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THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR  
FORCE**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
PAMPHLET 34-162**

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**Services**



**MORTUARY SERVICES ENTITLEMENTS  
FOR RETIRED DEPARTMENT OF THE  
AIR FORCE MEMBERS**

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This pamphlet supports Department of the Air Force Instruction 34-160, *Mortuary Affairs Program*. 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 military members of the Regular Air Force, United States Space Force (USSF), Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and Retired Reserve. In collaboration with the Chief of Air Force Reserve, the Director of the Air National Guard, and the Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Human Capital (SF/S1), the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services (AF/A1) prepares policies for approval and develops guidance for mortuary services entitlements for retired Department of the Air Force (DAF) members. This DAF publication may be supplemented at any level; Major Command- and Field 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 DAF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route DAF Forms 847 from the field through the appropriate functional chain of command. Ensure all records generated as a result of processes prescribed in this publication adhere to Air Force Instruction 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, and are disposed of in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule, which is located in the Air Force Records Information Management System.

***SUMMARY OF CHANGES***

This document has been revised to incorporate the USSF, update guidance and DAF terminology and clarify United States Air Force Academy internment eligibilities.

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

**2. Entitlements Administered and Extended by the DAF.**

2.1. Upon your death, the DAF will pay or reimburse the expense of transporting your remains from place of death to a destination for preparation, cremation or interment:

2.1.1. To be eligible, you must have died 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. See [paragraph 2.1.3.2.](#); for deaths occurring in Medical Treatment Facilities overseas.

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.

2.1.1.4. If you die in an outpatient status, even while residing in an Air Force Fisher House, no eligibility exists.

2.1.2. This entitlement is limited to transportation expenses from place of death to a place no further distant than the place of last permanent residence (not necessarily home of record) of the decedent.

2.1.2.1. If the destination is not the place of last permanent residence, the expenses paid or reimbursed by the DAF may not exceed the cost that would have been paid to transport to the decedent’s last place of permanent residence. As an example, you live in Orlando, Florida, but 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 DAF could pay no more than what it would have cost to return your remains to Orlando, Florida (your permanent address).

2.1.2.2. If the permanent residence is located where the death occurs, only local transportation expenses are authorized (e.g., transportation from the hospital, medical examiner or coroner’s office to the funeral home) to a funeral service and on to a cemetery or crematory.

2.1.3. For deaths occurring outside the continental United States (OCONUS), there are additional benefits that are not authorized for continental United States (CONUS) deaths.

2.1.3.1. Retirees and their dependents who die OCONUS are eligible for preparation in a DoD mortuary with the casket, clothing, and other preparation expenses paid to the DoD mortuary by the Primary Next of Kin (PNOK) or other person authorized to direct disposition. Although the expenses for use of the DoD mortuary must be paid by the PNOK or other person authorized to direct disposition, it is a significant cost saving benefit compared to the cost of a civilian funeral home. In addition to use of the DoD mortuary, they may be provided transportation on a space-available basis, on a military or military-chartered aircraft to a point of entry in the United States or OCONUS airfield dedicated for use by the DoD. The person directing disposition must arrange for a funeral home to receive the remains upon arrival at destination.

2.1.3.2. Retirees and dependents who die while OCONUS and while admitted as an inpatient in a medical treatment facility of the armed forces of the United States are also eligible for the transportation expenses found in [paragraph 2.2](#) to be paid for or reimbursed to the person who paid the expenses.

**2.2. Authorized Transportation Expenses.** If eligible, the DAF 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 PNOK.

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 PNOK.

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

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

2.3.1. Your PNOK or funeral director requests such honors by contacting the Honor Guard office at the nearest active USAF or USSF 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 USAF or USSF 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. Your record of military service and personal history are such that the rendering of military funeral honors would not be potentially discrediting to your former Military Service. For example, certain criminal convictions may be disqualifying. See Title 10 United States Code (USC) Section (§) 985, *Persons convicted of capital crimes; certain other persons: denial of specified burial-related benefits*, and 38 USC § 2411, *Prohibition against interment or memorialization in the National Cemetery Administration or Arlington National Cemetery of persons committing Federal or State capital crimes*.

2.3.5. At a minimum, military funeral honors will be performed by a two-person detail, one of which must be a member of the DAF. Military funeral honors will include flag folding and presentation, and the playing of Taps. NOTE: Other elements, such as pallbearers, firing party, live bugler, and color guard 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.

2.3.6. Your PNOK may request a flyover at the place of burial if:

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

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

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

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

2.3.7. 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 (USAF A) Cemetery, Colorado Springs, Colorado.** The Air Force Academy maintains the Air Force's only active cemetery in accordance with USAFI 34-501, *Using the USAF Academy Cemetery*. Additional information regarding the USAFA Mortuary Affairs Office can be found at the following website: <https://www.usafa.af.mil/Units/10th-Air-Base-Wing/Mission-Support-Group/Mortuary-Affairs/>. You, your spouse, and in some cases your children (see paragraphs 2.4.3 and 2.4.4 below) may be interred in the USAFA Cemetery provided you were discharged under honorable conditions and are a:

2.4.1. USAFA graduate (Active Duty, 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. DAF 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 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. Current or former Air Force Academy 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 assigned to the USAFA 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 as listed above in paragraph 2.4.1 through 2.4.11. 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. Eligible relatives are as follows:

2.4.12.1. A spouse.

2.4.12.2. A remarried widow or widower.

2.4.12.3. Dependent unmarried children under the age of 23.

2.4.12.4. A dependent unmarried adult, defined as one whom at the time of death was over 21 years of age, incapable of self-support due to physical or mental condition and who meets any of the following conditions:

2.4.12.4.1. Received more than one-half of his or her support from the service-connected parent.

2.4.12.4.2. If the service-connected parent is deceased and interred in the Academy Cemetery, was receiving more than one-half of his or her support from the widow or widower of the deceased service-connected parent.

