

[EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** To update the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) U.S. Flag Recognition Benefit and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Wall of Honor Recognition for Deceased Federal Civilian Employees.
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook contains procedures for requests, approvals, and distribution of the U.S. Flag recognition benefit and OPM Wall of Honor recognition. The pages in this issuance replace the corresponding page numbers in VA Handbook 5009. Revised text is contained in [brackets]. These changes will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5009 that is maintained on the [Office of Chief Human Capital Officer SharePoint Site](#) and [VA Publications Website](#). Significant changes include:
 - a. Streamline the process for requesting and approving the U.S. Flag Recognition Benefit and OPM Wall of Honor recognition.
 - b. A sample letter to OPM requesting deceased employees' names to be added to the OPM Wall of Honor.
 - c. New procedures for Administrations and Staff Offices to secure U.S. Flags for this benefit.
 - d. Clarifies the process to define 'other circumstances as determined by the President.'
 - e. Appendix E, Correct Method of Folding the United States Flag.]
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Worklife and Benefits Service (058), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO), Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness (006).
4. **RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 5009, Employee Benefits.
5. **RESCISSIONS:** None.

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, DC 20420**

**VA HANDBOOK 5009/15
Transmittal Sheet
November 10, 2022**

CERTIFIED BY:

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/
Guy T. Kiyokawa
Assistant Secretary for
Enterprise Integration

/s/
Gina M. Grosso
Assistant Secretary for
Human Resources and Administration/
Operations, Security and Preparedness

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic Only

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

PART IV. U.S. FLAG RECOGNITION BENEFIT [AND OPM WALL OF HONOR RECOGNITION] FOR DECEASED FEDERAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES

CONTENTS

PARAGRAPH	PAGE
1. PURPOSE	IV-4
2. RESPONSIBILITIES	IV-4
3. FORMS AND APPLICATION PACKAGES	IV-6
4. REQUEST SUBMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION PROCEDURES	IV-6
5. RETROACTIVE REQUESTS	IV-7
6. DEFINITIONS	IV-7
7. REFERENCES	IV-8

APPENDICES

IV-A. SAMPLE REQUEST FOR U.S. FLAG RECOGNITION BENEFIT [AND OPM WALL OF HONOR RECOGNITION]	IV-A-1
IV-B. SAMPLE BENEFICIARY NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE U.S. FLAG BENEFIT [AND TO ADD DECEASED EMPLOYEE'S NAME TO THE OPM WALL OF HONOR]	IV-B-1
IV-C. SAMPLE MEMORANDUM FOR AS/HRA/OSP APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL [OF U.S. FLAG BENEFIT AND/OR OPM WALL OF HONOR RECOGNITION].....	IV-C-1
IV-D. [SAMPLE] LETTER TO OPM REQUESTING [DECEASED EMPLOYEE'S] NAME BE ADDED TO THE OPM WALL OF HONOR.....	IV-D-1
IV-E. [CORRECT METHOD FOR FOLDING THE UNITED STATES FLAG].....	IV-E-1

[\[\]](#)

PART IV. U.S. FLAG RECOGNITION BENEFIT [AND OPM WALL OF HONOR RECOGNITION] FOR DECEASED FEDERAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES

1. PURPOSE. This part implements the “Civilian Service Recognition Act of 2011” (P.L. 112-73) which authorizes the department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to furnish a United States flag to a beneficiary on behalf of an employee who died of injuries incurred in connection with their employment under specific circumstances [and authorizes the beneficiary to request the deceased employee’s name be added to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Wall of Honor]. This part establishes VA procedures for the requests, approvals and distribution of the United States flag [and Wall of Honor recognition. Approval of this benefit does not mean that the employee or beneficiary is eligible for any other Federal benefits.]

