

SHIFT COLORS

The Magazine for Navy Retirees

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Navy Personnel Command

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MyNAVYHR

Serving Sailors 24/7



NPC launches new, improved website

Retiree services, Shift Colors, MNCC functions optimized for functionality, mobile devices

By MC3 Jared Catlett
NPC Public Affairs Office

MILLINGTON, Tennessee – Navy Personnel Command (NPC) completed its successful launch of a new and improved website MyNavyHR.navy.mil Feb. 15.

The new website combines the extensive resources of the old NPC.Navy.mil with a mobile-optimized site that seamlessly integrates with Navy.mil and the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS).

“MyNavyHR.Navy.mil is a major upgrade in terms of user experience and website capabilities,” said Lt. Cmdr. Matt Knight, NPC public affairs officer. “We understand that there will be some growing pains while our users get used to the new site structure; but in the long run the new site provides a much

improved platform to serve Sailors, their families and the fleet.”

The new site was rebranded from NPC.Navy.mil to MyNavyHR.Navy.mil to conform with the enterprise-wide rebranding that began in March 2020 with all MyNavyHR social media sites. The rebranding to MyNavyHR.Navy.mil also reflects the old website’s long-standing hosting of the majority of the MyNavyHR enterprise pages, which range from 21st Century Sailor, NAVADMINs and Uniform Regulations, to boards, detailers and MNCC.

“The documents on this website are not only important to Sailors who may need the information, but also their spouses or even agents at the MNCC Contact Center when assisting them with any issues they may have,” said Don Koehler, MyNavyHR/NPC web manager.

“To ensure that our users don’t end up on an outdated or dead webpage, we have arranged for all old links to forward to the new homepage for 60 days,”

said Knight. “I recommend that users take time to browse the new site, get acquainted with the new structure and update their old bookmarks.”

The layout of the new website, while updated, is structured very similarly to the previous site which will allow users to update bookmarks fairly easily. Site-wide search functions will not be at full capability until the new server finishes indexing the nearly 1,600 pages and 18,000 files hosted on the site. The full index procedure may take up to 30 days, and site-wide search capabilities will improve each day until the full index is completed. To assist users in finding the information they seek, MyNavyHR.navy.mil features user-friendly quick links on the homepage that contains top visited pages.

Prior to the migration, NPC.Navy.mil was one of the highest trafficked sites in the Navy where approximately 600,000 visitors a month conducted an average of 1.4 million visits and

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viewed an average of four million pages.

The new MyNavyHR.Navy.mil is now hosted on the Defense Media Activity (DMA) web hosted solution – American Forces Public Information Management System (AFPIMS). AFPIMS is a common platform that streamlines workflow processes and increases efficiencies for the public affairs mission. AFPIMS allows public affairs teams to display news stories, press releases, publications, fact sheets, photo and video galleries, and podcasts. They can also share this content across 800-plus DoD websites, including the Navy's flagship website, and seamlessly integrate with the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS), YouTube and other social media platforms.

Retirees and their families can find helpful resources at the following links (be sure to save these URLs):

[Reference Materials](#)
[Reserve Personnel Management](#)
[Retirement](#)
[Shift Colors](#)
[Veterans Affairs](#)

For more information, contact MyNavy Career Center (MNCC) at (833) 330-6622 or via email [here](#).

Editor's Note:

It's been an incredibly challenging year for all of us across the Fleet, active, Reserves and retired. We've all endured loss, the inability to travel to be close to loved ones and friends and restrictions to our daily lives. Hopefully, thanks to the new vaccines, we'll soon be seeing the light at the tunnel's end, but please continue to stay safe.

As in the Fleet, receiving a COVID-19 vaccination isn't mandatory, but highly recommended. If you have reservations, talk to your family physician. There is also plenty of research available to you to help you decide.

Looking forward to having all hands on deck and getting under full sail very soon!

Shift Colors

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Retirement with Pay: Be proactive

Reserve Personnel Management recommends applying a year prior to estimated Retired Pay Eligibility Date

**By Cmdr. Sarah McGann,
Retirement Transition Outreach
Program Manager**

If you retired from participation in the Navy Reserve, you'll definitely want to be conscientious and proactive about your request and paperwork timing as you look ahead to Retirement with Pay.

APPLY

Navy Personnel Command (NPC), Reserve Personnel Management, conducts a Retirement Transition Outreach (RTO) program to educate Navy Reservists including Gray Area retirees on their retiree pay and benefits. Reserve Personnel Management recommends that individuals anticipating Retired Pay and benefits, including healthcare through TRICARE from their Navy Reserve career, start the process by submitting their application about a year prior to their estimated Retired Pay Eligibility Date. This is nominally the member's 60th birthday, but may be reduced in 90-day increments per Title 10 USC. The member must apply for their retired pay and benefits. Apply by submitting DD Form 108 and DD Form 2656 by mail to Navy Personnel Command (NPC) in Millington, up to a year in advance of eligibility for retired pay.

If your application timing is delayed for some reason compared to your effective date of eligibility for retired pay, then your pay will be retroactive back to that eligibility date (usually the member's 60th birthday), limited by the Barring Act to a maximum of six (6) years.

Mail all forms with original signatures to the following address:

Commander, Navy Personnel Command
(Attn: PERS-912)
5720 Integrity Drive
Millington, TN 38055

Some people have reported problems accessing or downloading these required forms to apply for retired pay and benefits (DD Forms 108 and 2656).

The forms are fillable .pdf, so make sure you have an Adobe Reader installed at a minimum, and try using various browsers and sources of the forms. Google Chrome plus a current version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed generally yield success in downloading and employing these fillable forms from these sources: the MyNavyHR website (link at end of article) or the Department of Defense forms library [here](#).

Form 108 will be the easiest part of this application. We do recommend submitting with your application any documentation of missing retirement points, as well as legal documentation of any dependent status changes for your Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP). You do NOT need to iterate your point record on DD Form 108. You actually can just fill in your personal information, including your 60th birthday (block 3); then make a diagonal line across all the data in the middle and write something to the effect of "I will accept records on file with the Department of the Navy" and sign and date. Alternatively, if you have a copy of your point record (ASOSH) or Statement of Service, you can just attach/enclose that with your packet and take a similar approach as above, writing something to the effect of "See attached/enclosed." Or, you can sign it with "See attached point record which is inaccurate, and enclosed supporting documentation to update it" or something to that effect. You can also start the point record correction in advance of submitting the application. The team in PERS-912 can make the updates to your point record in line with processing your application for retired pay. They will also look up your SBP elections or defaults as part of their process, so don't fret too much on the DD Form 2656 blocks 33-38 if you don't recall if you made RCSBP elections or if you defaulted to plan participation at the time of your Notice of Eligibility for non-regular retirement with Survivor

Benefits.

CONFIRM RECEIPT

After mailing your application, be on the lookout for confirmation of receipt from the MyNavy Career Center (MNCC), or contact them directly to confirm receipt of your package. This is also your way to check on its status, but typically the team can only see as much detail as "received" and "in process". Basically, from this point PERS-912 staff will be in touch if they need anything from you to continue their processing of your package through to DFAS and to get you your retirement orders. PERS-912 averages about 6 months per package before sending forward to DFAS and sending back to you your retirement orders letter package. Generally speaking, we recommend following up via MNCC if it's been 6 months since you applied and you have not yet received in your mail your retirement with pay orders letter.

RECEIVE RETIREMENT ORDERS

Also be on the lookout in your home mail for your retirement orders letter, about six to nine months after mailing your application to NPC PERS-912. This letter should reflect your effective retirement with pay eligibility date, retired paygrade, retirement point total, and an estimate of your retired pay. You will need to take this retirement orders letter with you in hard copy to your ID card appointment.

This appointment is critical for establishing your eligibility to enroll in TRICARE, and can be scheduled for on or after your retirement with pay effective date, noted on your letter from PERS-912.

OBTAIN RETIRED ID CARD

Once you have the retired orders in hand, AFTER the effective date shown on your retirement, you can get your re-

————— See RWP Page 4



tired ID card via an appointment, which you can schedule appointment [here](#).

RECEIVE RETIRED PAY

Once you receive your retirement orders from PERS-912, you will know that they have also forward your information to DFAS for establishment of your retiree pay account. You will need to take some final action to activate your retiree pay account. You likely will receive communication from DFAS in your home mail about doing this.

To estimate your gross retired pay,

enter your total amount of points into the below retired pay equation:

Retired Pay = Total Retirement Points (P) ÷ 360 x .025 x Base Pay (B) (substitute .02 for .025 for BRS)

Refer to the active-duty pay chart in effect when you will become eligible for retired pay to determine your base pay. Note (B) can vary with Final Pay compared to High-3 pay plan. Also, the new Blended Retirement System (BRS) changes the service multiplier from 2.5 percent (.025) to 2 percent (.02) for those joining on or after Jan. 1, 2018.

ENROLL IN TRICARE

Soon after or even when leaving your ID card appointment, we recommend you enroll over the phone in TRICARE, shortly after your birthday. You can find TRICARE phone numbers plus a plan finder wizard and briefings for retiring Reservists and National Guard open source on the [TRICARE website](#).

