

United States Department of The Air Force Congressional Constituent Response Guide



119th United States Congress



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC**

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

2 May 2025

Dear Congressional Staff Member:

I am pleased to provide you with the newest version of the Department of the Air Force's Congressional Constituent Response Guide for the 119th Congress. As we begin this new session of Congress, I hope this publication will assist in your efforts to respond to inquiries from your constituents.

To minimize response times, we highly encourage you to send constituent inquiries to us at SAF.LLCI.Workflow@us.af.mil. My staff works directly with the experts to provide accurate and timely answers.

This edition of the Constituent Response Guide contains much of the same expert information you have come to expect, such as Department of the Air Force recruiting and family programs, personnel and financial matters, military benefits, medical and health care programs, as well as beneficial information as you work directly with my staff. This guide serves as a valuable resource on issues affecting United States Air Force (USAF) Airmen and United States Space Force (USSF) Guardians – Active Duty, Air National Guard, Reserves, Civilians, Veterans, and Department of the Air Force Families.

Although it continues to evolve rapidly, we remain your main point of contact for the United States Space Force.

Our commitment is to ensure timely and accurate responses. We look forward to working with you to help meet your constituents' needs.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Maitre", is positioned above the printed name.

BENJAMIN R. MAITRE
Major General, USAF
Director, Legislative Liaison

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of this Guide.

The Legislative Liaison Directorate, a segment of the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, provides liaison between the Department of the Air Force (DAF) and the United States Congress. More specifically, the Congressional Inquiry Branch (SAF/LLCI) within the directorate is charged with handling constituent inquiries as submitted by Members of Congress from across the country, as well as inquiries from the White House, the Office of the Vice President, governors and other executive agencies. The Congressional Inquiry Branch staff aims to provide timely and accurate responses to all inquiries.

This guide's user-friendly format and "quick search" function enables staff members to easily and quickly locate answers to a wide variety of constituents' questions and concerns. In some cases, the information, live links and contacts included may even provide constituents the means to directly and independently resolve their own issues in the most expeditious manner.

While we have made every effort to address the most frequently asked questions, the information herein is by no means all-encompassing. For this reason, the Department of the Air Force Congressional Inquiry Branch stands ready to assist by researching complex questions and by addressing the unique situations in which your constituents may find themselves.

1.2. Note on the United States Space Force.

The United States Space Force (USSF) was established as the sixth military branch on December 20, 2019. This new branch of the military evolved from the Air Force Space Command. As such, many of the Air Force policies and procedures you will find in this guide apply to the Space Force.

For purposes of delineation, the USSF and the USAF both fall under the Department of the Air Force, much like the United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps fall under the Department of the Navy. Therefore, you will often see in this guide that certain sections or chapters apply to the Department of the Air Force as a whole. This implies that they apply to both the Air Force and Space Force, unless otherwise noted.

1.3. Checklist for Inquiry Submissions.

Before officially submitting a Department of the Air Force-related inquiry, please ask the constituent, as appropriate, if he or she has attempted to resolve the issue by contacting a commander, first sergeant, the local personnel office, the local Inspector General's office or military and/or civilian legal counsel as applicable. This will help to ensure the issue is resolved as quickly as possible and address the issue at the lowest, local level.

When submitting an official inquiry, the following information and documentation should be included to ensure the most effective and efficient processing:

- ☐ Congressional staff member's name, e-mail address, phone number and district office address (please note if the final response should be sent to a Congressional staffer other than the one who submitted the initial inquiry).
- ☐ Constituent's name, unit of assignment, duty station, Social Security number, military rank (if applicable) and military status (active duty, Reserve, Guard, separated or retired, if applicable).
- ☐ Brief description of the constituent's issue, circumstances, or unique situation; the specific action, information or response requested; and an indication as to whether the constituent has previously contacted senior Air Force leadership, other governmental agencies and/or other Congressional offices regarding the same.
- ☐ Privacy Act Release Form completed and signed by the constituent (Not required if the constituent is a deceased military member).
- ☐ Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Form completed and signed by the constituent (Required only if the inquiry concerns health records or treatment information).
- ☐ A signed Standard Form 180 is required for requests for records.

1.4. How Best to Submit Inquiries.

The Department of the Air Force's Congressional Inquiry Branch works directly with Members of Congress staff to provide the specific information or assistance requested by constituents. The Inquiry Branch does not work directly with constituents. Inquiries may be submitted via e-mail or traditional mail. **E-mail submissions are preferable as they facilitate the most efficient processing.**

- ☐ Via E-mail: SAF.LLCI.Workflow@us.af.mil
- ☐ Via Mail: SAF/LL
Congressional Inquiries Branch
1160 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

It is important to note that submitting Department of the Air Force-related inquiries to the Department of the Air Force Legislative Liaison offices on the Hill may delay processing by several days and that submissions made directly to the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of the Air Force may be delayed by up to 10 days. Heightened security measures at the Pentagon may delay traditional mail correspondence by several weeks.

1.5. Urgent Inquiries.

Inquiries requiring expedited processing should be e-mailed to the Secretary of the Air Force Congressional Inquiry Branch (SAF/LLCI). The e-mail correspondence should make clear that the inquiry is urgent, should explain the time constraint for response or resolution, and should contain all pertinent information and documentation (see checklist above) for immediate processing.

SAF/LLCI prioritizes health and welfare inquiries involving self-harm or the threat or suspicion of self-harm above all other matters. These cases receive immediate and special attention. Our action officers are required to remain on duty until contact has been established between the owning unit and the constituent in question, and their status has been determined. Upon confirmation of the constituent's status, we promptly notify the congressional office to ensure that the information can be conveyed to interested parties without delay. An official response will be provided later in accordance with our established response procedures and standards.

1.6. The Inquiry Process.

It is important to note that the Department of the Air Force Congressional Inquiry Branch serves as the liaison between the Department of the Air Force and Members of Congress and their staffs concerning constituent inquiries. However, the Inquiry Branch does not house the subject matter expertise to immediately respond to inquiries. The subject matter at issue in constituent inquiries may fall under the purview of any number of agencies, organizations and offices throughout the Department of the Air Force.

The Congressional Inquiry Branch receives the inquiry, enters it into an internal tracking system and tasks it out appropriately based on the required area of expertise. Once the necessary research has been accomplished, subject matter experts deliver their final response directly to the congressional staffer or delivers their proposed draft response to the Inquiry Branch for review, if necessary. Responses for routine inquiries can take up to 30 days. Extensions are sometimes necessary for certain complex cases. Awards and decorations cases almost always take longer than 30 days because additional coordination is typically required with the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). Some select inquiries, for example Medal of Honor requests, can take years to fully process.

1.7. Release of Information.

Public Law 93-579, The Privacy Act of 1974, became effective on September 27, 1975, and requires the Department of the Air Force to protect personal information maintained in records systems. Accordingly, the DAF generally cannot release such information without the express written consent of the subject of the record.

Department of the Air Force policy protects the right of any member to communicate with government officials without fear of retaliatory action. To this end, regulations provide that a person's record cannot be coded, annotated or otherwise marked to indicate that Congressional, Executive or other high-level interest is, or was ever, generated by the individual.

1.7.1. The Privacy Act allows release of information of a non-sensitive, personal nature. Such items of information include: military unit of assignment (except overseas addresses or assignments to sensitive or routinely deployable units); rank; date of rank; base pay; special pay and all allowances (except basic allowance for quarters and variable housing allowance); past duty assignments; future assignments that are officially established (except overseas or assignments to sensitive or routinely deployable units); office or duty telephone numbers; source of commission; promotion sequence number; awards and decorations; attendance at professional

military schools; and duty status. Nonconsensual disclosure of this information will normally not violate the Privacy Act.

The Department of the Air Force may release personal information to Chairpersons of Congressional Committees or Subcommittees if the information relates to matters within the Committee's jurisdiction and the Committee or Subcommittee formally requests the information.