2. RESPONSIBILITIES.

a. The Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration [/ Operations, Security and Preparedness] (AS/HRA[/OSP]) is responsible for:

- (1) Reporting the death of the employee to [] OPM’s Enterprise Human Resources Integration (EHRI) Warehouse using the nature of action code 354;
- (2) Approving or disapproving flag recognition benefit requests;
- (3) Requesting OPM add the deceased employee’s name to the OPM Wall of Honor[, in accordance with P.L.112-73 and 5 C.F.R. § 550, subpart O and] upon request from the deceased employee’s [beneficiary];
- (4) Notifying [VA] employees annually of the flag recognition benefit; and
- (5) [Asking OPM to define ‘other circumstances as determined by the President,’ as possible eligible events occur.]

[]

b. The Director, Worklife and Benefits [(WLB)] Service, [Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO)], is responsible for:

- (1) Providing guidance regarding the flag recognition benefit to Human Resources (HR) Officers;
- (2) Analyzing and making recommendations for approval or disapproval of flag recognition benefit requests;
- (3) Forwarding approved flag recognition benefit requests to [] the [requesting facility HR Office;]
- (4) Maintaining record of the [deceased employees who are eligible for and who’s beneficiaries have received the benefit(s);]

- (5) [Submitting request to OPM to have deceased employee's name added to or deleted from the OPM Wall of Honor; and
 - (6) Annually reviewing and confirming names provided by OPM for the Wall of Honor.]
- c. [Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials, are responsible for:
- (1) Submitting requests through appropriate channels to the AS/HRA/OSP for approval or disapproval of U.S Flag recognition benefit and OPM Wall of Honor recognition requests; and
 - (2) Budgeting for and purchasing flags to present this benefit to eligible beneficiaries.]
- d. Facility Directors are responsible for [submitting requests, with concurrence, through the appropriate Administration or Staff Office to the AS/HRA/OSP for approval of the flag recognition benefit and OPM Wall of Honor recognition (see sample in Appendix A)]

[]

- e. Facility HR Officers are responsible for:
- (1) [Notifying eligible beneficiaries of the U.S. Flag recognition benefit and OPM Wall of Honor recognition;
 - (2) Verifying that a deceased employee meets eligibility criteria to receive the flag recognition and OPM Wall of Honor recognition;
 - (3) Submitting requests for the flag recognition and OPM Wall of Honor recognition through the appropriate Administration or Staff Office for concurrence and approval by AS/HRA/OSP in accordance with paragraph 6 of this part (Appendix A);
 - (4) Securing a flag using the Government Purchase Card in accordance with [VA Financial Policy Volume XVI](#);
 - (5) Distributing flags to qualified beneficiaries within 30 days of AS/HRA/OSP approval;
 - (6) If appropriate, inform the family/representative about ceremony details OPM plans for a given year; and
 - (7) Provide biographies and photographs of the employee (if available) to OPM upon request.]
- f. Qualified beneficiaries are responsible for:
- (1) Providing documentation establishing the relationship to the deceased employee [to the facility HR Officer. Required documents] may include copy of marriage

certificate for a spouse, copy of birth certificate or adoption papers for child, copy of a divorce decree, or a domestic partnership declaration;

- (2) [Completing the eligibility section of the [OPM 1825 Form](#), if requesting flag benefit, to the facility HR Officer; and
- (3) Submitting a written request for the name of the deceased federal employee to be added to or deleted from the OPM Wall of Honor to the facility HR Officer.]

[]

3. FORMS AND APPLICATION PACKAGES.

- a. **Forms.** [OPM Form 125](#), Application for U.S. Flag Recognition Benefit for Deceased Federal Civilian Employees.
- b. **Initial Applications.** Facility HR Officers must submit [OPM Form 1825](#) and appropriate documentation outlined in paragraph 6 below through the appropriate [Administration or Staff Office] to the AS/HRA[/OSP] for approval.
- c. **Wall of Honor Beneficiary []**. Qualified beneficiaries who receive the flag recognition benefit may request in writing to the [facility HR Officer] that the flag benefit recipient's name be added to the OPM Wall of Honor.