CHANGES COMING VIA NP2

In development is a comprehensive new Navy Pay and Personnel system, known by the acronym NP2. New platform capabilities will deploy to Sailors and the Navy HR workforce quarterly. The following two articles give a little preview of what these Navy Pay and Personnel system modernization efforts aim to do:

[Article 2386954](#)

[Article 2406910](#)

RTO PROGRAM EVENTS

In FY20 and FY21, NPC'S RTO Program has hosted informational events about the Navy Reserve retirement process including retired pay and health care benefits. Events have included the focused three-hour "Reserve Retirement Waypoint" event specifically for those within a couple years of retiring with pay; the partial two half days event "Reserve Retirement Counseling Session (RRCS) covering both retiring awaiting pay and retiring with pay; and the longer three-day "Retirement Awareness Workshop" event to best serve those retiring with detailed questions requiring more time on the topics.

Be on the lookout for planned FY22 events via your local installation Retired Activities Office, Navy Operations Support Center (NOSC), or check for an updated schedule and registration [here](#).

MNCC 24/7 CUSTOMER SERVICE

Questions about individual records or packages must be initiated through MyNavy Career Center (MNCC), and may be further ticketed as service requests to PERS-912 subject-matter experts and case managers.

Call MNCC at (833) 330-MNCC (6622), or email at askmncc@navy.mil.



ID CARDS

RETIREES / SPONSORS / FAMILY MEMBERS -- MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR YOUR EXPIRED OR EXPIRING ID CARD TODAY!

THE EXCEPTION TO USE AN EXPIRED ID CARD FOR MEDICAL BENEFITS AND PHYSICAL ACCESS EXPIRES ON **30 JUNE, 2021**. ONLINE APPOINTMENT AVAILABILITY HAS BEEN UPDATED AND APPOINTMENTS ARE AVAILABLE AT: [HTTPS://IDCO.DMDC.OSD.MIL/IDCO](https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco)

**Naval Air
Station
Jackson-
ville Com-
manding
Officer
Capt. Brian
Weiss,
right,
presents
Retired Ac-
tivities Of-
fice (RAO)
Director
James "JJ"
Ryan with a
certificate
of recogni-
tion after
20 years of
volunteer
work.**



JAX Air Station recognizes RAO director

After 20 years, former aviator releases helm of retiree office

**By Kaylee LaRocque
NAS Jax Public Affairs Officer**

Naval Air Station Jacksonville (NAS Jax) Commanding Officer Capt. Brian Weiss presented Retired Activities Office (RAO) Director James (JJ) Ryan with a certificate of recognition during a ceremony, Dec. 18.

Ryan who recently turned over his duties of overseeing the RAO to Tom Brennan, has been volunteering in the NAS Jax RAO for the past 20 years. "I plan to continue working here as needed, but will spend more time with the family and keeping up the house," he said.

A decorated veteran jet pilot/carrier aviator, Ryan spent 30 years in the Navy. "I was stationed at Cecil Field as an attack pilot and at NAS Key West as commanding officer of VF-45, the Atlantic Fleet Adversary Squadron. Afterwards, I spent most of the time on carriers and various operational staffs, and was the Navy's Aircraft Carrier program officer

and head of the Navy's Law Enforcement/Brig program while stationed at the Pentagon before retiring in Washington DC," he said. "But, my wife and I liked Jacksonville and had a home here, so we moved back in 1996."

"I got involved with RAO when our next door neighbor passed away and his wife needed help. While he was a Navy veteran, I really didn't know how best to help. That's when I learned about all this office does to help retirees and their families. So I got involved and started volunteering. At that time we had 16 people on staff, now we're down to four."

For the past 15 years, he's served as the RAO Jacksonville director assisting hundreds of military retirees and families. Ryan offers advice about the various benefits available, such as the Military's Survivor Benefit Program, the VA's Dependent's Indemnity Compensation Program and Educational benefits, Social Security, state/local veteran benefits and programs, Defense Finance

Accounting Service issues and helping widowed spouses and other family members validate and apply for their benefits when a retiree passes away.

Ryan also coordinates an annual RAO Seminar that is usually held in April. This seminar features guest speakers who provide information about programs beneficial to retirees and families. Although it had to be cancelled this year, they are working on next year's event which is to be held virtually.

For Ryan, he may be cutting back some hours, but he's not quitting the RAO. "I just enjoy helping people," he said. "My wife, Nancy, and I have been married 52 years. She is the rock of the family and has always been very supportive of my career. We have four sons and six grandchildren. I would gladly serve my country again, but now I have more time to spend with the kids."

If any veteran or spouse is interested in volunteering, for four hours a week as an advisor, contact the RAO office at (904) 542-5790.

Former CentCom CO is new SECDEF

Lloyd James Austin III was sworn in as the 28th Secretary of Defense on January 22, 2021.

He is the principal assistant to the President in all matters relating to the Department of Defense and serves on the National Security Council.

Secretary Austin was born in Mobile, Alabama, and raised in Thomasville, Georgia. He graduated from the United States Military Academy with a Bachelor of Science degree and a commission in the infantry. He holds a Master of Arts degree in counselor education from Auburn University, and a Master of Business Management from Webster University. He is a graduate of the Infantry Officer Basic and Advanced courses, the Army Command and General Staff College, and the Army War College.

His 41-year career in the Army included command at the corps, division, battalion, and brigade levels.

He was awarded the Silver Star for his leadership of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division during the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Seven years later, he would assume the duties of Commanding General of United States Forces — Iraq, overseeing all combat operations taking place in the country.

After a tour as the Army's Vice Chief of Staff, Austin concluded his uniformed service as the commander, U.S. Central Command, responsible for all military operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan. In this assignment, he led U.S. and coalition efforts to battle ISIS in Iraq and Syria. He retired from the Army in April, 2016.



**Secretary of Defense
Lloyd Austin James III**

Since his retirement from military service, Austin served on the Boards of Directors for Raytheon Technologies, Nucor, and Tenet Healthcare.

Coast Guard veteran takes Navy helm

Thomas W. Harker assumed duties as the Acting Secretary of the Navy on Jan. 20, 2021.

Previously, he was performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller). He was sworn in as Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Management and Comptroller) in 2018.

Secretary Harker graduated from the University of California Berkeley in 1990 and received an MBA from the University of Miami in 2000. A 20-year veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard, his career was marked by operational success including multi-ton drug seizures on the high seas. Ashore, he was assigned positions of increasing responsibility in budget, acquisition, internal controls, audit readiness and financial reporting. His leadership of the Coast Guard audit readiness and internal control program contributed to the Department of Homeland Security moving from 10 successive disclaimers to a clean audit

opinion. Prior to leaving active duty, Harker served at Office of Management and Budget (OMB) where he led the Campaign to Cut Waste, updated OMB Circular A-136 and drafted government-wide financial policy.

He served as an auditor and consultant at a large public accounting firm, auditing CFO Act agencies (including the first audit of the U.S. Marine Corps). He also assisted the Joint Staff with developing and implementing an audit readiness plan, and improved Coast Guard's accountability for property as a consultant.

Upon his return to government, Harker led the Coast Guard financial reporting, policy, property management and audit readiness efforts. He served at the Department of Veterans Affairs as the Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Financial Policy.

In this position, he also served as the Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management at the VA, and as



**Secretary of Defense
Lloyd Austin James III**

the Acting Deputy CFO for Accounting and Financial Management at Housing and Urban Development.

Meet your new Secretary of Veterans Affairs

McDonough brings White House, national security experience to post

From Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs Office

Denis Richard McDonough was nominated by President Joe Biden to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. McDonough's nomination was confirmed by the United States Senate on Feb. 8, 2021, and he was sworn in the following day as the 11th Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

On Jan. 27, 2021, during his confirmation hearing, Secretary McDonough testified to Congress, "I will work tirelessly to build and restore VA's trust as the premier agency for ensuring the well-being of America's veterans. After all, there is no more sacred obligation nor noble undertaking than to uphold our promises to our veterans, whether they came home decades ago or days ago."

He served in the Obama Administration as the 26th White House Chief of Staff from February 2013 to January 2017. In that role, he managed the White House staff and worked across the cabinet to advance the Obama-Biden agenda, confronted management issues facing the federal government, and devised and enforced goals, plans, and performance standards to preserve the Obama-Biden Administration's reputation for effective, ethical operations.

Prior to his role as Chief of Staff,

McDonough was Principal Deputy National Security Advisor from October 2010 to January 2013. He also served as the Chief of Staff of the National Security Staff and as the Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications. He chaired the National Security Council's Deputies Committee, leading the multiagency team to address complex challenges including crisis management and national security policymaking. And throughout his service in the White House, he helped lead the Obama-Biden administration's work on behalf of military families and Veterans.

Before his eight-year tenure in the White House, Secretary McDonough served in senior leadership and policymaking positions in the U.S. House of Representatives as a Professional Staff Member on the International Relations Committee and in the U.S. Senate for Majority Leader Tom Daschle and Senator Ken Salazar.

Since his White House tenure, he was Professor of the Practice of Public Policy at the Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame, Senior Advisor and Senior Principal at the Markle Foundation, and on the board of directors of the National Democratic Institute, the Tent Partnership for Refugees, and the SAFE Project, a national



"... there is no more sacred obligation nor noble undertaking than to uphold our promises to our veterans, whether they came home decades ago or days ago."

