

**BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY
OF THE AIR FORCE**

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Services

***MORTUARY SERVICES ENTITLEMENTS
FOR RETIRED AIR FORCE MEMBERS***

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This pamphlet is provided for you, the retiree, to assist you in explaining to your next of kin the various mortuary entitlements you may be eligible for upon death. It also includes a mortuary planning sheet for items to be considered in making funeral arrangements. This publication applies to civilian and military members of the Regular Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. In collaboration with the Chief of Air Force Reserve and the Director of the Air National Guard, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services (AF/A1) develops personnel policy for mortuary services entitlements for retired AF members. This Air Force publication may be supplemented at any level; Major Command-level supplements must be approved by the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) prior to certification and approval. Refer recommended changes to the OPR using Air Force Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route AF Form 847s from the field through the appropriate functional chain of command. Ensure all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with Air Force Manual 33-363, *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule located in the Air Force Records Information Management System.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This document has been revised to clarify eligibility for burial at the USAFA cemetery and to add specificity for some categories of eligibility.

1. Mortuary Services Entitlements. Members who retire from the Air Force retain certain mortuary services entitlements. Recognizing your long and faithful military service, the Air Force extends mortuary services entitlements to you within the extent possible as permitted by law.

2. Entitlements Administered and Extended by the Air Force.

2.1. The Air Force will transport you remains upon your death if:

2.1.1. You die while properly admitted to a military medical facility of the armed forces (excludes Veterans Administration hospitals) in the United States, to include Alaska, Hawaii, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and other territories and possessions of the United States.

2.1.1.1. "Properly admitted" means you are placed under treatment or observation and you are provided room, board, and continuous nursing service in the area of the hospital where patients stay at least overnight.

2.1.1.2. If you die in the emergency room without being properly admitted, no eligibility exists.

2.1.1.3. Deaths occurring in Veterans Administration hospital after being properly admitted may be eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs Death Benefit entitlements.

2.1.2. The destination is not to a place further from the place of death than the decedent's last place of permanent residence, and any amount paid may not exceed the cost of transportation from the place of death to the decedent's last place of permanent residence.

2.1.2.1. If the place of burial is further distant than your last place of permanent residence, the Air Force can pay no more than the cost to transport your remains to your last place of permanent residence. For example, your home is in Orlando, Florida, and visit Biloxi, Mississippi. You become ill and are properly admitted to the Air Force Hospital, Keesler AFB, Mississippi, and subsequently die. You are entitled to transportation of your remains back to Orlando, Florida. However, if your Next of Kin wants to bury you in Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia, the Air Force could pay no more than what it would have cost to return your remains to Orlando, Florida (your permanent address).

2.2. Authorized Transportation Expenses. If eligible, the Air Force will pay the following expenses:

2.2.1. Removal of remains from place of death or where remains are released by authorities to a funeral home selected by your Next of Kin for preparation, dressing, and casketing.

2.2.2. An outer shipping container to protect casket if transportation is by commercial air or rail.

2.2.3. Delivery of remains from the funeral home to a nearby airport or rail station.

2.2.4. Cost of commercial air carrier or train. The movement of your remains by military aircraft in the United States is prohibited by law.

2.2.5. Delivery of remains from the airport or rail station at destination to the funeral home selected by your Next of Kin.

2.2.6. Delivery of remains from the destination funeral home to the cemetery.

2.3. Military Funeral Honors. The Air Force may provide military honors at your place of burial provided:

2.3.1. Your Next of Kin or funeral director requests such honors by contacting the Honor Guard office at the nearest active Air Force base at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled time/date of burial.

2.3.2. There is sufficient time allotted to transition a funeral honors detail to the place of burial. Remember, the nearest servicing Air Force base may be several hundred miles away.

2.3.3. Rendering the desired honors will not interfere with the execution of the base's primary mission.

2.3.4. Military funeral honors will be performed by at least a two-person detail. Military funeral honors will include flag folding and presentation, and the playing of Taps. NOTE: Other elements, such as pallbearers, firing party, live bugler, color guard, Air Force chaplain may be provided, if resources are available. Whether the additional requested elements are provided depends on the capability of the base on the day requested.

2.3.5. Your Next of Kin may request a flyover at the place of burial if:

2.3.5.1. If you served as a 3-star or 4-star general officer.

2.3.5.2. If you served as Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force.

2.3.5.3. If you were awarded the Medal of Honor, Air Force Cross, Army Distinguished Service Cross, or Navy Cross.

2.3.5.4. If you achieved at least one or more officially recognized aerial victories, or were a Prisoner of War.

2.3.6. The performance of a flyover depends on the availability of tactical aircraft at the given time and date, minimum weather requirements, and approvals for the required air space.