1.7.2. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule was implemented in the DoD effective April 14, 2003. While similar to the Privacy Act of 1974, the HIPAA impacts all U.S. healthcare providers and health plans and serves to specifically protect health-related information. The rule provides rights for patients and puts restrictions on providers and health plans concerning the use and disclosure of protected health information. Although there is an allowance to disclose information to a military command authority, the HIPAA rule directly impacts how information can flow from military treatment facilities. The rule strengthens the strong set of patient privacy policies that were already in place within the Military Health System. To allow for the release of information relating to medical, dental and/or health issues, a constituent must complete and sign the DD Form 2870, *Authorization for Disclosure of Medical or Dental Information*.

1.7.3. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Department of the Air Force policy is to conduct its activities in as open a manner as possible and to provide the public with a maximum amount of accurate and timely information concerning its activities, consistent with the legitimate public and private interests of the American people.

The [Department of the Air Force Freedom of Information Act, or FOIA, website](#) offers links to current policy, the annual report to Congress, FOIA offices at each of the Air Force major commands and frequently asked questions, including a handbook explaining the FOIA process. The Air Force FOIA Program will honor requests by Members of Congress in their personal capacities or on behalf of constituents for Department of the Air Force records, unless exempt from mandatory public disclosure under FOIA or if release will cause an identifiable harm. Requests for Department of the Air Force records should be directed to the organization maintaining the records, if known. If it is unknown which Air Force activity maintains the desired records, requests should be e-faxed to 571-256-3110@fax.hqda.pentagon.mil or mailed to SAF/AAlI (FOIA), 1000 Air Force Pentagon, Washington, DC 20330-1000.

The Department of the Air Force may provide information exempt from release under the FOIA to Congressional Committees or Subcommittees if the information relates to matters within their jurisdiction and the Committee or Subcommittee Chairperson formally requests it. There may be fees required of FOIA requesters for research and reproduction costs. In addition, commercial requesters may incur review costs. The Air Force, however, usually waives fees less than \$15.

1.7.4. Using FOIA to Request Mishap Records. Accident Investigation Board (AIB) Reports are maintained by the owning MAJCOM of the aircraft and are publicly releasable; however, AIBs are only maintained for 25 years, then destroyed per Air Force Records Management disposition instructions.

The Air Force Safety Center (AFSEC) maintains mishap investigative records related to serious aircraft and other mishap events, such as aviation, explosive, occupational, space, and weapons mishaps resulting in damage, or injury. These DAF records are maintained at AFSEC, which is the official DAF repository for mishap investigations from 1956 – Present. If you would like to request mishap records from AFSEC, you will need to request the "releasable portions of the Safety Investigation Board (SIB) Report" via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) process as a private citizen; please refer to the instructions provided below to assist you in this process. To receive official government records from AFSEC, please submit a formal FOIA Request through the official Air Force Freedom of Information Act Public Access Link (eFOIA PAL) at the following website: <https://efoia.cce.af.mil/>. You'll need to establish an account, provide some required contact information (i.e., personal USPS Mailing address, contact number, personal e-mail address, willingness to pay processing fees (if applicable), etc.) and the rest is easy.

In the description of your request, please be as accurate and specific as possible in the details of the incident/mishap record(s) you are trying to get releasable responsive records for (i.e., Date of Mishap, Type of Aircraft, or mishap event, Tail Number, Location of mishap, and brief description/details of the incident/mishap, etc.). Additionally, please ensure you identify the Air Force Safety Center (AFSEC/AFSC) at Kirtland AFB, NM as the location for the records search.

Upon submission of your request, it will be routed to AFSEC, and they can proceed with processing your request. Remember, the more accurate/detailed information you provide on the incident/mishap event, the easier it will be in searching for records related to the mishap. If you request specific records from a report, such as the official mishap form (AF Form 14/711), History of Flight/Narrative, Findings, and available Pictures/Photos only, they can (in most cases) provide the responsive records at no cost to you.

A note about these SIB reports: Safety investigations are conducted immediately after a mishap for the sole purpose of protecting lives and resources vital to maintaining military readiness. Portions of those reports are not releasable pursuant to the military safety privilege. The safety privilege is a common law privilege, statutorily recognized, that protects the investigative process and promises of confidentiality. The close-hold, "safe harbor" nature of these investigations in turn encourages trust and unsparing candor in assessing causes and preventive measures, and keeps that information out of our adversaries' hands. Because they are not publicly releasable, mishap safety investigations are highly effective in reducing the number and severity of mishaps, and have a direct correlation to reduced injury, death and damage, and increased combat capability.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact AFSEC via e-mail at HQAFSECJA@us.af.mil, or call 505-853-8794.

Chapter 2

GETTING ORIENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

2.1. Air Force Mission.

The mission of the United States Air Force is “*To fly, fight, and win...airpower anytime, anywhere*”. To achieve this mission, the Air Force has a vision of Global Vigilance, Reach and Power. That vision orbits around three core competencies: developing Airmen, technology-to-warfighting, and integrating operations. These core competencies make the service’s five core functions possible: Air Superiority; Global Strike; Rapid Global Mobility; Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance; and Command and Control.

2.1.1 Core Values. The Air Force bases these core competencies and distinctive capabilities on its members’ shared commitment to three values: Integrity first, Service before self, and Excellence in all we do.

2.2. Space Force Mission.

The Space Force’s mission is to “secure our Nation’s interests in, from, and to space”. Military and civilian members of the Space Force are called Guardians, a term that traces back to “Guardians of the High Frontier.” The Space Force organizes, trains, and equips space forces to protect and defend American interests in space and the space capabilities that enable and enhance the lethality and effectiveness of the Joint Force. Guardians build, operate, and protect space systems that provide world-wide connectivity and security, enabling the American way of life. Missions such as GPS navigation and satellite communications provide access and networks for information to freely flow. Guardians also defend the homeland and our ability to use space systems through missions such as missile warning, space domain awareness, and orbital and electronic warfare.

2.2.1 Guardian Values. As the Space Force continues to build their service and culture, their values - Character, Connection, Commitment, and Courage - serve as their foundation.

2.3. Air Force Organization.

The Air Force is organized into nine major commands (MAJCOMs) and two Air Reserve Components. Directly subordinate to Headquarters Air Force, MAJCOMs carry out most of the service’s mission by both accomplishing activities and executing operations around the world and by organizing, training, and equipping subordinate elements. Within the United States, MAJCOMs are organized by function and include: Air Combat Command, Air Education and Training Command, Air Force Global Strike Command, Air Force Materiel Command, Air Force Reserve Command (both a MAJCOM and an Air Reserve Component), Air Force Special Operations Command, and Air Mobility Command. Overseas, MAJCOMs are organized by geography and include Pacific Air Forces and U.S. Air Forces in Europe - Air Forces Africa. The service’s two Air Reserve Components include the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve. In general, the organizational construct subordinate to each MAJCOM includes numbered air forces composed of wings, which are composed of groups made up of squadrons.

2.4. Space Force Organization.

The Space Force is organized into three Field Commands: Space Operations Command (SpOC), Space Systems Command (SSC), and Space Training and Readiness Command (STARCOM). Field Commands align with specific mission focuses. The organizational construct subordinate to each Field Command includes deltas, which are composed of groups made up of squadrons. A delta is a single level of command which combines the wing and group command echelons found in the U.S. Air Force.

2.5. Base Structure & Community.

Air Force and Space Force bases are small communities with infrastructure and social support resources common to any American town. What makes these communities different is the fact that each has a mission to perform to support the overall Air Force and Space Force missions. In the Air Force, a base hosts a wing which encompasses several groups, each of which encompasses several squadrons made up of any number of flights. In the Space Force, a base hosts a delta which encompasses several squadrons. Each squadron, group and wing/delta have a commander who is responsible for the military mission and the health and well-being of all of the unit's members. The commander's concern extends to the families of military members, as well as to civilian employees. The wing commander also concerns him or herself with retirees and their families living in nearby communities. Finally, all commanders are responsible for positive relations with adjacent civilian communities, the private citizens who live near a base, and those who are impacted by DAF operations.