**-- Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Denis Richard McDonough**

nonprofit working to end the nation's catastrophic addiction epidemic.

Secretary McDonough grew up in Minnesota in a family of 11 children, graduated from St. Johns University in Collegeville, Minnesota, and earned his master's degree from Georgetown University.



VA Helpful Online Tools

Change address on file with VA

Find out how to change your address and other contact information in your VA.gov profile. This will update your information across several VA benefits and services.

Change your VA direct deposit information

Change your VA direct deposit information for disability compen-

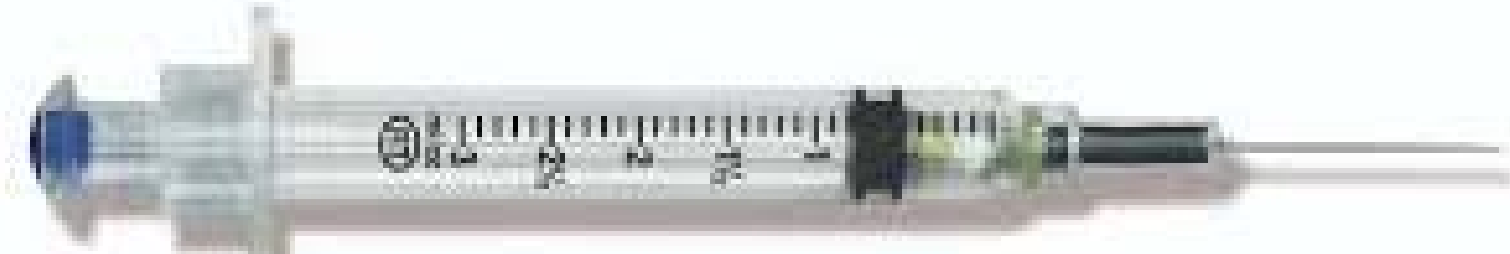
sation, pension benefits, or education benefits online.

Check VA claim or appeal status

Find out how to check the status of a VA claim or appeal online.

Schedule, view your VA appointments

Find out how to schedule an appointment by phone, online, or through secure messaging.



More options are available to get COVID-19 vaccine

By TRICARE Communications

FALLS CHURCH, Va., Feb. 18, 2021 — If you and your family are looking to get a COVID-19 vaccine near you, you'll soon have more options for where you can go to get it. As part of the ongoing response to COVID-19, the federal government has launched the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program for COVID-19 Vaccination.

This new program is a collaboration between the federal government, states, territories, and 21 national pharmacies and independent pharmacy networks to increase access to the COVID-19 vaccine in the U.S.

"Vaccination is a critical step in protecting your health and slowing the spread of COVID-19," said Col. Markus Gmehlin, acting chief of the Pharmacy Operations Division at the Defense Health Agency. "This program will provide TRICARE beneficiaries with more opportunities to get vaccinated at a location near them."

Here are some details about distribution and how you can get the vaccine with your TRICARE benefit.

How does the program work?

The Federal Retail Pharmacy Program will supply COVID-19 vaccines to retail pharmacies in phases. As part of the initial phase, 1 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine will be sent to a select group of pharmacies. These pharmacies will then administer vaccinations to those who are eligible. Some pharmacies have already begun offering a limited amount of the vaccine through

this program. Other pharmacies are set to begin offering doses soon. As stated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "As vaccine supply increases, more retail locations will be added."

Will my local pharmacy offer the COVID-19 vaccine?

Pharmacies that are part of the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program (FRPP) may vary by state and territory. Pharmacies participating in the program may include TRICARE network pharmacies and non-network pharmacies. You can find a list of pharmacies that are currently participating in your area on the CDC website.

How can I get the vaccine with my TRICARE benefit?

The availability of the vaccine may vary by location. If you're a TRICARE beneficiary, you'll eventually be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine at:

- ◆ Your local military hospital or clinic
- ◆ Local or state health department COVID-19 vaccination sites
- ◆ Your civilian provider
- ◆ Pharmacies participating in the FRPP.

"At this stage of the program, the vaccine supply is limited," said Gmehlin. "So, it's important to make sure you contact your local pharmacy in advance to see if the vaccine is available and if you can schedule an appointment to receive it."

There is no cost-share if you get the COVID-19 vaccine at a TRICARE network pharmacy.

Planning to get the vaccine at a non-

network pharmacy? There's no cost for the COVID-19 vaccine itself. Keep in mind, TRICARE doesn't cover other vaccines and most prescription drugs at non-network pharmacies.

Remember, there may be a cost based on your health plan for an office visit with a provider, or if you need follow-on care. If you have questions, you can contact your TRICARE contractor.

Prefer to get the vaccine at a military hospital or clinic?

If you're eligible for TRICARE, you can get the COVID-19 vaccine at any military hospital or clinic that offers it. This is true even if you don't get your routine care there. Phase 1A of the Department of Defense (DoD) COVID-19 vaccination plan is currently underway at many military hospitals, clinics, and DoD installations.

This phase includes vaccinating health care workers, first responders, and residents of Armed Forces Retirement Homes. Keep in mind, some military hospitals and clinics may be in different phases of the vaccination plan. So, make sure you check first to see if the vaccine is available at your location.

Stay up to date on vaccine guidance through the TRICARE and Military Health System websites. You can also check with your local health department and talk to your health care provider about when you may qualify to receive the vaccine as well as where you can go to get vaccinated. The Federal Retail Pharmacy Program for COVID-19 Vaccination is the latest of several resources introduced to help you and your family.

Navy veteran, medical student has new mission

**By Tonya C. Lobbestael,
VA Office of Academic Affiliations.**

When Gabriel Carrillo joined the Navy in 2005 at age 19, he was already interested in medicine. So, becoming a hospital corpsman who deployed with the Marines to Afghanistan was the right preparation for this son of a Cuban immigrant.

His father became a U.S. citizen and served two tours with the Army in Vietnam. Carrillo was following in his footsteps.

Believing people come out of adverse situations with new insight and breadth, Carrillo's military experience, including the leadership skills he learned, led him to enlist his fellow medical students to help vaccinate thousands of Veterans at Durham VA Medical Center's COVID-19 Vaccine Blitz.



Navy veteran and Duke University medical and law student Gabe Carrillo.

He did this while pursuing both his medical and law degrees at Duke University.

Dr. Genevieve Embree and her team were planning a weekend-long mass vaccination for early February. When Carrillo learned of the plan, he immediately recognized the opportunity for Health Professions Trainees (HPT) who trained at the facility to support the effort.

Embree is Durham VA's Deputy Chief, Office of Public Health and Epidemiology.

"Medical students can hit the ground running"

"Medical students are prime folks to help out and most of us are well trained in CPRS (VA Computerized Patient Record System), and can hit the ground running," explained Carrillo. "Plus, all the students are COVID-19 tested repeatedly."

Armed with this knowledge, Carrillo contacted all the Duke medical students who had already trained at VA. He quickly had almost 50 students interested in working the vaccination blitz. Then he created a spreadsheet to track which students had access to CPRS and who needed access and training. After that, he worked with Dr. Embree and Voluntary Service to reactivate accounts and complete training requirements for all — within just four days.

Med students helped vaccinate over 2,850 veterans

A total of 21 medical students helped vaccinate more than 2,850 veterans at the first Durham VAMC COVID-19 Vaccine Blitz held the weekend of Feb. 6 and 7.

Carrillo is quick to point out that it was the Durham VA staff who planned the vaccination clinic. Embree is equally quick to point out the importance of having the trainees volunteer.

"The pandemic has taken a toll on many health care workers," said Embree. "We were very grateful to learn that many employees were willing to work on the weekend for a vaccine blitz, but we fell short of our target number of vaccinators."

"Gabe Carrillo contacted our Public Affairs team and offered a pool of medical students to volunteer who could not only assist with the clinic flow but could actually vaccinate veterans while working under a supervising physician."

Adding the students to the workforce increased the blitz capacity from 3,000 to 4,000 veterans who could be vaccinated in a weekend. When the medical center held its second vaccination blitz the weekend of Feb. 27 and 28, they added appointment slots for an additional 1,400 veterans to receive their first dose of the vaccine.

Durham VA and Duke School of Medicine valuable partners

And now Carrillo, whose interests in both infectious disease and national security law correlate directly to issues around the pandemic, is recruiting again, this time from Duke medical students, law students and students at Duke's other professional schools. Carrillo's work brought more than 30 students to support the mass vaccination effort.

Learning public health emergency response

Both Carrillo and Embree hope to see more VA medical centers utilize trainees to help vaccinate veterans. They know the students' experiences serving veterans on the front lines during the pandemic will impact them for years to come.

"What I think is even more important is learning what it's like to be part of the response during a public health emergency," said Embree.

VA's Acting Chief Academic Affiliations Officer Dr. Karen M. Sanders, agrees. "The experience these trainees are gaining and the contributions they are making will benefit the trainees, the patients and our nation for years to come."



Marine Vietnam Veteran Chris Casey receives his COVID-19 vaccine at the Durham VA Medical Center clinic.

