

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

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Services

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

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY

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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 benefits 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 all Air Force military and civilian personnel, Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC), and Air National Guard (ANG) units and members. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) using the AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route AF Form 847s from the field through the appropriate functional's chain of command. This publication may be supplemented at any level, but all Supplements must be routed to the OPR of this publication for coordination prior to certification and approval. Ensure all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) located at <https://www.my.af.mil/afrims/afrims/afrims/rims.cfm>.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This document has been revised to include those members who are eligible for a flyover if requested.

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

2. Benefits Administered and Extended by the Air Force.

2.1. Remains Transportation.

2.1.1. You are eligible for the transportation entitlement listed in [paragraph 2.1.2](#) if 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. Transportation provided under this section may not be to a place further from the place of death than the decedent's last place of permanent residence, and any amount paid under this section 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, you live in Orlando, Florida, and are visiting 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 NOK 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.

2.2.1. Removal of remains from place of death or where remains are released by authorities to a funeral home selected by your NOK 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 NOK.

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

2.3. Military Funeral Honors.

2.3.1. The Air Force may provide military honors at your place of burial provided:

2.3.1.1. Your NOK or funeral director requests such honors by contacting the mortuary officer of the nearest active Air Force base at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled time/date of burial.

2.3.1.2. 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.

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

2.3.2. Military honors ceremonial elements that may be requested are part of the standard Air Force funeral and include the following: pallbearers, firing party, bugler, color guard, Air Force chaplain, officer or noncommissioned officer in charge. **NOTE:** Any one or all of the elements may be requested.

2.3.2.1. Whether the requested elements are provided depends on the capability of the base on the day requested.

2.3.2.2. Should valid conditions or circumstances preclude the base from providing the requested honors, that base will, as a last resort, provide one military person to represent the Air Force at the place of interment and present the flag to your NOK, if requested.

2.3.3. Flyover. If you served as a 3-star or 4-star general officer or as Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, or were awarded the Medal of Honor, Air Force Cross, Army Distinguished Service Cross, or Navy Cross, achieved at least one or more officially recognized aerial victories, or were a Prisoner of War; your closest NOK may request a flyover at the place of burial. 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. Graduate of the USAF Academy.

2.4.2. US Air Force general or lieutenant general.

2.4.3. Former superintendent, commandant, dean of faculty, chief of staff, appointed registrar, director of athletics, permanent professor, or tenure professor.

2.4.4. An Air Force military member assigned to the USAF Academy between 11 July 1955 and 10 September 1957.

3. Veterans Administration (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.

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.

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. A current list of those cemeteries having available grave space is contained in VA pamphlet #VA-DMA-IS-1, *Interments in National Cemeteries*, or on the web 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, *Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker for Installation in a Private or Local Cemetery*.

3.3. Burial Allowance. Your NOK may receive a small burial allowance from the VA. Details pertaining to this allowance are contained in the VA Fact Sheet IS-1, *Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents*.

3.4. Interment Flag. You are entitled to one interment flag to drape your casket, with ultimate presentation to your NOK. 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 Benefits.

4.1. If your NOK wants to take advantage of some or all benefits when you die, he or she should do the following:

4.1.1. Call the mortuary officer of the Air Force base nearest you. Inform the mortuary officer of the death and request their assistance in obtaining authorized transportation entitlements or funeral honors.

4.1.2. Call a nearby funeral home to care for your remains and conduct desired arrangements and services.

4.2. The mortuary officer will assist your NOK to the extent possible. If you are eligible for transportation, the mortuary officer will obtain a signed statement from your NOK listing the funeral home(s) selected and place of burial.

4.3. The mortuary officer will instruct the funeral home(s) on direct billing to the Air Force for transportation. The mortuary officer will also arrange for requested honors within the base's capability. If interment will be in another area, the mortuary officer will request the nearest base to provide requested honors to the extent possible.

4.4. Your NOK must give the funeral home the official document (DD Form 214 or retirement orders) reflecting pertinent military service data. The document substantiates your status as a retiree for Air Force benefits and enables your NOK to obtain VA benefits such as interment in a national cemetery, headstone, interment flag, etc.

4.5. Your NOK 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 benefits or discussions about mortuary matters can be answered by the mortuary officer at the nearest Air Force installation.

DARRELL D. JONES, Lt General, USAF
DCS, Manpower and Personnel

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

___ GROUND BURIAL

___ CREMATION (___ DIRECT or ___ FOLLOWING SERVICES)

OTHER: _____

A1.1. 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

A1.2. 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: _____

A1.3. 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: _____

A1.4. My cemetery preference is (Select One):

___ PRIVATE CIVILIAN CEMETERY

___ GOVERNMENT CEMETERY

CEMETERY NAME/LOCATION: _____

A1.5. If I chose cremation in A1., I wish my cremated remains to be (Select One):

BURIED IN THE CEMETERY LISTED IN A5.

PLACED IN A COLUMBARIUM AT THE CEMETERY LISTED IN A5.

RETAIN MY URN AT HOME

SCATTER MY CREMATED REMAINS AT (LOCATION): _____

A1.6. My remains should be consigned to the funeral home designated below for services prior to interment:

FUNERAL HOME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: (____) _____

A1.7. Burial or cremation clothing (Select One):

MILITARY UNIFORM (PROVIDED BY MY NEXT OF KIN)

APPROPRIATE CIVILIAN ATTIRE

A1.8. Outer Burial Container at private cemetery (Select One):

VAULT (concrete, steel, plastic)

GRAVE LINER

NONE OR NO PREFERENCE

A1.9. Type of Funeral Service/s I desire: (More than one may be marked)

PLACE OF WORSHIP

NAME: _____

FUNERAL HOME CHAPEL SERVICE

GRAVESIDE ONLY

OTHER: _____

NO PREFERENCE

A1.10. (Circle One) I DO / DO NOT wish to have the appropriate Military Honors at my service.

A1.11. (Circle One) I DO / DO NOT wish to have an Air Force Chaplain at my service.

A1.12. (Circle One) I DO / DO NOT wish to have a fly over if I am eligible. (see paragraph 8.2)

A1.13. (Circle One) I DO / DO NOT wish to have a government furnished marker.

A1.14. My preference of Music and Readings: _____

A1.15. My preference for flowers, memorial or charitable contributions in my memory:

A1.16. Individuals I wish to be present or take part in my service:

A1.17. The nearest base is _____ AFB and the Mortuary Office/Military Funeral Honors telephone number is (____)_____

MEMBER NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

WITNESS NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____