4. REQUEST SUBMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION PROCEDURES.

- a. If the HR Officer determines that the deceased employee is a candidate for receipt of the flag recognition benefit, the HR Officer will contact the qualified beneficiary and notify them of:
 - (1) The flag recognition benefit and OPM Wall of Honor recognition;
 - (2) Procedures for submitting a request for the flag recognition benefit using an OPM Form 1825;
 - (3) Procedures for requesting that the employee's name be added to the OPM Wall of Honor; and
 - (4) Request documentation requirements for meeting eligibility criteria (Appendix B).]
- b. Upon receipt of an [[OPM Form 1825](#) and OPM Wall of Honor recognition request] from a qualified beneficiary, the facility HR Officer will prepare a request for the flag recognition benefit and OPM Wall of Honor recognition and forward it to the facility Director, including:
 - (1) [OPM Form 1825](#);
 - (2) Memorandum requesting flag recognition benefit ([]Appendix A); and

- (3) Documentation that both employee and beneficiary eligibility criteria are met.
- c. If the facility Director concurs with the request, the complete package [] [is] forwarded through the appropriate Administration or Staff Office to the AS/HRA[/OSP].
- d. The OCHCO WLB Service will review the request for completeness and recommend approval or disapproval to the AS/HRA[/OSP](Appendix C).
- e. The AS/HRA[/OSP] will approve/disapprove the request in writing within 60 days of receipt. The response for any request that is not approved will include the reason for disapproval. If approved, the AS/HRA/OSP will also request that the deceased employee's name be added to the OPM Wall of Honor if requested by the beneficiary (Appendix D).
- f. Upon approval of a flag recognition benefit, [OCHCO WLB] [will notify the facility HR Officer and HR Officer will:]
 - (1) Secure a flag using the Government Purchase Card in accordance with [VA Office of Finance Handbook Volume XVI](#) ;]
 - (2) Notify the beneficiary of the flag recognition approval;
 - (3) Fold the flag according to [Appendix E, Correct Method for Folding the United States Flag]; [and]
 - (4) Present the flag to the beneficiary within 30 days of receipt of the flag.

[]

5. RETROACTIVE REQUESTS.

- a. Facility HR Offices will review death in service employee records dating back to December 20, 2011 to see if any deceased employees qualify for the flag recognition benefit.
 - (1) If the HR Office finds that a deceased employee retroactively qualifies for the flag recognition benefit, they will follow the Request Submission and Distribution Procedures in paragraph 6 above.
- b. [\[VA Financial Policy Volume XVI\]](#)

6. DEFINITIONS.

- a. **Beneficiary.** An individual qualified to request and receive the flag recognition benefit on behalf of a fallen employee in the following order of precedence:
 - (1) Widow or widower;
 - (2) If none, a child (including step, foster, or adopted child) according to age (i.e., oldest to youngest);

- (3) If none, a parent (including step, foster, or adoptive parent);
- (4) If none, a sibling (including step, half, or adopted sibling) according to age (i.e., oldest to youngest); and
- (5) If none, any individual related by blood or close family affiliation, including domestic partnership.

b. **Eligible employee.** An individual who:

- (1) Was a VA employee of the Department (as defined in 5 U.S.C. § 2105) [at the time of death], and
- (2) Who died on or after December 20, 2011, of injuries incurred in connection with such individual's employment with the Federal Government, suffered as a result of a criminal act, act of terrorism, a natural disaster, or other circumstances as determined by the President.

NOTE: A flag may not be furnished when the death is the result of the unlawful or negligent action of the employee; willful misconduct of the employee; or activities unrelated to the employee's status as a Federal employee.

- c. **Flag.** [Defined as a standard United States Flag that is at least 3 by 5 feet.]
- d. **OPM Wall of Honor.** A memorial that honors employees who died in the line of duty. Eligibility requirements are the same as those for the flag recognition benefit. The memorial is located in the lobby of the OPM Headquarters building in Washington, D.C. and the names of honorees are listed on OPM's website.
- e. **Other Circumstances as Determined by the President.** OPM is responsible for consulting with the White House on what other circumstances may qualify for these benefits. OPM will provide guidance to agencies for eligibility of such other circumstances on a case-by-case basis.]