How to turn on automatic refills for TRICARE home delivery prescriptions

From TRICARE

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — Looking to get the most out of your TRICARE pharmacy benefit? Take some time to check out the TRICARE pharmacy automatic refill program. With this program, you won't have to remind yourself to refill your prescription. Before you run out of medication, Express Scripts will refill and ship your prescription to you for up to a 90-day supply, over the course of a prescription written for a one-year supply.

"We want beneficiaries to be aware of their options for filling prescriptions," said Henry Gibbs, acting chief of the Purchased Care Branch, Pharmacy Operations Division at the Defense Health Agency. "Automatic refills through TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery helps to make sure you have enough medication on hand to take as instructed by your doctor. It's safe, easy to use, and may save you money."

Is my prescription eligible?

Many common maintenance medications that you may take for long-term therapy, like blood pressure medicine, are eligible for automatic refills. If your medication is eligible, you'll see the "start automatic refills" option next to them when logged into your account.

To see if your medication is available through home delivery, use the TRICARE Formulary Search Tool. If you have questions, visit the [Express Scripts](#) website or call them at (877) 363-1303.

How do I set up automatic refills?

To get started, simply login to the Express Scripts® mobile app or your online account. If you don't have an account, you can register for one online. Once you've signed in, click on the "manage prescriptions" tab and then select an eligible prescription you would like to enroll. Eligible medications will



have the "start automatic refills" option next to them. After you enroll your prescription, make sure to choose your preferred method of communication (phone call, email, or text message) to get alerts about your refill orders.

Keep in mind, not all medications are eligible for the automatic refill program. And this service is only available through TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery. Some limits on home delivery may apply overseas.

How can I continue to get my medication if I'm almost out of refills?

When you're on your last refill, Express Scripts will contact you by your preferred method of communication to make sure you're still taking your medication. You'll then have 10 days to respond that:

You're still taking the medication;

You want Express Scripts to renew your prescription;

You want to continue to get your medication through automatic refills.

After your response to continue is received, Express Scripts will contact

your doctor to renew your prescription. If Express Scripts can't get in touch with your doctor, they'll let you know. You may need to reach out to your doctor.

This consent is required once your prescription expires to ensure you're still taking the medication and continue to receive refills automatically. Your doctor may ask to see you before renewing the prescription. Once the order ships, your payment method will be charged for your pharmacy copayment.

Can I change or cancel an automatic refill order?

Yes. Express Scripts will contact you via your preferred communication method before every automatic refill to tell you they're getting ready to start working on your order. This gives you time to change the date or cancel the prescription if you no longer need your medication. You can track your order through the Express Scripts® mobile app while it's processed and shipped.

Got questions about prescription costs? Visit TRICARE Pharmacy or download the TRICARE Costs and Fees Sheet.



**GAETA, Italy
(March 16, 2021)
Electronics Technician 2nd Class
Joseph Sawyer
responds to a
simulated active
shooter during
a security drill
aboard the Blue
Ridge-class com-
mand and control
ship USS Mount
Whitney (LCC 20),
operating in the
U.S. 6th Fleet area
of operations.**

U.S. Navy photo by Mass
Communication Specialist
2nd Class Scott Barnesby

For seniors, tooth loss not a result of aging

Delta Dental

Contrary to common belief, tooth loss is primarily the result of preventable oral disease and not the aging process. Proper oral care can keep you smiling well into retirement, and taking care of your teeth can help them last a lifetime.

As you age, your dental needs become increasingly specialized, making regular visits to the dentist even more essential. Common problems to watch for are:

Gum (periodontal) disease. Most people don't realize how important it is to take care of their gums as well as their teeth. Gum disease is an infection of the gum tissue that supports the teeth and is the leading cause of tooth loss in adults. Most adults show some signs of gum disease. Gum disease has two stages:

Gingivitis. Gingivitis is an early stage of gum disease that is reversible with good oral hygiene and professional treatment. Gingivitis is caused by the bacteria found in plaque. Symptoms of gingivitis include red, swollen gums and possible bleeding when you brush. If you have any of these symptoms, see a dentist at once. If left untreated, gingivitis can advance into periodontitis.

Periodontitis. Periodontitis, a more

severe form of gum disease, affects more than half of 65- to 74-year-olds. With this condition, bacterial infection causes your gums and the bone supporting the teeth to break down. Your gums may begin to recede, pulling back from the teeth. In the worst cases, the bone supporting the teeth is destroyed and, if untreated, can lead to tooth loss.

Root caries (decay). As we age, gums may recede due to the damage caused by brushing too hard or gum disease. Receding gums cause the exposure of the root surfaces of teeth. Root surfaces are softer and more porous and therefore more susceptible to decay than the tooth crown.

Oral cancer. Oral cancer most often occurs in people over 40 years of age. See a dentist immediately if you notice any red or white patches on your gums, tongue or other oral tissues, and watch for sores that fail to heal within two weeks. Unfortunately, oral cancer is often difficult to detect in its early stages, when it can be cured more easily. Your dentist should perform a head and neck exam to screen for signs of cancer at your regular checkups.

Dry mouth. Taking prescription and over-the-counter medications can cause

changes to the oral tissues. Many common medications cause a decrease in saliva, leading to dry mouth. Since saliva plays a major role in preventing tooth decay by rinsing away bacteria and food particles and by neutralizing harmful acids, you should talk to your dentist about ways to treat dry mouth.

Difficulty brushing and flossing. If you have arthritis, you may find it difficult to brush and floss. Ask your dentist for ways to overcome this problem. Certain dental products are designed to make oral care more comfortable. You may want to try strapping the toothbrush to a larger object, such as a ball, to make the brush more comfortable to handle. Electric toothbrushes do a good job of removing plaque and can help by doing some of the work for you. Tools to help make flossing easier are available in most drug stores.

Limited dentist access. If you have difficulty accessing dental services because of transportation, medical conditions or limited mobility, ask a family member to help schedule regular dental visits and provide transportation. If you are planning to enter a senior community or assisted living facility, inquire about the facility's dental care services.

DFAS tools can help manage pay account

Submitted by DFAS Cleveland

Did you know that the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) has a variety of convenient tools to help you get or provide the information you need to manage your retired pay or Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity pay account?

Most of the DFAS tools are even available on your web browser from your smartphone or tablet! Check out some examples of the helpful tools below.

DFAS.mil Website Tools

Start here: www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary

News, Overviews, FAQs, and Quick Links

See news/announcements on the Retired & Annuitant Pay main webpage, plus quick links, and how-to's for myPay.

The quarterly Retiree Newsletter and the new semiannual Survivor SBP Newsletter are available to read online, plus in a downloadable, shareable PDF.

Need a form? The retiree and annuitant forms webpage provides quick links to download forms, Form Wizards, and other helpful form tools.

Retirees - there is a range of information on planning for and managing military retirement, including overviews and FAQs on applying for retirement, keeping your contact information up to date, getting tax documents, and understanding the VA Waiver and disability pay. There is also information on what your family needs to know after you pass away.

Survivor Benefit Plan annuitants - there are overviews and FAQs on a variety of topics that include applying for SBP, keeping your contact information up to date, and getting tax documents, as well as the reporting and eligibility requirements for SBP annuitants. There are also explainer webpages on School Certifications and Understanding SBP, DIC and SSIA, plus a news page for the phase-out of the SBP-DIC Offset.

The "How Long Does It Take" webpage provides typical time frames for processing.

Have questions? Look for FAQs webpages that provide answers to common questions on an assortment of topics.

Tools to Make Forms Easier to Fill Out and Submit

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service is rolling out new tools to help retirees and annuitants fill out and submit forms easily and correctly. The tools include helpful PDF Form Wizards, how-to checklists, and how-to videos.

The Form Wizards "take the form out of the form" by asking a series of questions and filling in your answers in the appropriate areas of the form. The how-to checklists and how-to

videos provide quick tips and walk-throughs of the forms to help you fill them out correctly and easily.

AskDFAS FAQs, Online Forms and Upload Tools

Start here and choose Retirees and Annuitants:

www.dfas.mil/dfas/AskDFAS/

♦ FAQs

Read helpful questions and answers about retired or annuitant pay, or submit a question of your own. Please note, these are general question and answers, not those specific to an individual situation.

♦ AskDFAS Online Forms

Send DFAS information or a request via one of our AskDFAS online forms:

- Retirees and annuitants can get 1099-Rs sent to their mailing address on record or to a one-time, temporary mailing address by submitting the request online on AskDFAS.
- Use our convenient online form to report the death of a military retiree.

♦ AskDFAS Online Upload Tools

The new AskDFAS online upload tools allow some forms and the required documentation to be uploaded and submitted through AskDFAS on the DFAS.mil website, which is also accessible on a mobile browser. More online upload tools are coming in 2021.

myPay <https://mypay.dfas.mil>

The fastest and most secure way to manage your retired pay or SBP pay account is through myPay, which is available using the internet from your computer or your mobile device browser.

myPay provides convenient access to a range of information about your payments, and lets you easily update your contact information or your tax withholding, check your SBP coverage and your AOP beneficiary (retirees), submit your annual certification (annuitants), or download your tax documents. Retirees and annuitants can log in to myPay, and print a 1099-R from the comfort of their home.