2.4. Interment in the USAF Academy Cemetery, Colorado Springs, Colorado. You, your spouse, and dependent unmarried children under 21 years of age may be interred in the USAF Academy Cemetery provided you are a:

2.4.1. USAF Academy graduate (retiree or veteran graduate).

2.4.2. An active duty or retired USAF General (4-star) or Lieutenant General (3-star).

2.4.3. Former Superintendents, Vice Superintendents, Commandants of Cadets, Deans of the Faculty, Directors of Staff (formerly Chiefs of Staff), congressionally appointed Directors of Admissions, USAFA Directors of Athletics, Permanent Professors, Senior Military Faculty (formerly Continuous Tour Staff Officers and Sequential Tour Faculty Officers), Tenured Faculty Officers, Preparatory School Commanders, 10th Air Base Wing Commanders and Academy Command Chief Master Sergeants.

- 2.4.4. Original cadre AF personnel assigned to the USAFA between 11 July 1955 and 29 August 1958.
- 2.4.5. AF military personnel assigned to USAFA or tenant units at the Academy at the time of their deaths. This does not include non-Academy personnel who are assigned on Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders to the Academy Patient Squadron Section of the USAFA Clinic.
- 2.4.6. USAF cross-commissioned officer graduates of U.S. Military Academy or the U.S. Naval Academy who have retired with at least 20 years of uniformed service.
- 2.4.7. Air Force Academy (AFA) Board of Visitors members who were honorably discharged following military service.
- 2.4.8. All Medal of Honor recipients regardless of branch of service.
- 2.4.9. All Air Force Cross recipients.
- 2.4.10. Former CMSgts performing as Cadet Wing Sergeant Majors who held the position during any period of service between 1972 and 1996.
- 2.4.11. Female Air Training Officers (ATOs) assigned to the U.S. Air Force Academy between 1975 and 1977 in support of the arrival of the first female cadets who graduated in the Class of 1980. A list of names is on file in the Mortuary Affairs Office.
- 2.4.12. Eligible relatives of a service-connected sponsor who are interred or eligible to be interred in the Academy Cemetery. The Academy Cemetery inters eligible relatives who die before their service-connected sponsor only if the sponsor signs an agreement saying he or she wants to be interred in the Academy Cemetery.

3. US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefits. You are entitled to certain benefits administered and extended by the VA. Listed below are VA benefits in general. Should you have specific questions or circumstances concerning these benefits, please contact your nearest VA office for assistance. The VA forms and pamphlets discussed in the following paragraphs may be obtained from the nearest VA office or through the VA website at https://www.cem.va.gov/burial_benefits/.

3.1. National Cemetery. You may be interred in a national cemetery, most of which are operated by the VA, while Arlington National Cemetery is operated by Department of the Army. For the most current information on interment eligibility requirements at Arlington National Cemetery, check the following website: www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/#/.

3.1.1. All retirees, their spouses, and unmarried children under 21 years of age are eligible for burial in national cemeteries, including Arlington.

3.1.2. You can find information on burial eligibility, locate a cemetery, learn about burial benefits and more at the VA's website at: www.cem.va.gov.

3.2. Government Headstone. A government-furnished headstone may be obtained to mark your grave. There are different styles and types of headstones and certain cemetery requirements that must be met. All details concerning these headstones may be found in VA Form 40-1330, *Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker*.

3.3. Burial Allowance. Your Next of Kin may receive a small burial allowance from the VA. Details pertaining to this allowance are contained in the VA Fact Sheet, *Burial and Plot Interment Allowance*.

3.4. Interment Flag. You are entitled to one interment flag to drape your casket, with ultimate presentation to your Next of Kin. This flag is furnished by the VA, not the Air Force. The funeral director handling your arrangements and conducting your funeral obtains this flag by completing a prescribed VA form. The funeral director then gives the form to the nearest postmaster who, in turn, gives him/her the flag that will drape your casket.

4. How to Obtain Entitlements. If your Next of Kin wants to take advantage of some or all entitlements when you die, he or she should do the following:

4.1. Transportation: If eligible for transportation entitlements in accordance with sections 2.1 and 2.2, contact the Force Support Squadron mortuary officer at the closest Air Force base for assistance. The mortuary officer will obtain a signed statement from your Next of Kin listing the funeral home(s) selected and place of burial and will coordinate with the funeral home for billing.

