRILLED IN THE CASKET. 4 IN THE HEAD CAP, 4 IN THE FOOT CAP, 8 IN THE BOTTOM AND 2 IN THE FOOT & HEAD ENDS.

### WEIGHTING

PLACE 150 LBS. OF EXTRA WEIGHT INSIDE CASKET WITH REMAINS PRIOR TO THE BANDING PROCESS.