Also, when you have an email address in myPay, you can receive important email messages from DFAS about your pay account and information from your branch of service.

1099-R Telephone Self-Service for Retirees

If your mailing address on file with us is current, retirees can get a 1099-R copy through our telephone self-service option.

Start Here for All of the Convenient Tools

You can access all of the DFAS tools from the Retired & Annuitant Pay main webpage at: www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary



DFAS: Additional option for managing your allotments

Submitted by DFAS Cleveland

In an effort to support DoD's ongoing reform to reduce costs, DFAS is encouraging retirees to set up their discretionary allotments with their personal financial institutions using the online banking tools now commonly available through most banks.

Discretionary allotments (e.g. home mortgage payments or savings) are specific dollar amounts you designate for deposit into another bank account directly from your retirement pay.

Managing these transactions through your financial institution instead of your myPay account is easy and allows you to take advantage of tools that offer flexibility to establish, cancel, and modify payments. It's fast, simple and



free at most banks.

Examples of discretionary allotments that can easily transfer to your financial institutions include:

- ♦ Commercial Insurance payments
- ♦ Other Financial Organizations / Savings Accounts

Note: There is no change to non-discretionary allotments (e.g. health care and child support), which you do not control.

Many institutions offer tutorials for those who are not familiar with this option or process. You will typically need the account number for your allotment payment (e.g., insurance number, savings account) and the name, address, and phone number of the payment company/institution.

For additional information and instructions on how to stop discretionary allotments in your myPay account, visit DFAS.mil's Retired Military Manage Allotments here.

You can also call the DFAS Customer Care Center at (800) 321-1080.

ESGR looking for a few good volunteers

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a Department of Defense program with a mission to foster positive relationships between Guard and Reserve members and their civilian employers through outreach, mediation, and recognition.

The program relies on a network of more than 3,500 volunteers across 54 state committees to help carry out the mission.

The program is always looking for volunteer talent to help brief units on the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), engage employers, or become ombudsmen and help conduct informal mediation between service members and their employers if issues arise.

Attached is a graphic

Would you like to stay connected to Service members by supporting Reserve and National Guard members in your community? Consider becoming an ESGR volunteer, and help strive to promote a culture in which all employers value military service in the National Guard and Reserve.

This is accomplished by educating service members and employers about their rights and responsibilities under USERRA, recognizing supportive employers through a robust awards program, and mediating conflicts between Service members and their employers when issues arise.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is powered by a network of DoD volunteers who support ESGR Committees located in every state, territory, and the District of Columbia.



Volunteers perform a variety of roles, including employer engagement, representing ESGR at tradeshow and community events; unit outreach, briefing service members on USERRA; engagement with business, government, and military leaders to raise awareness of ESGR's resources; and conducting mediation to help resolve conflicts between service members and civilian employers as an ombudsman.

These dedicated volunteers come from all walks of life. They are business executives, civic leaders, and patriotic citizens, but they all join for one main reason: to support the National Guard and Reserve members who protect our nation at home and around the world.

Join and become an ESGR volunteer today by visiting www.esgr.mil/Volunteers/Become-a-Volunteer

AROUND THE FLEET



TEMA, Ghana (March 23, 2021) Information Systems Technician 1st Class Samuel Ellis speaks to students at a junior high school during a community relations event in Tema, Ghana as part of Exercise Obangame Express 2021. It was a homecoming for Ellis, as he was once a student at this very same school. Far left, Ellis and Sailors in the Ghanaian Navy review a map in a maritime operation center. Left, Lt. Aricka Faulkner learns a traditional dance from teachers and students.

U.S. Navy photos by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Trey Fowler



 To see a video about Ellis' visit to his former school, click [here](#).

Captain Amy Bauernschmidt will soon assume command of **USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72)**, marking the first time a female commanding officer will lead the crew of one of the Navy's 11 nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. The Milwaukee, Wisconsin native and 1994 Naval Academy graduate will take command this summer, upon completion of the nuclear power, aviation, and leadership training required of aircraft carrier COs.

Official Navy Photo



GULF OF ADAN (March 15, 2021) Sailors assigned to the guided-missile destroyer **USS Laboon (DDG 58)** fire M9 pistols during a live-fire weapons qualification shoot. Laboon is supporting the **Charles de Gaulle Carrier Strike Group** while deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations.

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Jeremy R. Boan

AROUND THE FLEET



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist
2nd Class Brandie Nuzzi

INDIAN OCEAN (March 28, 2021) The Indian navy Shivalik-class guided-missile frigate *INS Shivalik* (F47), front, transits in formation with the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer *USS Russell* (DDG 59) during a joint force maritime exercise



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kaleb J. Sarten

MEDITERRANEAN SEA (March 17, 2021) Gunner's Mate Seaman Chandler Hanif, from Gastonia, North Carolina, strikes an opponent during security reaction forces basic (SRF-B) training aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer *USS Mitscher* (DDG 57). *Mitscher* is operating with the Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group on a routine deployment in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in support of U.S. national interests and security in Europe and Africa.

PACIFIC OCEAN (March 22, 2021) Boatswain's Mate Seaman Shannon Hagen, from Grand Rapids, Mich., uses a radio during a damage control drill aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer *USS John Finn* (DDG 113). *John Finn* is underway conducting routine operations in U.S. 3rd Fleet.

U.S. Navy photo by
Mass Communication
Specialist 3rd Class
Jason Waite



VANotify gives updates with new digital feature

Story courtesy of VA Office of Information and Technology

Veterans, their families and caregivers can now receive digital notifications through VANotify, a new paperless platform.

While Veterans already receive appointment notifications through VEText, VA sends most notifications via postal mail. With VANotify, Veterans can now receive even more VA notifications by email and text.

Veterans do not have to sign up for VANotify. VA automatically uses it on the back-end to streamline communications to Veterans who receive services from VA, as long as the Veteran's contact information with VA is [up to date](#).

Mail delivery is a slow and expensive process. It can lead to Veterans amassing piles of letters related to their health care, benefits, and other services. Challenges can also arise when Veterans change addresses or do not have easy access to a mailbox. With the launch of VANotify, which was developed using open source software, VA further expands the Department's capability to effortlessly send Veterans emails and texts to support the following functions:

- ◆ Confirming Veterans' receipt of benefits applications
- ◆ Notifying Veterans of changes to their VA accounts



- ◆ Helping Veterans track their VA Pharmacy deliveries

Other uses

Most recently, VA used the feature to notify Veterans about COVID-19 vaccinations. Over 200,000 Veterans received communications around vaccination planning through VANotify.

There are plans to expand the use of VANotify to include:

- ◆ Sending monthly SMS notifications about benefit payments
 - ◆ Sending information about debt acquisition
 - ◆ Expanding VANotify features to enable push notifications (automated messages sent by VA applications to a user)
- VA's investments in digital applications such as the COVID-19 Chatbot, "I

am Here" texting solution, the Digital Screener tool, and now VANotify, ensure Veterans have more options and flexibility in accessing the benefits and services they have earned.

Charles Worthington, VA's chief technology officer, highlighted the technologists, analysts, and partners across VA and private industry who collaborated to deliver this innovative IT solution.

"At VA, our number one priority is delivering excellent customer service to our Veterans," Worthington said. "It has been incredible to see so many VA staff from across the agency come together and quickly deliver creative solutions to new problems. VANotify is a great example of VA's commitment to using new technologies to improve our services."



U.S. Navy Airman Megan Kearns climbs on the forward course yard aboard the U.S. Coast Guard barque USCGS Eagle (WJX 327) while underway in the Atlantic Ocean. Sailors assigned to USS Constitution are underway with Eagle to receive training in the art of sail and to further build Navy and Coast Guard relationships.

U.S. Navy Photo by
Mass Communication Specialist
2nd Class Grant Grady

FTC: Shut down unwanted communications

*From the Federal Trade Commission,
Division of Consumer and Business Education*

Tired of having your mailbox crammed with unsolicited mail, including preapproved credit card applications? Fed up with getting telemarketing calls just as you're sitting down to dinner? Fuming that your email inbox is chock-full of unsolicited advertising? The good news is that you can cut down on the number of unsolicited mailings, calls, and emails you receive by learning where to go to "just say no."

Consumer Reporting Companies

If you decide that you don't want to receive prescreened offers of credit and insurance, you have two choices: You can opt out of receiving them for five years or opt out of receiving them permanently.

To opt out for five years: Call toll-free (888) 5-OPT-OUT (888-567-8688) or visit www.optoutprescreen.com. The phone number and website are operated by the major consumer reporting companies.

To opt out permanently: You may begin the permanent Opt-Out process online at www.optoutprescreen.com. To complete your request, you must return the signed Permanent Opt-Out Election form, which will be provided after you initiate your online request.

Now be advised: When you call or visit the website, you'll be asked to provide certain personal information, including your home telephone number, name, Social Security number, and date of birth. The information you provide is confidential and will be used only to process your request to opt out.

If you don't have access to the Internet, you may send a written request to permanently opt out to each of the major consumer reporting companies. Make sure your request includes your home telephone number, name, Social Security number, and date of birth.