2.6. On-Base Helping Resources.

The commander of each functional area is charged with taking care of both people and the mission. Each squadron also has a first sergeant who serves as the focal point for helping the squadron's members get the support they need from base agencies. Below is a list of the primary helping resources resident on a typical Department of the Air Force base, though most bases have many additional helping agencies and resources. Before submitting an official congressional inquiry, constituents with issues should be encouraged to seek resolution by contacting one or more of these units.

2.6.1. Area Defense Counsel (ADC). The Area Defense Counsel provides legal defense services to Air Force members. The ADC is not subordinate to the wing commander but is rather considered an independent tenant on base. While some bases do not host an ADC office, ADC services can be made available remotely.

2.6.2. Force Support Squadron (FSS). Includes military and civilian personnel flights (MPF and CPF), responsible for processing requests for transfers, corrections to military records, dependent identification cards and the like. The FSS also provides combat support, community services, and family programs, to include fitness, food service, lodging, libraries, child development and youth programs, recreation, officer and enlisted clubs, golf and bowling. The FSS also manages the base mortuary affairs and military funeral honors programs.

2.6.3. Inspector General (IG). Assists members in resolving issues and investigates complaints of military whistleblower reprisal under Section 1034, Title 10 USC. The IG is also the base focal point for fraud, waste and abuse (of resources) issues.

2.6.4. Judge Advocate (JA). Provides legal advice to the wing/delta commander. Also provides routine legal assistance and services for members of the base community (e.g. powers of attorney, wills, notary service, and advice on various personal civil legal matters). The staff judge advocate (senior military lawyer on the base) advises the wing/delta commander and subordinate commanders on all military justice matters, including whether court-martial charges are appropriate based on the evidence. With the advice of the staff judge advocate, the wing/delta commander acts as the initial disposition authority for sexual assault investigations against assigned military members.

2.6.5. Medical Group. Responsible for the medical mission of the wing. The Air Force designates a medical group as a small or large group depending on the size of the military medical treatment facility (MTF). In each medical group, there is a TRICARE Flight and patient advocate to address almost any concern constituents may have.

2.6.6. Military Equal Opportunity (MEO). Addresses equal treatment issues for military members and complaints against military members by either civilian or military employees.

2.6.7. Victims' Counsel (VC). VCs represent eligible adult and child sexual assault and domestic violence victims throughout the entire investigatory and military justice process to ensure their rights, as victims of crime, are protected as codified by Sections 1044e and 806b, Title 10, United States Code. VCs accomplish these goals by developing victims' understanding of the investigatory and military justice processes, providing advocacy to protect the rights of victims during the military justice process, removing barriers to victims' participation in the military justice process and assisting them in obtaining services and resources after the commission of the crime.

Chapter 3

JOINING THE AIR FORCE AND SPACE FORCE

3.1. Enlistment.

3.1.1. Qualifications for Enlistment. Candidates for enlistment into the Air Force and Space Force must be between 17 and 42 years old. The Department of the Air Force requires at least a high school diploma, a GED with at least 15 college credits, or a valid home-school diploma. Individuals with at least a high school diploma, GED, or a valid home-school diploma must score a minimum of 36 on the Air Force Qualification Test (AFQT) portion of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB); applicants with a GED must earn a minimum score of 50.

A high school graduate can be accessioned with a score of 31 or higher on the AFQT portion of the ASVAB when the applicant fails to meet the minimum score of 36 but meets all other mandatory requirements for the Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) he or she is being accessioned into, in accordance with the current Air Force Enlisted Classification Directory. Furthermore, the Air Force Recruiting Service (AFRS) may allow a specified number of ASVAB test applicants who score between 10 and 30 on the AFQT to enlist in the Air Force. Approval for these waivers is with AFRS/CC. All other ASVAB waivers will be approved or disapproved by Headquarters AFRS/A3.

Beginning in 2025, the Space Force replaced ASVAB line scores with Predictive Service Model (PSM) scores. Applicants must still score a 36QT or higher on the ASVAB to be eligible, but they must reach a specific score on TAPAS/PSM (Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System) to be eligible for certain career fields.

The Department of the Air Force allows five percent of recruits to enlist with a GED. Currently, a valid homeschool education qualifies an individual with the equivalent to a high school diploma when the home-school diploma is issued in accordance with state requirements and is administered by a parent, teacher, school district or umbrella association. Candidates for enlistment into the Air Force Reserve may join after turning 17 years old and before turning 42 years old. If a candidate has prior uniformed service, he or she must join before turning 42 years old minus the timeframe previously served. For example, if a candidate previously served in a military branch for six years, he or she could enlist up until age 48.

For more information on joining the US Air Force, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, or the US Space Force as either an enlisted member, officer, or civilian, please visit www.airforce.com and www.spaceforce.mil.

For more information about enlisting in the Air Force Reserve, please visit the [Air Force Reserve Website](#).

3.1.2. Considerations of Moral Character. Prior Civilian Convictions: Air Force enlistment directives stipulate applicants with records or convictions of certain civil or juvenile offenses are not eligible for enlistment unless the applicant receives a waiver. In evaluating a waiver, the Air

Force considers the nature of the offense(s), date(s) of the offense(s), and the applicant's record after release from any sentence.

The Air Force will not enlist applicants who admit difficulties with law enforcement agencies until completion of a thorough investigation of the circumstances. Prior Drug Use: Air Force enlistment directives stipulate applicants with records, convictions or self-admissions of illicit drug offenses, driving under the influence of, while intoxicated or impaired by alcohol or drugs are not eligible for enlistment unless the applicant receives a waiver. Additionally, testing positive on the Drug and Alcohol Test while processing for enlistment at the Military Entrance Processing Station could permanently disqualify an individual from enlistment.

As of 2022, the DAF is conducting a pilot program that will allow non-prior service enlisted applicants who have previously tested positive on the Drug and Alcohol Test for Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), a 90-day retest window, and the opportunity to enter the Air Force with an approved waiver.

3.1.3. Two Types of Enlistments. Enlistment in the Air Force can be for a specific, guaranteed job, or in one of four aptitude index areas, including mechanical, administrative, general and electronics. Under the Guaranteed Training Enlistment Program, the applicant enlists for training in a specific AFSC. The AFSC assigned depends on the individual's aptitude scores, medical assessment, and, in some instances, previous education and experience.

Provided the individual is not disqualified or eliminated from training, the Air Force guarantees continued training and an assignment in that specific AFSC; this guarantee is documented on the Air Force Form 3007, USAF Enlistment Agreement. Airmen and Guardians may not request a change to another AFSC unless they are unqualified for training or continuation in training as originally scheduled, or they volunteer for and receive a special assignment.

Under the Guaranteed Aptitude Area Enlistment Program - sometimes referred to as "Open Area Contract" - the applicant is guaranteed to receive a job in a specific aptitude area but will not learn of his or her specific job until basic training.

3.1.4. Reenlistment. When enlisted personnel separate from the service, the service assigns them Reenlistment Eligibility (RE) codes that determine eligibility for further military service and facilitate personnel management decisions. A listing of current Air Force RE codes and their clear text meaning can be found in [Air Force Instruction 36-2606, Reenlistment and Extension of Enlistment in the United States Air Force.](#)

The codes are in numeric/alpha format; the number indicates whether the individual is eligible for further service while the letter indicates the exact reason for ineligibility. If an applicant has not completed six months of service, he or she is considered non-prior service and will require an RE code eligibility determination to continue processing as a non-prior service applicant.

Generally, an Airman with an RE code of 1# is eligible for immediate reenlistment (within 24 hours after separation) and for prior service enlistment provided he or she is otherwise eligible.

