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**Michael T. McRaith,**

*Director, Federal Insurance Office.*

[FR Doc. 2016-30632 Filed 12-19-16; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4810-25-P**

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## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Reimbursement for Caskets and Urns for Burial of Unclaimed Remains in a National Cemetery

**AGENCY:** Department of Veterans Affairs.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is updating the monetary reimbursement rates for caskets and urns purchased for the interment in a VA national cemetery of Veterans who die with no known next of kin and where there are insufficient resources for furnishing a burial container. The purpose of this notice is to notify interested parties of the rates that will apply to reimbursement claims that occur during calendar year (CY) 2017.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Eric Axelbank, Budget Operations and Field

Support Division, National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20420. Telephone: (202) 632-7236 (this is not a toll-free number).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 2306(f) of title 38, U.S.C., authorizes VA National Cemetery Administration (NCA) to furnish a casket or urn for interment in a VA national cemetery of the unclaimed remains of Veterans for whom VA cannot identify a next of kin and determines that sufficient financial resources for the furnishing of a casket or urn for burial are not available. VA implemented regulations to administer this authority as a reimbursement benefit in section 38.628 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations.

Reimbursement for a claim received in any CY will not exceed the average cost of a 20-gauge metal casket or a durable plastic urn during the fiscal year (FY) preceding the CY of the claim. Average costs are determined by market analysis for 20-gauge metal caskets, designed to contain human remains, with a gasketed seal, and external rails or handles. The same analysis is completed for durable plastic urns,

designed to contain human remains, which include a secure closure to contain the cremated remains.

Using this method of computation, in FY 2016, the average costs for caskets were determined to be \$2,069 and \$163 for urns. Accordingly, the reimbursement rates payable for qualifying interments occurring during CY 2017 are \$2,069 for caskets and \$163 for urns.

### Signing Authority

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or designee, approved this document and authorized the undersigned to sign and submit the document to the Office of the Federal Register for publication electronically as an official document of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Gina S. Farrissee, Deputy Chief of Staff, Department of Veterans Affairs, approved this document on December 13, 2016, for publication.

Dated: December 13, 2016.

**Jeffrey Martin,**

*Office Program Manager, Office of Regulation Policy & Management, Office of the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs.*

[FR Doc. 2016-30510 Filed 12-19-16; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 8320-01-P**