Direct Marketers Telemarketing

The government's National Do Not Call Registry is a free, easy way to reduce the telemarketing calls you get at home. To register your phone number or to get information about the registry, visit www.donotcall.gov, or call (888) 382-1222 from



the phone number you want to register. You will get fewer telemarketing calls within 31 days of registering your number. Telephone numbers on the registry will only be removed when they are disconnected and reassigned, or when you choose to remove a number from the registry.

Mail and Email

Consumers can register at the Direct Marketing Association's (DMA) consumer website: www.DMAchoice.org for a processing fee of \$2 for a period of ten years. Registering online is the fastest way to see results. DMAchoice offers consumers a simple, step-by-step process that enables them to decide what mail they do and do not want.

In addition, DMAchoice online offers registration for DMA's eMail Preference Service (reduce your unsolicited commercial email);

Mail-in registration:

If you do not wish to complete your registration online, you can register for DMAchoice by using the mail-in form that is online: fill out the DMAchoice Mail In Form with all required information, print it and mail to the address below.

Or, if you do not have access to the Internet, you can register by sending your name and address (with signature), along with a \$3 processing fee (check or money order payable to DMA) to:

DMAchoice
DMA
PO Box 900
Cos Cob, CT 06807

Department of Motor Vehicles

The Drivers Privacy Protection Act allows states to distribute personal information only to law enforcement officials, courts, government agencies, private investigators, insurance underwriters, and similar businesses — but not for direct marketing and other uses.

CONSUMER REPORTING AGENCIES

Experian
Opt Out

P.O. Box 919
Allen, TX 75013

TransUnion
Name Removal Option
P.O. Box 505
Woodlyn, PA 19094

Equifax, Inc.
Options

P.O. Box 740123
Atlanta, GA 30374

Innovis Consumer Assistance
P.O. Box 495
Pittsburgh, PA 15230

Armed Forces Retirement Home now welcoming retired enlisted Reserve, National Guard members

From AFRH

Are you seeking to live in a vibrant and affordable independent-living retirement community with other military retirees? Are you retired from the service, with the majority of your duty time spent as an enlisted member or warrant officer? Then the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) may be just for you!

With locations in Washington, D.C., and Gulfport, Mississippi, the home now also welcomes retired reservists and National Guard members to apply for residency.

Experience the same camaraderie you enjoyed during your time in uniform, and join your fellow retirees in a dynamic community that also offers exceptional care and extensive services!

Rooms are currently available at both locations with no waiting period, down payment or contract required. The monthly rate for independent living is just 46.7 percent of the resident's gross monthly income or \$2,050, whichever is less.

All residents must be able to live independently upon moving to AFRH. We also provide advanced levels of care to our current residents as they age in place.

Many veterans choose to live at AFRH for the superior medical, dental and vision care offered, with amenities that include private rooms with a shower,



With locations in Washington, D.C., and Gulfport, Mississippi, the Armed Forces Retirement Home now also welcomes retired reservists and National Guard members to apply for residency.

three delicious daily meals prepared by licensed nutritionists in our modern dining facility, a wellness program and deluxe fitness center, movie theater, bowling center, and numerous hobby shops, clubs, and social activities.

Services include recreational activities and resident day trips, a full-service library, barber shop, beauty salon, 24-7 security, computer center, mailboxes, ATM, campus PX/NEX and convenient transportation available to local hospitals and appointments. Residents also have access to additional services such as on-site physical and occupational therapy, in-room internet and cable TV, podiatry, and counseling.

In Washington, D.C., AFRH offers residents a scenic, wooded campus just

minutes from downtown - home to museums, monuments, and a host of local entertainment, sports and other cultural options. In Gulfport, residents have a beautiful view of the Gulf of Mexico, with an outdoor swimming pool, walking path to the beach, reflecting pool, art studio and modern media room.

Veterans who are not retired may also be eligible to live at AFRH if they have a service-connected disability of 50 percent or greater, or if they served in a war theater (such as in Vietnam, Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan) and now have an injury, disease or disability.

Married couples are welcome to apply for residency at AFRH:

- ♦ If both individuals meet all military and other eligibility requirements in their own right, or

- ♦ If the eligible veteran is retired and married their current spouse prior to military retirement.

Call for details regarding married couples' fees – discounts are available.

Veterans convicted of a felony or who are not free of drug, alcohol, or psychiatric problems are ineligible.

For further information or to request an application visit <https://www.afrh.gov/apply> or contact the Office of Public Affairs at admissions@afrh.gov or (800) 422-9988.

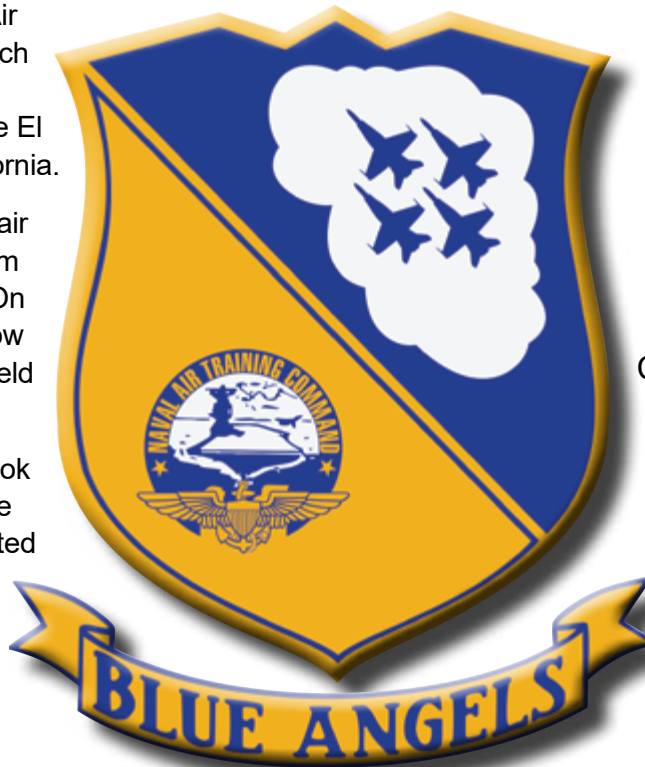


Blue Angels

The Blue Angels are at Naval Air Station Pensacola from mid-March until early January each year. In January they train together at the El Centro Naval Air Facility in California.

Here is a calendar of the 2021 air shows. This year's season is from mid-April until early November. On Nov. 5, the Homecoming Air Show will take place at their home airfield at NAS Pensacola.

Due to the pandemic, please look for local updates pertaining to the specific air show you are interested in attending. Shows could be cancelled due to conditions.



APRIL 17 - 18

Lakeland, FL
Sun N' Fun Aerospace Expo

MAY 1 - 2

NAS Corpus Christi, TX
Wings Over South Texas

MAY 8 - 9

Fort Lauderdale, FL
Fort Lauderdale Air Show

MAY 15 - 16

Melbourne, FL
Great Florida Air Show

MAY 26 - 28

Annapolis, MD
USNA Flyover

MAY 29 - 30

Latrobe, PA
Westmoreland County Air Show

JUNE 5 - 6

Lake Charles, LA
Chennault International Air Show

JUNE 12 - 13

La Crosse, WI
Deke Slayton Airfest

JUNE 19 - 20

Niagara Falls, NY
Thunder of Niagara

JUNE 26 - 27

Duluth, MN
Duluth Air and Aviation Expo

JULY 3 - 4

New Century, KS
KC Air Show

JULY 10

Pensacola Beach, FL
Pensacola Beach Air Show

JULY 24 - 25

Fargo, ND
Fargo Air Show

JULY 31

Eielson AFB, AK
Arctic Lightning Air Show

AUGUST 1

Eielson AFB, AK
Arctic Lightning Air Show

AUGUST 7 - 8

Seattle, WA
Boeing Seafair Air Show

AUGUST 14 - 15

Owensboro, KY
Owensboro Air Show

AUGUST 21 - 22

Chicago, IL
Chicago Air and Water Show

AUGUST 28 - 29

London, Ontario, Canada
Air Show London

SEPTEMBER 4 - 5

JB Cape Cod, MA
Cape Cod Air Show

SEPTEMBER 18 - 19

NAS Oceana, VA
NAS Oceana Air Show

SEPTEMBER 25 - 26

MCAS Miramar, CA
MCAS Miramar Air Show

OCTOBER 2 - 3

Huntington Beach, CA
The Great Pacific Air Show

OCTOBER 9 - 10

San Francisco, CA
San Francisco Fleet Week

OCTOBER 16 - 17

Loveland, CO
The Great Colorado Air Show

OCTOBER 23 - 24

Fort Worth, TX
Bell Fort Worth Alliance Air Show

OCTOBER 30 - 31

Rome, GA
Wings Over North Georgia

NOVEMBER 5 - 6

NAS Pensacola, FL
NAS Pensacola Homecoming

REUNIONS



To ensure your reunion has the more exposure, send us your information as soon as details are finalized.