An Airman with an RE code of 2# is ineligible to reenlist in the Regular Air Force and, unless specifically authorized in AFI 36-2606, is not authorized to extend enlistment under any of the conditions outlined therein. An Airman with an RE code of 3# is ineligible for immediate reenlistment (within 24 hours after separation) but is eligible for prior service enlistment with an approved waiver (provided the Airman is otherwise qualified) under conditions outlined in AFI 36-2606. An Airman with an RE code of 4# is ineligible to reenlist in the Air Force and, unless specifically authorized by a condition outlined in AFI 36-2606, is not authorized to extend enlistment under any of the conditions outlined therein.

3.1.5. Enlistment of Prior Service Members. The Air Force opens and closes the prior service program based on career fields' needs. When available, the prior service program allows individuals with prior service in any branch of the armed forces to enlist, provided they meet all qualifications. Prior service members from branches other than the Air Force who have a skill that converts to a matching and required Air Force skill are eligible to apply for enlistment in that skill. If their skill does not match or is not on the requirement list, they may qualify for a few select cross training opportunities. Career Field Managers work with Air Force Recruiting Service to consider these applications case-by-case, putting first the needs of the Air Force.

All prior service members, regardless of branch of service, must meet all qualifying criteria, which includes an appropriate reenlistment eligibility code, a break in service not longer than six years, and no more than 12 years of Total Active Federal Military Service. Whenever possible, recruiting authorities seek exceptions to policy from Career Field Managers.

3.1.6. Enlisting With Dependents. The DoDI outlines that more than two dependents requires a waiver and the DAF empowers the AFRS/CC as the waiver authority. At some point, the Air Force may require an enlistee with minor dependents to serve at locations to which dependents may not accompany the member. Should these enlistees seek preferential treatment because they cannot or will not find means to leave their children properly attended, the Air Force would face several unwanted alternatives, including immediate hardship discharge or offering the member special treatment by excusing or deferring the member from assignment obligations. These situations may result in less eligible individuals receiving short assignment notifications or adverse effects on the gaining organizations.

Dependency Waivers/Determinations may be granted for particularly promising entrants based on a thorough examination using a "whole person" review. Commanders' determination for approval is based on current accession requirements that include an individual's suitability to serve based on their adaptability, potential to perform, and conduct.

3.2. Officer Accessions.

3.2.1. United States Air Force Academy Nomination and Appointment Process. Individuals interested in attending the United States Air Force Academy with the goal of commissioning into the Air Force or Space Force can find information and apply at www.academyadmissions.com. This website provides a comprehensive overview of the Air Force Academy's academic, athletic, character, and military programs as well as information on the application process. The Air Force

Academy application opens on the 1st of March of each year and closes on the 31st of December.

An education at the U.S. Air Force Academy is provided at no cost to cadets. Instead, once one graduates, one will commission as an officer in either the U.S. Air Force or Space Force. The commitment length will depend on the chosen career path.

Applicants to the Air Force Academy must meet the following requirements: be at least 17 years old, but not have passed their 23rd birthday as of the 1st of July in the year they enter directly into the Air Force Academy, be a United States citizen; be unmarried with no obligation to support children or other dependents; not pregnant; and be of good moral character. For you to consider a candidate for a nomination, he or she must first start an application on our website. The applicant will then appear on your Air Force Academy nominations portal with some basic information to assist you in the nomination process. If an individual inquires about a nomination and is not on your nominations portal, first ask them if they have submitted the Precandidate Questionnaire (PCQ) on our website.

The Air Force Academy also conducts a Summer Seminar program for rising high school seniors in the summer before their senior year. This program allows interested students to attend a one week orientation at the Academy which includes a taste of academics and the military structure. The Academy conducts a selection program to ensure geographic representation in this program, but be aware space is limited and the Academy cannot accommodate all interested students. The application for the Summer Seminar program opens on the 1st of December of a high school student's junior year and the application is also found at the Academy's website.

Before nominating an applicant, Members of Congress should carefully evaluate each applicant's overall qualifications, including the legal domicile, to confirm the applicant lives within the boundaries of the Representative's Congressional district or for Senators within their state. Each of the three military service academies considers evidence of character, scholarship, leadership, physical aptitude, medical fitness, goals and motivation as part of each nominee's "whole person" evaluation.

Each Representative or Senator conducts their own nomination process and sets their own deadlines for individuals to apply. Most advertise their nomination process and deadlines on their websites. A best practice for your constituents is to make this information readily available and your process transparent. Many Congressional Members also advertise and host Academy Days, Virtual Academy Days, or Webinars. These are informational sessions on the service academies and are excellent venues to advertise the academies, your nomination process, and serve your constituents.

Detailed information on best practices and the nomination process are beyond the scope of this Constituent Guide. However, information on the nomination process can be found in Title 10 U.S. Code, Subtitle D, Part III, Chapter 953, Sections 9442 to 9447; DoD Instruction 1322.22, Service Academies, the "Congressional Guide" published by the service academies, and the Congressional Research Service publication "Congressional Nominations to U.S. Service Academies: An Overview of Resources for Outreach and Management".

The U.S. Air Force Academy's Nominations and Appointments Branch within the Office of Admissions can also provide you with education to help your constituents and provide best practices and education on the nomination process for you and your staff. You can contact the Nominations and Appointments Branch via: USAFARRSC.ORGMAIL@afacademy.af.edu.

3.2.2. Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps (AFROTC). Candidates for the [Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps \(AFROTC\)](#) must be U.S. citizens before scholarship activation and must be high school graduates or have an equivalent certificate.

Candidates must be 17 years of age before scholarship activation and younger than 31 years of age as of the December 31 prior to commissioning into the Air Force or Space Force. Candidates will be required to meet medical eligibility requirements for military service prior to scholarship activation as evaluated by the Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board. Interested applicants may contact the nearest AFROTC unit or visit [AFROTC scholarships website](#) for the latest eligibility criteria.

The AFROTC High School Scholarship Program is intended to attract the nation's highest qualified high school seniors or graduates who have not previously been enrolled as full-time college students. AFROTC offers up to 4-year, full tuition and fee scholarships awarded through a competitive national board. Scholarship offers are based on individual merit, not on financial need. Some scholarships in highly technical fields of study may be extended up to one additional year at the discretion of Commander, AFROTC, based on budgetary constraints and cadet performance.

Depending on the scholarship budget there are opportunities to obtain AFROTC financial assistance after entering college. All eligible, enrolled AFROTC cadets in the freshman and sophomore years that are not already on scholarship will meet an in-college scholarship board for a second chance at gaining a scholarship. A final opportunity to earn the Brigadier General Charles McGee Leadership Award, a fixed value tuition award offered to eligible cadets whose performance has qualified them for entry into the final two years of the AFROTC program. These scholarship opportunities, if available, will be announced through the AFROTC detachment staffs.

Freshmen cadets on scholarship receive a monthly stipend of \$300. Sophomore cadets on scholarship receive a monthly stipend of \$350. Junior and Senior cadets, regardless of scholarship status, receive a stipend of \$450 and \$500 respectively. Cadets on scholarship also receive a \$900 per year textbook allowance. Additionally, uniforms are provided for all cadets.

To be commissioned, AFROTC cadets must take the Air Force Officer Qualifying Test (AFOQT) and score at least 15 on the verbal portion and 10 on the quantitative portion. This requirement may be waived by the Commander, AFROTC in individual cases based on military and academic performance and the needs of the Air Force.