4.2. Military Funeral Honors: Request military funeral honors through your selected funeral home. Provide the funeral director the DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*, or retirement order. If your funeral director cannot assist you, you can contact your closest Force Support Squadron mortuary officer or Honor Guard office to arrange for military funeral honors.

4.3. Provide the funeral home the DD 214 or retirement orders. The document substantiates your status as a retiree for Air Force entitlements and enables your Next of Kin to obtain VA benefits such as interment in a national cemetery, headstone, interment flag, etc.

4.4. Your Next of Kin will be responsible for paying any funeral home and cemetery expenses they incur.

5. Future Planning. A “Mortuary Planning Sheet for Retired Air Force Members” is provided in [Attachment 1](#). This guide is designed to alleviate undue burden on your family members upon your death. Take the time to carefully review the information and complete the attachment. Provide copies of your expressed wishes contained within this attachment to your family members. Questions concerning entitlements or discussions about mortuary matters can be answered by the mortuary officer at the nearest Air Force installation.

Shon J. Manasco
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force
Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, 1 March 2008

AFPD 34-1, *Air Force Services*, 11 October 2018

AFI 34-501, *Mortuary Affairs Program*, 16 April 2019

USAFI 34-501, *Using The USAF Academy Cemetery*, 13 November 2018

VA Fact Sheet, *Burial and Plot Interment Allowance*

Adopted Forms

VA Form 40-1330, *Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker*

DD Form 214, ***Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty***

AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

Attachment 2

MORTUARY PLANNING SHEET FOR RETIRED AIR FORCE MEMBERS

Figure A2.1. Mortuary Planning Sheet for Retired Air Force Members.

To The Next Of Kin Of: _____

This is not intended as a legal or binding document. It is only an expression of my preferences and desires regarding the disposition of my remains upon my death. Please recognize that this was done primarily to make things easier for you and let you know my thoughts.

A1.1. At the time of my death, I prefer (Select One):

Ground Burial

Cremation (_____ Direct or _____ Following Services)

Other: _____

A1.2. I prefer that preparation, casketing, and transportation were arranged and handled by (Select One):

A Private Funeral Service Provider Chosen By You

The Following Private Funeral Service Provider Listed Below

A1.3. Casket selection if my preference is ground burial or entombment (Select One):

Metal Casket (sealing type, steel, bronze or copper)

Metal Casket (non-sealing type, usually light gauge steel)

Solid Hardwood Casket (various woods and colors)

Other: _____

A1.4. Urn selection if cremation is my desire (Select One):

Solid Metal Urn (usually bronze, steel or copper)

Solid Wood Urn (oak, walnut, poplar, cherry, mahogany)

Alternative: _____

A1.5. My cemetery preference is (Select One):

Private Civilian Cemetery

Government Cemetery

Cemetery Name/Location: _____

A1.6. If I chose cremation in A1, I wish my cremated remains to be (Select One):

- Buried In The Cemetery Listed In A1.5.
 Placed In A Columbarium At The Cemetery Listed In A1.5.
 Retain My Urn At Home
 Scatter My Cremated Remains At

(Location):

A1.7. My remains should be consigned to the funeral home designated below for services prior to interment:

Funeral Home: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

A1.8. Burial or cremation clothing (Select One):

- Military Uniform (Provided By My Next Of Kin)
 Appropriate Civilian Attire

A1.9. Outer Burial Container at private cemetery (Select One):

- Vault (concrete, steel, plastic)
 Grave Liner
 None or No Preference

A1.10. Type of Funeral Service/s I desire: (More than one may be marked)

- Place of Worship Name: _____
 Funeral Home Chapel Service
 Graveside Only
 No Preference

OTHER: _____

A1.11. Circle One. I DO/DO NOT wish to have the appropriate Military Honors at my service.

A1.12. Circle One. I DO / DO NOT wish to have an Air Force Chaplain at my service.

A1.13. Circle One. I DO / DO NOT wish to have a fly over if I am eligible. (see paragraph 2.3.3.)

A1.14. Circle One. I DO / DO NOT wish to have a government furnished marker.

A1.15. My preference of Music and Readings: _____

A1.16. My preference for flowers, memorial or charitable contributions in my memory:

A1.17. Individuals I wish to be present or take part in my service:

A1.18. The nearest base is _____ AFB and the Mortuary Office/

Military Funeral Honors telephone number is _____

MEMBER NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

WITNESS NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____