SHIP/STATION	Date	Phone	Email/Web
USS BREWTON (FF 1086)	April 22-24	(352) 382-7706	jessmackey@jandltravel.com
USS CONSERVER (ARS 39)	Apr. 28 - May 2	(619) 449-4499	dcwoodworking1@yahoo.com www.ussconserver.org
USS COGSWELL (DD 651) & USS WEDDERBURN (DD 684)	June 7-9	(760) 889-2216	secretary@usscogswell.com www.usscogswell.com
Naval Security Group (Naval Cryptologic Veterans' Association)	June 15-20	(210) 695-1708	ncra.gouge@gmail.com www.usncva.org
USS WYOMING (SSBN 742)	July 23-27	(918) 381-0360	wymingreunion@gmail.com
USS ARCTIC (AOE 8)	Aug. 6-8	(571) 312-5808	ussarcticaoe8@gmail.com www.ussarcticaoe8.org
USS FULTON (AS 11)	Sept. 8-12	N/A	rhnkhs@gmail.com www.ussfulton.org
USS HORNET (CV 8, CV/CVA/CVS 2) joint reunion with USS ESSEX (CV/CVA/CVS 9, LHD-2)	Sept. 13-18	(814) 312-4976 602) 882-0375	hornetcva@aol.com https://usshornetassn.com tferelli@gmail.com https://ussessexassociation.com
USS STERETT (DD 27, DD 407, DLG/CG 31 and DDG 104)	Sept. 16-19	(360) 720-4401	www.sterett.net/reunions/
USS GRAFFIAS (AF 29) and all Viet Nam Era AF's	Sept. 16-20	(847) 567-5341	srchiefdan@comcast.net www.ussgraffias.com
USS DAVID R. RAY (DD 971)	Sept. 16-21	(901) 218-8935	jmarti7378@aol.com www.ussdavidrrayassociation.org
USS TOWERS (DDG 9)	Sept. 21-26	(415) 601-6285	ustowersddg9@pacbell.net www.ustowersddg9.com
USS WILLIAM R RUSH (DD/DDR 714)	Sept. 26-30	(508) 548-5233	captainhock@comcast.net
USS BAUSELL (DD 845)	Sept. 29 - Oct. 4	(928) 854-2205	genied@frontiernet.net www.ussbausell.com
USS ROBERT A OWNES (DD/DDE 827)	Oct. 4-7	(412) 610-0905	billmiller15644@gmail.com
USS SPIEGEL GROVE (LSD 32)	Oct. 20-24	(623) 853-9913	lsd32usn@gmail.com



DPAA lab IDs 300th Oklahoma unknown

Member of capsized ship's Marine detachment makes historic milestone

From Navy Retired Activities

WASHINGTON-The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced the 300th identification of a previously unaccounted-for service member from the USS Oklahoma was made at the DPAA Laboratory at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska on Jan. 28.

Marine PFC John F. Middleswart was the milestone identification for an effort that began 18 years earlier in 2003, but has seen the majority of its work in the past five and a half years with the USS Oklahoma Project.

"When his identification came through, it was really exciting because I knew this was number 300," said Carrie LeGarde, the USS Oklahoma Project lead. "It shows everyone's hard work and I knew everyone would be really excited about it, because this is a really huge milestone for the project."

Hattie Johnson, the head of the Repatriation branch of the Marine Corps Casualty Office, said her office was also excited, but that they were not the only ones.

"When I notified the nephew, who is 80 years old, he was not only excited that his uncle had been identified, he was also excited that he was the 300th service member of 429 unaccounted-for Sailors and Marines to be identified," said Johnson. "He stated that his mother, he, and his brother provided DNA in 2009 to assist in the identification of his uncle if remains were recovered, although he was skeptical that an identification would happen in his lifetime."

"His mother always hoped that her brother would be recovered and identified. She passed away in 2015 at 98 years old. The Marine Corps is very excited and looking forward to working with the family to bring PFC Middleswart home!"

In 2015, Department of Defense officials approved the phased disinterment of all the USS Oklahoma caskets from the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, where 394 unidentified Sailors and Marines had been buried as Unknowns since being consolidated there from other Hawaiian cemeteries in the 1950s. Since then, only six USS Oklahoma crewmen had been accounted for, leaving 388 left to identify.

On Nov. 10, 2015, the last caskets were removed from the cemetery thanks to a partnership between DPAA, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of the Navy. All of the capsized vessel's remains were transferred to the Offutt lab. While this accomplishment signifies that the project will soon end, LeGarde said her team isn't finished yet. She expects a conservative estimate of 42 more identifications will be made, but is pushing for more.

"I am very optimistic that we will hit 350," she said. "We're really shooting for that next milestone."

For additional information on the USS Oklahoma Project, visit the DPAA website at <https://www.dpaa.mil>.

As of March 29, DPAA scientists have identified 323 Sailors and Marines from the USS Oklahoma.



The DPAA recently announced the identification of Marine PFC John F. Middleswart as the 300th unknown crewmember of the USS Oklahoma.



HONOLULU (Jan. 29, 2021) Sailors conduct a funeral for U.S. Navy Chief Machinist's Mate Lada Smisek at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Honolulu, Hawaii. Smisek served at Naval Ammunition Depot and Submarine Base Cavite, Philippines, when Japanese forces invaded, resulting in thousands of U.S. and Filipino service members being taken prisoner and sent to prisoner of war camps. Smisek was among those reported captured after the surrender of Corregidor and held at the Cabanatuan POW camp, where he died on Sept. 28, 1942. Smisek was recently identified through DNA analysis by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) forensic laboratory and laid to rest with full military honors.

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Melanye Martinez

Retired Activities Office Locator

NOTE: Locations listed with '★' need volunteers.

Navy and Joint RAOs

Arizona (★)

➤ Retired Activities Office
Navy Operational Support Center
14160 W. Marauder St.
Luke AFB, Phoenix, AZ 85309
9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Tue-Thu)
☎ (602) 353-3033, Opt. 4, Press 2

California

➤ Retired Activities Office (★)
Naval Air Weapons Station
Code 75H000D
1 Administration Circle
China Lake, CA 93555-6100
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (760) 939-0978

➤ Retired Activities Office (★)
Fleet and Family Support Center
966 Franklin Ave., Bldg. 930
Naval Air Station
Lemoore, CA 93246
8 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (559) 998-4032

➤ Retired Activities Office (★)
Housing Office Bldg. 587
Moffet Field, CA 94035-0162
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
(Tues/Wed/Fri)
☎ (650) 603-8047

➤ Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
1000 23rd Ave, Bldg. 1169, Code N93V
Port Hueneme, CA 93043
8 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (805) 982-1023

➤ Retired Activities Office (CLOSED)
Naval Amphibious Base (NAB)
3324 Guadalcanal Road, Bldg. 16
Coronado, CA 92155
8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Mon/Tues/Thu/Fri)
☎ (619) 437-2780

➤ Retired Activities Office (★)
Navy Station San Diego
Fleet and Family Support Center
3005 Corbina Alley, Suite 1
San Diego, CA 92136
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (619) 556-8987

➤ Retired Activities Office
Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach
800 Seal Beach Blvd.
Bldg. 22, Room. 2
Seal Beach, CA 90740-5000
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon-Thu)
9 a.m. - noon (Fri)
☎ (562) 626-7152

➤ **Connecticut (serves RI retirees)**
Retired Activities Office
Naval Sub Base, New London
Building 83, P.O. Box 93
Groton, CT 06349-5000
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (860) 694-3284

Florida

➤ Retired Activities Office
Naval Air Station, Jacksonville
Fleet and Family Support Center
554 Childs St., Bldg. 876
P.O. Box 136
Jacksonville, FL 32212-0136
10 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (904) 542-5790, Fax: 542-5716

➤ Retired Activities Office (★)
Fleet and Family Support Center
Naval Air Station Whiting Field
7511 USS Enterprise St., Bldg. 3025
Milton, FL 32570-5000
8:30 - 11:30 a.m. (Mon & Fri)
☎ (850) 623-7215/7177

➤ Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
Naval Air Station Pensacola
151 Ellyson Ave., Bldg. 625
NAS Pensacola, FL 32508-5217
9 a.m. - 1 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (850) 452-5622

Hawaii

➤ Retired Activities Office (★)
Military and Family Support Center
4827 Bougainville Drive
Honolulu, HI 96818-3174
9 a.m. - 1 p.m. (Mon-Wed)
8 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Thu-Fri)
☎ (808) 474-0032/1999

Illinois

➤ Retired Activities Office (CLOSED)
Fleet and Family Support Center
2601A Paul Jones St., Bldg. 42
Naval Training Center
Great Lakes, IL 60088-5125
9 - 11 a.m. (Wed)
☎ (847) 688-2430

Maine (with Portsmouth Shipyard)

➤ Retired Activities Office (★)
400 Foxtrot Ave.
Naval Air Station
Brunswick, ME 04011-5004
9 a.m. - 1 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (207) 841-0582

Maryland (★)

➤ Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
NSA Annapolis
168 Bennion Rd.
Annapolis, MD 21402
9 - 11 a.m. (Wed.)
☎ (410) 293-2641

Massachusetts (CLOSED)

➤ Retired Activities Office
Navy Operational Support Center
85 Sea St.
Quincy, MA 02169
11 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Fri.)
☎ (617) 753-4636/26

Michigan (Joint RAO)