3.2.3. Officer Training School (OTS). [Qualification for Officer Training School \(OTS\)](#) requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and minimum scores on the AFOQT of 15 on the verbal portion and 10 on the quantitative portion. Positions are

normally available in flying and non-flying jobs. Applicants for pilot, combat systems operator and air battle manager positions must complete OTS and begin flying training prior to age 33; non-flying applicants must be commissioned prior to age 40. Civilians, and active-duty Airmen and Guardians may apply. An Officer Selection Board comprised of senior officers, managed by the Air Force Recruiting Service at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, reviews all applications based on the “whole person” concept. Applicants selected for OTS must attend a nine-week training course at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve officer candidates also attend OTS programs but are selected by their respective commands.

3.2.4. Health Professions. [Air Force healthcare professionals](#) include medical doctors (both Allopathic or M.D., and Osteopathic or D.O.), dentists, nurses, health care administrators, optometrists, podiatrists, physical therapists, and other medical specialties. The requirements for different specialties change throughout the year. The Air Force selects a small number of physicians and dentists in civilian residency for the Financial Assistance Program, which provides a monthly stipend and annual grant; the service obligation is deferred until residency completion. The Air Force also offers a Health Professions Scholarship Program for individuals accepted to medical school and a Dental Health Professions Scholarship Program for individuals accepted to dental school. The Health Professions Scholarship Program is also used by the Nurse Corps and Biomedical Science Corps, albeit on a more limited basis. The Air Force pays the tuition and fees of selectees, as well as a monthly stipend.

To speak with a health profession recruiting professional, you may call (800) 588-5260.

3.2.5. Judge Advocate General’s (JAG) Corps. Attorneys and law students may apply for a direct appointment to the [Judge Advocate General’s \(JAG\) Corps](#). To be eligible to enter the JAG Corps through the Direct Appointment Program (DAP), an attorney must be (1) a U.S. citizen; (2) a graduate of a law school approved by the American Bar Association (ABA); and (3) in an active (or equivalent) status with a current license in good standing to practice law before the highest court of a U.S. state, commonwealth or territory, or the District of Columbia. Applicants are competitively selected at boards held three times each year.

Law students may also enter the JAG Corps through the Graduate Law Program (GLP) or the One-Year College Program (OYCP). GLP and OYCP students are guaranteed positions as Air Force judge advocates upon successful completion of the Air Force Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (AFROTC) Program, graduation from an ABA-approved law school, and completion of legal licensing requirements, including proof of active (or equivalent) status with a current license in good standing to practice law before the highest court of a U.S. state, commonwealth or territory, or the District of Columbia. Applicants apply for the GLP during their first year of law school and for the OYCP during their second year of law school.

Officers commissioned through college AFROTC Programs who are interested in delaying their entry onto extended active duty to study law may apply to the AFROTC Educational Delay (Ed Delay) Program. Applicants must have applied and ultimately be unconditionally admitted to a daytime J.D. program of study at an ABA-approved law school; must be in good academic standing; and must successfully complete the AFROTC Program and obtain a commission as a second lieutenant. Applicants apply for entry into the Ed Delay Program during their final year

of undergraduate studies.

All applicants must complete an Air Force medical examination and be medically qualified by the Air Force Surgeon General prior to commissioning. Applicants must be able to complete 20 years of active commissioned service before reaching age 55 years. Therefore, individuals without prior commissioned officer service must be commissioned by their 35th birthday.

To speak with a JAG Corps recruiting professional, you may call (800) JAG-USAF (524-8723).

3.2.6. Chaplain Corps. Clergy who are citizens of the United States (dual citizenship not permitted) may apply for a direct appointment to the [Chaplain Corps](#). To be eligible, clergy must have earned a Baccalaureate degree with no less than 120 semester hours and a post-baccalaureate degree with no less than 72 semester hours from an accredited institution. Applicants must also possess ecclesiastical endorsement from a Department of Defense-identified endorser and have at least two years of religious leadership experience. All applicants must successfully complete an Air Force commissioning physical and be determined as medically qualified before commissioning.

Applicants must meet all requirements and receive their commission before their 42nd birthday. To speak with a Chaplain Corps recruiting professional, call (800) 803-2452.

3.3. Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFJROTC).

The purpose behind the [Air Force Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps \(AFJROTC\) Program](#) is derived from Public Law, Title 10. The program instills in students in United States secondary education institutions the values of citizenship, service to the United States, an acceptance of personal responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment. The program's mission is, "Developing Citizens of Character." Air Force Junior ROTC is a robust citizenship program with a wide variety of curricular and Leadership Development Requirements that enhance team building, character development, and citizenship education. The program explores the historic and scientific aspects of aerospace technology and teaches high school students self-reliance, self-discipline and other characteristics of sound citizens and leaders. Students who participate in the program do not incur any obligation to the Air Force. The Air Force Junior ROTC program is open to all young citizens of the United States who are in school above the 7th grade level and geographically co-located.

3.4. Space Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps.

With the standup of the U.S. Space Force in December 2019, ten AFJROTC units were selected and approved to be in the inaugural cohort of high school Space Force JROTC units. This initial group converted from Air Force to Space Force JROTC units during the 2021-2022 academic year and will continue to be administered by AFJROTC. Selections were based on proximity to Space Force or related government agencies, including Space Force bases, facilities, and centers of influence, such as U.S. Space Command Headquarters, NASA, Missile Defense Agency, and other locations, or where the current instructor cadre had prior space operations experience.

Chapter 4

SERVING ON ACTIVE DUTY

4.1. Active-Duty Service Commitment (ADSC).

ADSCs fulfill two very important functions. They assure the Department of the Air Force and the nation's taxpayers receive an appropriate return for their investment in money and/or time in training, education, and bonuses. This includes training not provided by the Department of the Air Force. ADSCs also communicate to Department of the Air Force members the periods of obligated service they must complete before becoming eligible to separate or retire from the Department of the Air Force.

The Department of the Air Force establishes ADSCs for all active-duty members who participate in ADSC-incurring events. ADSCs incurred for training or education will become effective on the graduation date or upon completion of required training or education.

4.1.1. Officers. Officers in the grades of colonel and below incur ADSCs when they begin training and complete all or a portion of an ADSC-incurring event. Department of the Air Force policy is that officers incur ADSCs voluntarily. If an officer is unwilling to accept an ADSC, he or she must elect separation or retirement from the Department of the Air Force in lieu of participating in the ADSC-incurring event. The [Total Force Service Center \(TFSC\)](#) staff advises officers participating in ADSC-incurring events. Upon notification, officers accept or decline an ADSC before entering into an ADSC incurring event. Members who are properly advised of an ADSC-incurring event who do not establish a date of separation (DOS) or retirement date under the 7-day option and attend or enter into the ADSC-incurring event are considered to have constructively accepted the ADSC. The Department of the Air Force recognizes that officers sometimes attend training that they would not otherwise have accepted had they been fully aware that they would incur an ADSC. In such cases, an officer may state his or her case through an appeal to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR). However, if a policy directive or Department of the Air Force Instruction provides a specific appeal or redress channel, the applicant must exhaust those channels before applying to the AFBCMR.

4.1.2. Enlisted. Enlisted Airmen and Guardians have established dates of separation. Any action which requires an ADSC, such as promotion to a senior enlisted rank, assignment or training, allows the member to reenlist or extend their enlistment to accept the action. ADSCs cannot extend beyond the established DOS.

4.2. Assignments for Enlisted Members.

4.2.1. Enlisted Assignments Process. The Air Force assignment selection process ensures fair and equitable treatment for Air Force members. The process considers Airmen eligible for overseas duty based on their grade (rank), Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC), previous overseas assignment history, tour length involved and volunteer status. For duty in long-tour areas, the process selects volunteers based on length of time at their current duty stations. Non-volunteers are selected based on overseas time compared with peers in the same grade and AFSC.

For duty in short-tour areas, the process selects Airmen with no overseas service first, followed by those with the least number of short tours. When previous short-tour overseas service is equal, Airmen with the earliest short tour return dates are selected first. In all cases, selections are made from among eligible volunteers before non-volunteers are considered. Additionally, all Airmen may volunteer for upcoming assignments on the Enlisted Quarterly Assignments Listing (EQUAL) and Special Duty Assignment Listing (EQUAL-Plus) - available through [MyVector/Talent Marketplace](#) and the Assignment Management System (AMS).