2.4.12.4.3. Was receiving such support from some other source because of the prior death or inability of the parent or parents to provide such support.

**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](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/#/](http://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.

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](http://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 PNOK 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 PNOK. This flag is furnished by the VA, not the DAF. The funeral director handling your arrangements and conducting your funeral obtains this flag by completing VA Form 27-2008, *Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes*. 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 PNOK wants to take advantage of some or all entitlements when you die, he or she should do the following:

4.1. **DoD Mortuary and Transportation Entitlements:** If eligible for any of the entitlements found in [paragraph 2](#), contact the Force Support Squadron mortuary officer at the closest USAF or USSF base for assistance. The mortuary officer will obtain a signed statement from your PNOK listing the funeral home(s) selected and place of burial and will coordinate with the funeral home for billing or reimburse the expense to the person who paid the expense.

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 DAF installation's Force Support Squadron mortuary officer or Honor Guard office to arrange for military funeral honors.

4.2.1. Military funeral honors can be denied even if one received an Honorable discharge from the Service, if criminal conduct that has occurred since retirement might be discrediting to one's former Service. See 10 USC § 985.

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

4.4. Your Primary 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 DAF 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 DAF installation.

JOHN A. FEDRIGO  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Manpower and Reserve Affairs



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

10 USC § 985, *Persons convicted of capital crimes; certain other persons: denial of specified burial-related benefits*

38 USC § 2411, *Prohibition against interment or memorialization in the National Cemetery Administration or Arlington national Cemetery of persons committing Federal or State capital crimes*

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

AFI 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, 23 Mar 2020

DAFI 34-160, *Mortuary Affairs Program*, 2 March 2022

USAFI 34-501, *Using the USAF Academy Cemetery*, 13 Nov 2018

VA Fact Sheet, *Burial and Plot Interment Allowance*

***Adopted Forms***

VA Form 27-2008, *Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes*

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

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

DAF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

***Prescribed Forms***

None

***Abbreviations and Acronyms***

**CONUS**—Continental United States

**DAF**—Department of the Air Force

**OCONUS**—Outside the continental United States

**OPR**—Office of Primary Responsibility

**PNOK**—Primary Next of Kin

**USAF**—United States Air Force Academy

**USSF**—United States Space Force

**VA**—Veteran's Affairs

***Office Symbols***

**AF/A1**—Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services

**AF/RE**—Chief of the Air Force Reserve

**NGB/CF**—Director of the Air National Guard

**SF/S1**—Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Human Capital

## Attachment 2

## MORTUARY PLANNING SHEET FOR RETIRED DAF MEMBERS

Figure A2.1. Mortuary Planning Sheet for Retired DAF Members.

To The Primary 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.

**A2.1.** At the time of my death, I prefer (Select One):

\_\_\_\_ Ground Burial

\_\_\_\_ Cremation (\_\_\_\_ Direct or \_\_\_\_ Following Services)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**A2.2.** 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:

\_\_\_\_\_

**A2.3.** 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: \_\_\_\_\_

**A2.4.** Urn selection if cremation is my desire (Select One):

\_\_\_\_ Solid Metal Urn (usually bronze, steel or copper)

\_\_\_\_ Solid Wooden Urn (oak, walnut, poplar, cherry, mahogany)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**A2.5.** My cemetery preference is (Select One):

\_\_\_\_ Private Civilian Cemetery

\_\_\_\_ Government Cemetery

Cemetery Name/Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**A2.6.** If I chose cremation in A2.1, I wish my cremated remains to be (Select One):

\_\_\_\_ Buried In the Cemetery Listed In A2.5.

\_\_\_\_ Placed In A Columbarium At The Cemetery Listed In A2.5.

\_\_\_\_ Retain My Urn At Home

\_\_\_\_ Scatter My Cremated Remains At

(Location): \_\_\_\_\_

**A2.7.** My remains should be consigned to the funeral home designated below for services prior to interment or cremation:

Funeral Home: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**A2.8** Burial or cremation clothing (Select One):

\_\_\_\_\_ Military Uniform (Provided By My Next of Kin)

\_\_\_\_\_ Appropriate Civilian Attire

**A2.9.** Outer Burial Container at private cemetery (Select One):

\_\_\_\_\_ Vault (concrete, steel, plastic)

\_\_\_\_\_ Grave Liner

\_\_\_\_\_ None or No Preference

**A2.10.** 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: \_\_\_\_\_

**A2.11. (Circle One)** I DO/DO NOT wish to have Military Honors at my service.

**A2.12. (Circle One)** I DO / DO NOT wish to have a fly over if I am eligible. (See **paragraph 2.3.6.**)

**A2.13. (Circle One)** I DO / DO NOT wish to have a government furnished marker.

**A2.14.** My preference of Music and Readings:

\_\_\_\_\_

**A2.15.** My preference for flowers, memorial or charitable contributions in my memory:

\_\_\_\_\_

**A2.16.** Individuals I wish to be present or take part in my service:

\_\_\_\_\_

**A.2.17.** The nearest base is \_\_\_\_\_ AFB and the Mortuary Office/Military  
Funeral Honors telephone number is \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_