➤ Retired Activities Office
44200 Jefferson, Bldg. 780,
Room 17 (S604)
Selfridge Army National Guard Base
Mt. Clemens, MI 48045-5263
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Tue-Fri)

☎ (586) 307-5580

Minnesota (★)

➤ Retired Activities Office
Navy Operational Support Center
6400 Bloomington Rd., Fort Snelling
St. Paul, MN 55111-4051
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Tue & Thu)
☎ (612) 713-4664

Missouri (CLOSED)

➤ Retired Activities Office, St Louis
Navy Operational Support Center
Air National Guard Base
10810 Lambert International Blvd.
Bridgeton, MO 63044-2314
9 a.m. - 1 p.m. (Tue.)
11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. (Fri)
☎ (314) 524-9553/862-5163

New Hampshire (★)

➤ Retired Activities Office
Portsmouth Naval Shipyard
Code 866, Bldg. 22
Portsmouth, NH 03804-5000
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (207) 438-1868

Rhode Island (CLOSED)

Service provided by RAO Groton, CT

South Carolina (CLOSED)

➤ Retired Activities Office
103 Hill Blvd, Bldg. 503, Rm. 122
Joint Base Charleston, SC 29404
9 a.m. - noon (Mon-Fri)
☎ (843) 963-2228

Tennessee (★)

➤ Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
Bldg. 456, 1st Floor
NSA Memphis, Code N 763
Millington, TN 38054-5000
7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (901) 874-5195

Virginia

➤ Retired Activities Office (★)
Fleet and Family Support Center
7928 14th St., Ste. 102
Norfolk, VA 23505-1219
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (757) 445-4380 Fax: 445-5326

➤ Retired Activities Office (★)
Joint Expeditionary Base
Little Creek-Fort Story
Fleet and Family Support Center
1450 D Street
Virginia Beach, VA 23521
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (757) 462-7563/8101

Washington

➤ Retired Activities Office (★)
Fleet and Family Support Center
Naval Station Everett
13910 45th Ave. NE, Rm. 818
Marysville, WA 98271
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (866) 854-0638

➤ Retired Activities Office (★)
Fleet and Family Support Center

Offices marked as (CLOSED) have been shut due to lack of volunteers

Naval Air Station Whidbey Island
Oak Harbor, WA 98278
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (866) 854-0368

➤ Retired Activities Office (★)
Fleet and Family Support Center
Naval Base Kitsap
Silverdale, WA 98315
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
☎ (866) 854-0368

Wisconsin (CLOSED)

➤ Retired Activities Office
Navy and Marine Corps
Reserve Center
2401 South Lincoln Memorial Dr.
Milwaukee, WI 53207-1999
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (414) 744-9766

Navy RAO Overseas

Naples, Italy

➤ Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
3 - 5 p.m. (Wed only)
081-811-6372

Rota, Spain (★)

➤ Retired Activities Office
NS Rota Community Support
Bldg 3293
PSC 819, Box 57
FPO AE 09645-5500
1 - 4 p.m. (Tue & Thu, appt only)
34-956-82-3232 (From Conus)

Independent Retired Coordination Offices (IRCOS)

IRCOS are independent retired activities efforts of interested retirees, not sponsored by the Navy, in areas which are geographically isolated from Navy and Marine Corps commands/installations, but which have a sizeable retired population and share a similar RAO mission and operate in a similar manner.

Florida

➤ Retired Activities Office
VA Lakemont Campus, Rm. 125
2500 Lakemont Ave.
Orlando, FL 32803
☎ (407) 646-4110/4111/4114

Italy

➤ Retired Activities Office
Via De Amicis No. 16
07024 La Maddalena
O. T. Italy
100-Percent Email Contact
✉ Panzanic@Hotmail.com

Subic Bay (Philippine Region)

➤ Retired Activities Office
Subic Bay-Olongapo
No. 34 National Highway
Barrio Barretto 2200
Olongapo City
PSC 517, Box RS
FPO/AP 96517-1000
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon. - Fri.)
✉ Dir@Raosubic.Com
☎ (Office) 011-63-47-222-2314
(24/7 Cell) 639065705335

Ready Reference Contact Information

Air Force Retiree Services: (800) 531-7502; www.retirees.af.mil

Arlington National Cemetery: (703) 607-8000;

www.arlingtoncemetery.org

Armed Forces Retirement Home: (800) 422-9988; www.afrh.gov

Army & Air Force Exchange Service: (214) 312-2011;

www.aafes.com

Army Retired Services: (703) 571-7232;

<https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement>

Burial at Sea Information: (866) 787-0081; webpage

Combat Related Special Compensation:

www.donhq.navy.mil/corb/crscb/crscmainpage.htm

DEERS: (800)-538-9552, Fax: (831) 655-8317;

www.tricare.osd.mil/deers

Defense Commissary Agency: www.commissaries.com

DFAS Casualty Assistance Branch: (800) 321-1080 or (216) 522-5955; (For Reporting a Retiree's death, option #1)

Fleet Reserve Association: (703) 683-1400; www.fra.org

Gulf War homepage: www.gulfink.osd.mil

I.D. Cards Benefits and Eligibility: (866) 827-5672;

<http://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/Pay-Pers-Support/ID-Cards/>

Internal Revenue Service: (800) 829-1040; www.irs.gov

Marine Corps Retired Affairs: (800) 336-4649; www.usmc.mil

(Hover over "Marine Services" then click on "Retired Services")

Medicare: (800) 633-4227. TTY: (877) 486-2048; www.medicare.gov

Military Officers Assoc. of America: (800) 234-6622; www.moaa.org

National Burial Services: (800) 697-6940

NPC Navy Reserve Personnel Management (PERS 9): (866) 827-5672;

www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Career-Management/Reserve-Personnel-Mgmt/

Navy Casualty Assistance: (800) 368-3202

Navy Retired Activities Office: (866) U-ASK-NPC (866-827-5672)

MILL RetiredActivities@navy.mil;

www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/21st-Century-Sailor/Retired-Activities/

Navy Uniform Shop: (800) 368-4088; www.navy-nex.com/uniform

Reserve Component SBP: (866) 827-5672 ask for PERS-912

Retiree Dental — Delta Dental: (888) 838-8737; www.trdp.org

Servicemembers Group Insurance (SGLI): (800) 419-1473;

www.insurance.va.gov

TRICARE: www.mytricare.com/mtc

TRICARE East: www.humanamilitary.com/beneficiary

AL, AR, CT, DC, DE, IL, IN, KY, FL, GA, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MS, NC, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OK, PA, RI, SC, TN (except 35 Western zips), TX (except the extreme Western area) VT, VA, WI, and WV

TRICARE West: www.tricare-west.com

AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, IA (except 82 zips near Rock Island), KS, MO (except St. Louis area), MN, MT, ND, NE, NM, NV, OR, DE, SW TX, UT, WA, WY some zips in IA, MO, TN

TRICARE Overseas: (888) 777-8343; www.tricare-overseas.com

TRICARE For Life: (866) 773-0404; www.tricare.mil/tfl

TRICARE mail order pharmacy: (877) 363-1303;

www.tricare.mil/pharmacy

www.express-scripts.com

VA: www.va.gov

Regional offices: (800) 827-1000 (overseas retirees should contact the American Embassy/consulate), TDD (800) 829-4833

Insurance:

VA Regional Office and Insurance Center

PO Box 7208 (claims inquiries) -ORPO

Box 7327 (loans) -ORPO

Box 7787 (payments)

Philadelphia PA 19101

(800) 669-8477; www.insurance.va.gov

Burial information: (800) 827-1000; www.cem.va.gov

GI Bill: (888) 442-4551; www.gibill.va.gov

Records:

For replacement DD 214s, service records, medical records, award information:

Retired prior to 1995: www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records

Retired after 1995:

Navy Personnel Command

PERS-312E

5720 Integrity Drive

Millington, TN 38055-3120

Fax requests to: (901) 874-2664

Gray-area reservists: (866) 827-5672

Navy recreation: www.mwr.navy.mil

Navy Gateway Inns & Suites: <http://dodlodging.net>

ITT: <http://navymwr.org/mwrprgms/itt.html>

Sister service retiree publications:

Air Force Afterburner: www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner

Army Echoes: <https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement/echoes>

Coast Guard Evening Colors:

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1psc/ras>

Marine Corps Semper Fidelis: www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME/MM/SR/RET_ACT/Semper_Fidelis

Pay/SBP Questions: www.dfas.mil

Pay inquiries and update of pay or SBP records in case of death, divorce or remarriage:

Retiree:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service

U.S. Military Retirement Pay

8899 E 56th Street

Indianapolis, IN 46249-1200

(800) 321-1080 / Fax: (800) 469-6559.

SBP/RSFPP annuitant:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service

U.S. Military Annuitant Pay

8899 E 56th Street

Indianapolis IN 46249-1300

(800) 321-1080 / (800) 469-6559



*PHILIPPINE SEA (March 23, 2021)
Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class Zachary Kai, from Kau, Hawaii, awaits signals from the pilots of an MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter assigned to Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 51 during flight operations on the flight deck of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS John S. McCain (DDG 56).*

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Jeremy Graham