4.2.2. Enlisted Assignments Returning from Overseas. Procedures under the Assignment Management System (AMS) permit Airmen returning from overseas duty to review the EQUAL for available requirements in their grade/AFSC. Personnel officials match Airmen sequentially given established priorities by considering Air Force specialty, security clearance and special experience identifiers. Many members may not receive their assignment preferences because the needs of the service are paramount. Factors such as the number of overseas returnees, Air Force requirements versus personal preferences, and excessive numbers of applicants for assignments in the most preferred locations, all affect the ability to satisfy assignment preferences.

4.2.3. Enlisted Quarterly Assignment Listing (EQUAL). EQUAL is the listing used to advertise available overseas and stateside requirements. This listing reflects available requirements by AFSC and grade at particular locations.

4.2.4. Special Duty Assignment Consideration (EQUAL-Plus). EQUAL-Plus is a listing of requirements by grade and AFSC for special duty assignments, Joint/Departmental assignments, and short-notice requirements. EQUAL-Plus is accessed via the MyVector/Talent Marketplace. Assignment selection will occur after the volunteer-by date has expired. Airmen may volunteer for another assignment if the Military Personnel Flight (MPF) has not notified them of selection within 45 days after the volunteer-by date. Airmen may volunteer for only one special duty at a time. Eligibility requirements vary and specific qualifications are shown in the advertisement or in the Special Category (SPECAT) Assignment Guide available at the MPF or online. Airmen may apply for special duties if their date of arrival coincides with the assignment reporting date plus 60 days.

4.3. Assignment Programs & Policies.

4.3.1. Follow-On Program. The purpose of the Follow-On Program is to reduce permanent change of station (PCS) costs and increase family stability. It does so by providing advance assignment consideration to members who meet program criteria and agree to certain conditions. To be eligible for the Follow-On Program, Airmen must have elected or been selected to serve an overseas (OS) unaccompanied short tour of 17 months or less and must be currently serving in the continental United States (CONUS), Alaska or Hawaii in order to request a follow-on assignment to a foreign OS location. If an Airman is currently serving in a foreign OS location, he or she may request a follow-on assignment only to the CONUS, Alaska or Hawaii.

When Airmen apply for follow-on assignments, either by hard copy submission as directed in Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-2110, *Total Force Assignments* (Attachment 3), or via virtual MPF, they must confirm they have read and understand the Home-basing/Follow-on

Entitlements and Restrictions Fact Sheet and that they will comply with the content of the agreement, which follows here.

“If my request for follow-on assignment is approved, in conjunction with my overseas and follow-on assignments, I agree that I may:

- a. Not move my dependents at government expense except to the follow-on location, but I may move them to any desired location at personal expense, and
- b. Not claim Dislocation Allowance (DLA) unless I’m moving my dependents to
- c. the follow-on location, and
- d. Not ship household goods (HHG) at government expense to other than the follow-on location (and only if I or my agent will accept delivery of my HHG upon their arrival at the follow-on location) (unless I am required to live off base at my projected assignment location), but I may ship HHG to any desired location at personal expense, and
- e. Not store HHG in non-temporary storage at government expense (see note below for an exception for single Airmen, single Airmen parents and military couples), but I may store them at personal expense during my unaccompanied overseas short tour assignment, and
- f. I may ship my privately owned vehicle (POV) at government expense to the overseas location, unless shipment of POV is prohibited to a particular location, or I am ineligible based on my rank.
- g. If denied continued occupancy of government-owned or controlled quarters, my dependents and HHG may be moved at government expense only within the same city, town or metropolitan area as prescribed by the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR), volume I.
- h. If I take action contrary to the above agreements without prior approval of a request for exception from HQ AFPC/DP3AM, my home basing will be canceled.
- i. My follow-on assignment is subject to cancellation due to unavoidable changes in Air Force requirements (i.e., base closure, change in mission or weapons system, etc.) or individual qualifications (i.e., loss of AFSC, promotion, etc.).
- j. My follow-on assignment is subject to cancellation if I apply for a four-month or longer extension of my OS tour.
- k. As an exception, if I am a single member, a single member parent, or part of a military couple that will serve a concurrent but separate unaccompanied short tour, I can store HHG at government expense by the most cost-effective means (as determined by the local TMO).

4.3.2. Home-Basing Program. The purpose of the Home-Basing program is to reduce permanent change of station (PCS) costs and increase family stability. It does so by providing an Airman who meets program criteria and agrees to certain conditions an assignment back to the same continental United States (CONUS) location or long tour location in Alaska or Hawaii from which he or she departs.

To be eligible for the Home-Basing Program, Airmen must have elected or been selected to serve an overseas (OS) unaccompanied short tour of 17 months or less, and must be currently serving in the CONUS, Alaska or Hawaii.

When Airmen apply for home-basing assignments, either by hard copy submission as directed in Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-2110, *Total Force Assignments* (Attachment 3), or

via virtual MPF, they must confirm they have read and understand the Home-basing/Follow-on Entitlements and Restrictions Fact Sheet and that they will comply with the content of the agreement, which follows here.

“If my request for home-basing assignment is approved, in conjunction with my overseas and return assignments, I understand and agree that I may:

- a. Not move my dependents at government expense, but I may move them at personal expense, and
- b. Not ship household goods (HHG) at government expense (unless I am required to live off base at the projected assignment location), but I may ship HHG at personal expense, and
- c. Not store HHG in non-temporary storage at government expense (see note below for an exception for single Airmen, single Airmen parents and military couples), but I may store them at personal expense during my unaccompanied overseas short tour assignment, and
- d. I may ship my privately owned vehicle (POV) at government expense to the overseas location, unless shipment of POV is prohibited to a particular location, or I am ineligible based on my rank, and
- e. If denied continued occupancy of government-owned or controlled quarters, my dependents and HHG may be moved at government expense only within the same city, town or metropolitan area as prescribed by the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR), volume I.
- f. If I take action contrary to the above agreements without prior approval of a request for exception from HQ AFPC/DP3AM, my home basing will be canceled.
- g. My home-basing assignment is subject to cancellation due to unavoidable changes in Air Force requirements (i.e., base closure, change in mission or weapons system, etc.) or individual qualifications (i.e., loss of AFSC, promotion, etc.).
- h. My home-basing is subject to cancellation if I apply for a four-month or longer extension of my OS tour.
- i. As an exception, if I am a single member, a single member parent, or part of a military couple that will serve a concurrent but separate unaccompanied short tour, I can store HHG at government expense by the most cost-effective means (as determined by the local TMO).

4.3.3. Humanitarian Reassignments and Deferments. The Exceptional Assignment Programs (EAP) Division at the Air Force's Personnel Center may authorize reassignment for humanitarian reasons when a severe, substantiated hardship exists within the Department of the Air Force active-duty member's family. The Airman and Guardian must clearly establish that the problem can be resolved only by reassignment and within a reasonable length of time (normally 12 months or less). In this regard, the Department of the Air Force does not consider applications favorably if they are based on a problem that would restrict further assignment for an extended period or necessitate relocation to a base or area where the Service cannot effectively use the member's skills and training.

The Department of the Air Force may defer an Airman and Guardian from reassignment for humanitarian reasons if his or her request substantiates the Service member's presence is essential to alleviate a temporary hardship experienced by the family. Since indefinitely restricting assignment to one base or area would be prejudicial to other Service members, and not in the best interest of the Service, a deferment may be authorized only when it meets established

criteria and when resolution of the problem can be expected within a reasonable length of time.