7. REFERENCES.

- a. [5 U.S.C. § 2105; \[Employee\]](#)
- b. [5 U.S. C. § 5570, \[note Compensation for disability or death\]](#)
- c. [\[18 U.S.C.§ 2331, Definitions\]](#)
- d. [P.L. 112-73, Civilian Service Recognition Act of 2011](#)
- e. [5 C.F.R., part 550 subpart O, \[Flag Recognition Benefit for Fallen Civilian Employees\]](#)

[APPENDIX A. SAMPLE REQUEST FOR FLAG RECOGNITION BENEFIT [AND OPM WALL OF HONOR RECOGNITION]

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

MEMORANDUM

Date:

From: Director, VA Name of Facility () identify mail code

Subj: Request for Beneficiary to Receive U.S. Flag Recognition Benefit [and/or OPM Wall of Honor Recognition (as appropriate) (VIEWS #)]

To: Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration[/Operations, Security, and Preparedness] (006)

Thru: [OCHCO, Worklife and Benefits Service (058)]

1. I am requesting that the beneficiary of (deceased employee's name) receive the flag recognition benefit [and that the employee's name be added to the Office of Personnel Management's Wall of Honor].
2. (deceased employee's name) was an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs and died on (date of employee death), of injuries incurred in connection with such individual's employment with the Federal Government, suffered as a result of (cite specific circumstances that meet criteria for receipt of flag recognition benefit).
3. We request that your decision be provided as expeditiously as possible. Questions regarding this request may be directed to (name of contact), (title) and (telephone).

(Name of the Facility Director)

[(Facility Director's Signature Here)]

Attachment (supporting documentation that deceased employee has met the criteria to receive the flag recognition benefit)

Concur/ Do Not Concur:

Administration or Staff Office Head (as appropriate) signature here

Date

**[APPENDIX B. SAMPLE BENEFICIARY NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE
U.S. FLAG BENEFIT [AND TO ADD DECEASED EMPLOYEE'S NAME TO THE OPM
WALL OF HONOR]**

Name of Beneficiary
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear (Name of Beneficiary),

Please accept my condolences for the loss of your (relationship to employee) who died while performing public service as a Federal employee. I am honored to inform you that P.L. 112-73, the "Civilian Service Recognition Act," authorized the VA to acknowledge your loved one's death with the provision of a United States Flag. This benefit is provided to eligible beneficiaries of Federal civil servants who die in the line of duty as a result of a criminal act, terrorist attack, natural disaster or other circumstance as determined by the President. If you wish to receive this flag benefit, please complete the enclosed OPM 1825 Form and return it to the Human Resources Office point of contact listed below.

[On April 11, 2013, OPM dedicated the Wall of Honor to recognize those civilian Federal employees who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country. I am also honored to inform you that your loved one's name can be included on the list of honorees for the Wall of Honor in recognition of their contribution and sacrifice in the service to our country. The circumstances of the death of your loved one while performing Federal service meet the criteria to be listed among the names of the other Federal civil servants who have died in the line of duty. The name of your loved one will be made public during a Wall of Honor ceremony. If you would like the name of your loved one to be added to the Wall of Honor, please send (HR POC) written confirmation.

To receive these benefits, you must also provide documentation that both employee and beneficiary eligibility criteria are met (example: Federal Employees Group Life Insurance documentation or marriage certificate) and documentation showing that employee died of injuries incurred in connection with employment with the Federal Government, suffered as a result of a criminal act, act of terrorism, a natural disaster, or other circumstances as determined by the President (example: death certificate or police report). Please include this documentation when you return the OPM Form 1825 to the point of contact listed below.

November 10, 2022

If you have any questions about these benefits, please contact (insert name and telephone number of the Human Resources Office point of contact).]