4.3.4. Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP). The Department of the Air Force's EFMP aids Airmen and Guardians and their families who have documented special medical or educational needs. The Exceptional Assignment Programs (EAP) Division at the Air Force's Personnel Center was stood up on June 1, 2020, to serve as a single, consolidated resource focal point for leaders and families. Legal assistance, Special Education liaison, Physicians, Medical Admin Technicians, and Assignment Navigators joined the division in October 2020, and brought a myriad of resources to enhance the program. One purpose of the program is to ensure assignment coordination is completed prior to reassignment orders being funded to locations where medical and/or special education services are available through the Military Treatment Facility (MTF), TRICARE, or a combination of the two. Prior to a "standard" reassignment being levied, consideration for EFMP enrollment is not provided; this ensures all Airmen and Guardians are provided equal career progression and development opportunities. Family Member Travel Screenings are completed for EFMP enrolled family members prior to reassignment orders issuance. If the gaining location is unable to provide the required services at the prescribed frequencies, the Service member may request a change or cancellation of the assignment to a location better suited to meet the family member's needs.

When substantiated by evidence submitted with their request, active-duty Airmen and Guardians may also be reassigned or deferred from reassignment to start or continue a medical/special educational program for their family members enrolled in the EFMP. Stabilization at a particular location or reassignment will depend upon both Air Force manning requirements and availability of medical/special educational services and facilities. Service members with EFMP enrolled family members will not be exempt from serving their equitable share of overseas assignments.

Additionally, servicemembers and their dependents can receive legal assistance from the local installation legal office on matters relating to special education law.

4.3.5. Join Spouse Program. Current Air Force policy provides that, military requirements permitting, married Airmen with military spouses may be assigned to the same or adjacent locations. Within established parameters, this policy gives military couples every practical opportunity to establish a common household and minimize their family separation. At times, duty commitments, mission requirements and equitable assignment considerations limit the ability to co-locate military spouses.

Military couples must share the responsibility for minimizing their family separation by judicious decisions relating to further service, career development and family planning. They should not base decisions in these areas on an assumption they will always have a joint assignment. Manning requirements are paramount in determining assignments. Accordingly, the Air Force cannot guarantee that military spouses will be assigned together. Approval of a join spouse application depends on the availability of a suitable requirement at the requested location.

Assignment policies and procedures for join spouse assignment consideration for same-sex

military couples are the same as those for heterosexual military couples.

4.3.6. Sole Surviving Son or Daughter. Department of the Air Force assignment policy concerning a sole surviving son or daughter is addressed in Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-2110, *Total Force Assignments*, Attachment 5. This policy pertains to an Airman or Guardian who is the only surviving son or daughter in a family where the father, mother or one or more siblings served in the U.S. Armed Forces and as a direct result of the hazards of duty was killed; died as a result of wounds, accident or disease; is in captured or missing in action status; or is determined to be 100% disabled (including mental disability) by the Department of Veterans Affairs or one of the services. The death or disability need not have occurred in a combat zone but must be a result of the hazards of duty and be determined to have been in the line of duty. Being an only child does not, in itself, qualify an Airman or Guardian for sole surviving status.

Airman or Guardians may submit a request for this assignment restriction. After meeting eligibility criteria and having documentary evidence, an Airman or Guardian should complete an application available through the self-service actions on the vMPF, or virtual Military Personnel Flight, (vMPF for regular Air Force members; members of the Reserve and Guard should contact their Military Personnel Flight for assistance), print the application, and provide it to his or her unit commander for recommended approval/disapproval.

4.3.7. Expedited Transfer. Expedited Transfer reassignments are processed by the Humanitarian/EFMP Reassignments Office at the Air Force Personnel Center. Expedited Transfer actions apply to military victims of sexual assault who file an unrestricted report with a Sexual Assault and Response Coordinator (SARC); military victims of stalking or other sexual misconduct who file an unrestricted report with the Victim and Witness Assistance Program (VWAP) in the installation's Legal Office; and military victims of physical domestic violence committed by the spouse or intimate partner who file an unrestricted report with the Family Advocacy Program (FAP) Office and when the assignment action has been approved by the Airman or Guardian's wing commander or equivalent.

Expedited Transfer actions also apply to Airmen and Guardians whose adult military dependent makes an allegation of non-domestic abuse sexual assault with the SARC, files an unrestricted report, and the alleged offender is a Service member or if the alleged sexual assault has a military nexus and the assignment action has been approved by the wing commander or equivalent. Examples of a military nexus include: Adult military dependent, works for DoD as a civilian employee (appropriated and non-appropriated fund employees, or is a government contractor); or the alleged sexual assault occurred on a DoD installation or facility.

The intent of these actions is to offer the option of a permanent change of station (PCS) or a temporary or permanent change of assignment (PCA) to a location that will assist with the immediate and future welfare of the victim, while also allowing him or her to move to a location that will offer additional support to facilitate the healing, recovery, and rehabilitation process.

To enhance protection for the sexual assault victim, potential reassignment of the alleged offender may also be considered by the vice wing commander or equivalent, balancing the

interests of the victim and the offender. The wing commander or equivalent must consult with the servicing staff judge advocate and military criminal investigation organization in making this decision when there is an open investigation. Reassignment options include a temporary or permanent change of assignment (PCA) or PCS to a location determined by Air Force needs.

4.4. Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Moves.

4.4.1. Shipment of Personal Property. The Joint Travel Regulations (JTR), Chapter Five, Part A, derived from Titles 5, 10 and 37 of United States Code (U.S.C.), contains guidance on the entitlement to move household goods (HHG) and privately owned vehicles (POV). The authorized weight allowance for permanent change of station moves for uniformed members is established by grade and based on “with dependents and without dependents” status, as outlined in the JTR, paragraph 5200.

Military members married to military members are entitled to a combined weight allowance under some circumstances. Additional information is contained in Air Force Instruction 24-501, *Personal Property Moving and Storage*, and at www.move.mil.

Allowances apply to the actual net weight of unpacked HHG. Adjustments are made for packing materials; in most cases, 10 percent is subtracted from the net weight. Professional books, papers and equipment (PBP&E) are not chargeable against weight allowances if required in the performance of a member’s duties; however, they must be declared before shipment. An after-the-fact declaration will be considered only when the shipment file contains indisputable intent to declare PBP&E. Packers must separately pack, mark, weigh and inventory professional gear, which cannot include any furniture items. In qualifying situations, an additional PBP&E weight allowance not to exceed 500 pounds may possibly be claimed for items that belong to a member’s spouse.

A service member is authorized to ship empty gun safes with HHG to the next PDS. The next PDS includes the home of record or home of selection upon leaving the Service. The maximum weight allowed for gun safe transportation is limited to 500 pounds net weight in addition to Service member's weight allowance authorized in Table 5-37 of the Joint Travel Regulations, not to exceed 18,000 pounds.

If the member ships more than the JTR authorized weight allowance, the Air Force computes charges for excess weight based on the least costly shipment. The Air Force Excess Cost Adjudication Function at the Personal Property Activity Headquarters performs this function for Air Force shipments. Movement of HHG to/from/between overseas locations is normally by surface transport, with a few exceptions for “hard lift areas.” The Joint Personal Property Shipping Office Director approves special circumstances.

Local Personal Property Processing Offices provide counseling on shipment and storage of HHG, POVs and mobile homes. The Director of Logistics manages the Department of the Air Force personal property shipment program.

It is customary that the Service Component of the military member responds to matters

pertaining to JTR household goods (HHG) entitlements. The Air Force is without authority to offer statutory relief for Service members outside of the Air Force, and our Joint Personal Property Shipping Offices will work with them to provide necessary supporting documentation of events that occurred while the HHG shipment was in DAF control. Conversely, the Department of the Air Force responds to Congressional Inquiries pertaining to Air Force members if an incident occurs while HHG are in the control of another Service Component.