Sincerely,

Human Resources Officer

[Enclosure]
[OPM Form 1825]

**[APPENDIX C. SAMPLE MEMORANDUM FOR AS/HRA/OSP
APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF U.S. FLAG BENEFIT AND/OR OPM WALL OF HONOR
RECOGNITION**

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

MEMORANDUM

Date:

From: Director, OCHCO Worklife and Benefits Service (058)

Subj: U.S. Flag Recognition Benefit and/or OPM Wall of Honor Recognition for (Name of Deceased Employee) (VIEWS #)

To: Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness (006)

Thru: Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) (05)

1. **PURPOSE:** The (*administration sending the request*) requests approval for the U.S. Flag Recognition Benefit and/or OPM Wall of Honor Recognition Request for (*Deceased Employee*) who died as a result of a criminal act on (*date of death*) of injuries incurred in connection with his/her employment with the Department of Veterans Affairs.
2. **BACKGROUND:** The request meets the eligibility and criteria cited in VA Handbook 5009, Part IV., § 4, as indicated below:
 - a. Eligible employee. An individual who:
 - (2) Was an employee of the Department (as defined in 5 U.S.C. § 2105), and
 - (3) Who died on or after December 20, 2011, of injuries incurred in connection with such individual's employment with the Federal Government, suffered as a result of a criminal act, act of terrorism, a natural disaster or other circumstances as determined by the President.
 - f. My point of contact on this request is (HR Specialist), Worklife and Benefits Service at benefitsretirement058@va.gov.

3. OPTIONS:

- g. Approve U.S. Flag Recognition Benefit and OPM Wall of Honor Recognition Request.
- h. Deny U.S. Flag Recognition Benefit and OPM Wall of Honor Recognition Request.

4. RECOMMENDATION: Approve U.S. Flag Recognition Benefit and OPM Wall of Honor Recognition Request.

CHCO Signature

Attachments

APPROVE RECOMMENDATION DISAPPROVE RECOMMENDATION

Assistant Secretary,
Human Resources and Administration/
Operations, Security and Preparedness (006)]

Date

[

**APPENDIX D. LETTER TO OPM REQUESTING DECEASED EMPLOYEE'S NAME
BE ADDED TO THE OPM WALL OF HONOR**



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration/
Operations, Security and Preparedness
Washington DC 20420**

Director, Office of Personnel Management
ATTN: OPM Wall of Honor
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, North West
Washington, DC 20415

Dear OPM Director:

In accordance with the Civilian Service Recognition Act (P.L. 112-73), the beneficiary of the *Deceased Employee* has requested the U.S. Flag Recognition Benefit and that her name be added to the OPM Wall of Honor. *Deceased Employee's Name* died as a result of a *criminal act, act of terrorism, a natural disaster, or other circumstances as determined by the President on Date of Death* of injuries incurred in connection with his/her employment with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The U.S. Flag Recognition Benefit request meets the criteria outlined in P.L. 112-73 and has been approved using the enclosed documentation. Based on this approval, the Department of Veterans Affairs requests that the deceased employee's name be added to the OPM Wall of Honor.

My point of contact is (WLB Director's Name), Director, Worklife and Benefits via name@va.gov, or (phone number).

Sincerely,

(Name of AS/HRA/OSP)

Enclosures]

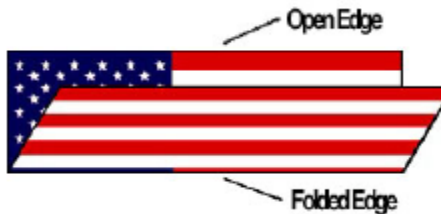
APPENDIX E. CORRECT METHOD FOR FOLDING THE UNITED STATES FLAG

Start

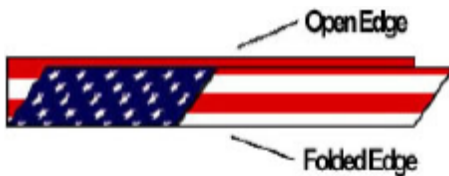
Completed



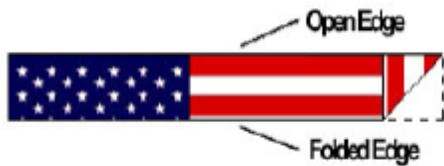
Step 1: Fold the lower striped section of the flag over the blue field.



Step 2: Folded edge is then folded over to meet the open edge.



Step 3: A triangular fold is then started by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to the open edge.



Step 4: Outer point is then turned inward parallel with the open edge to form a second triangle.



Step 5: Triangular folding is continued until the entire length of the flag is folded in a triangular shape with only the blue field visible.



Completed