4.4.2. Passport and Visa Issues. All inquiries, including Congressional inquiries, regarding passport and visa applications for DoD military and civilian personnel and dependents should be directed to the [Passport Matters Public Site](#). The office provides executive agency support for passport and passport agent services except in rare instances (i.e. a small number of DoD commands deal directly with the State Department). Whatever the circumstances, the Passport Matters Public Site can provide and/or contact the appropriate personnel as needed.

Airmen and Guardians may be encouraged to seek resolution of their passport and visa issues by directly contacting the DoD Passport and Visa Office at (703) 545-0003/0004, DSN 865-0003/0004 or via e-mail at usarmy.pentagon.hqda-oaa-det.mbx.det-ppv-customer-service@mail.mil. Customer service hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday excluding federal holidays.

Chapter 5

AIR FORCE RESERVE & AIR NATIONAL GUARD MATTERS

5.1. Air Force Reserve.

When Air Force reservists submit inquiries concerning their uniformed service, the Air Force Congressional Inquiry Branch is generally able to work within the purview of the Air Force, specifically with the Headquarters, Air Force Reserve, to address the issues and provide official responses to Members of Congress.

Reservists may also be encouraged to seek resolution of their issues through the interactive myFSS personnel support website and/or the [Total Force Service Center](#).

5.2. Air National Guard.

All Congressional inquiries regarding the activities of the Air National Guard and the uniformed service of its members should be directed to the [National Guard Bureau Congressional Inquiries Branch](#). Such matters fall outside the purview of the Air Force and if received by the Air Force Congressional Inquiry Branch will be transferred to the National Guard Bureau.

The National Guard Bureau Congressional Inquiries Branch is the central point of contact for all Congressional and White House correspondence. The Branch is responsible for receiving and responding to correspondence relating to the activities of the Army and Air National Guard and its members.

All requests should include the following: an authorization for release of information in accordance with the Privacy Act, full name, Social Security number, current military address and a description of the specific assistance required. To expedite processing, inquiries should be sent via e-mail to: Ng.ncr.arng.mbx.ngb-congressional-inquiries@army.mil.

Guardsmen may also be encouraged to seek resolution of their issues through the interactive myFSS personnel support website and/or the [Total Force Service Center](#).

Chapter 6

READINESS FOR DUTY

6.1. Security Clearance.

All Congressional inquiries regarding security clearances should be directed to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs. Though formerly handled by the Air Force Central Adjudication Facility (CAF), security clearance actions now fall outside the purview of the Department of the Air Force, and if received by the Air Force Congressional Inquiry Branch, will be appropriately transferred.

Inquiries should be directed via e-mail to osd.pentagon.oasd-la.mbx.constituentinquiries@mail.mil or faxed to 703-693-5530.

6.2. Department of the Air Force Fitness Program and Guardian Resilience Teams (GRTs)

The goal of the Department of the [Air Force Fitness Program](#) is to ensure a fit and viable military force of active duty and reserve component members. The program is structured to motivate Airmen and Guardians to participate in a year-round physical conditioning program that emphasizes total fitness, to include proper aerobic conditioning, strength and flexibility training, and healthy eating. Health benefits from an active lifestyle will increase productivity, optimize health, and decrease absenteeism while maintaining a higher level of readiness.

[Department of the Air Force Manual \(DAFMAN\) 36-2905, Physical Fitness Program](#) is the governing directive for the Department of the Air Force. The Department of the Air Force assesses the aerobic fitness, body composition, and muscular fitness (muscular strength and muscular endurance) of its Airmen to determine their overall fitness. The Department of the Air Force tailored its fitness program to meet DoD policies and objectives as well as the Department of the Air Force needs. DAFMAN 36-2905 establishes standard and equitable application of program requirements.

Improving and maintaining optimal physical fitness and health is every Airman and Guardian's responsibility. Airmen and Guardians are encouraged to exercise regularly in individual and unit fitness programs, to follow intervention and rehabilitative programs as needed, and to comply with Department of the Air Force standards. Airmen and Guardians must maintain an overall fitness score within prescribed standards. Those Airmen and Guardians who do not meet fitness standards receive rehabilitative support via physical activity and nutrition counseling, a monitored fitness program, medical evaluation, and monthly follow-ups.

Commanders are responsible for execution of the DAF Fitness Program. As such, commanders make every effort to assist Airmen and Guardians in maintaining the fitness standards. Commanders may initiate (as concerns enlisted Airmen and Guardians) or recommend (as concerns officers) administrative discharge only after an Airman or Guardian has received four unsatisfactory fitness assessment scores in a 24-month period; has failed to demonstrate significant improvement (as determined by the commander) despite a minimum reconditioning period; and has had their medical records reviewed by a military health care provider to rule out

medical conditions that could preclude the Airman or Guardian from achieving a passing score. Administrative actions for failing to comply with the standards of the fitness program include, but are not limited to, verbal counseling, written reprimand, denial or deferment of promotion, demotion and separation.

Please refer to DAFMAN 36-2905, Chapter 8, *Administrative and Personnel Actions*, and attachment 6, *Administrative and Personnel Actions*, for additional guidance.

In addition to the DAF Fitness Program, the Space Force created Guardian Resilience Teams (GRTs) to build skills to promote shared protective factors and increase positive behaviors across Total Force Fitness, to include physical, mental, and spiritual fitness. GRTs advise commanders and are the physical fitness subject matter experts to promote optimal human performance across the Space Force. In 2023, the Space Force partnered with Air Force Research Laboratory to conduct a Continuous Fitness Assessment (CFA) study. The CFA study is expected to conclude in late 2025. The CFA study is voluntary and designed to promote continuous fitness through use of a Portable Wearable Fitness Device, vice annual episodic testing, in an effort to establish a USSF specific fitness program, increase the short and long-term health outcomes for Guardians, reduce injury, disassociate punitive consequences with physical fitness, and encourage movement throughout the day. Guardians have monthly goals for purposeful physical activity with the ability to partake in physical fitness activities of their choice. Guardians who do not voluntarily opt in to the study or who are disenrolled will be required to follow the Department of Air Force physical fitness manual.

6.3. Urinalysis Drug Screening Program.

The Department of the Air Force urinalysis drug-screening is executed through the services' Drug Demand Reduction Program (DDRP). The primary deterrent in the DDRP is the threat to the individual's career and the certainty of legal or administrative action. The Department of the Air Force views illegal or improper drug use as incompatible with military service. All Department of the Air Force personnel, regardless of pay grade, who are found to be involved with drug abuse (through means other than self-identification) are subject to criminal prosecution. The member faces possible confinement, reduction in rank, forfeiture of pay, and/or dishonorable discharge. The base Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Program evaluates all active-duty members identified as abusing drugs.

Urinalysis drug screening is accomplished through random sampling, individual sampling (command-directed/probable cause) and unit sweeps. Each Department of the Air Force installation must conduct random military urinalysis testing a minimum of eight randomly selected days per month, and every assigned active-duty Department of the Air Force member is eligible for selection each time. Consequently, each Department of the Air Force member is eligible for random selection at least 96 times per year. Once authorities notify a member of their selection to provide a sample, the member must report to the designated collection site within two hours. This is necessary to ensure members do not have time to "flush" their system before submitting the sample.

Installation-specific intelligence/drug threat assessment from the Air Force Office of Special

Investigations and Security Forces is provided to installation commanders to enable them to conduct sweeps on units or populations that are at greatest risk for using drugs. The commander also has the authority to modify testing procedures in response to changes in the drug threat environment. This may include increased weekend testing, after-hours testing, gate checks after hours, increased frequency of testing or increased rate of testing. These sampling methods ensure a constant chance of selection, and thus detection, throughout a member's Air Force or Space Force career.

The Department of the Air Force screens all personnel applying for entrance during accessions processing at the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS). All new accessions are also tested within 48 hours of arrival at Basic Military Training School, Consolidated Officer Training School, Basic Officer Training School, and the Air Force Academy. Drug testing is also conducted for Air Force civilian employees working in testing designated positions.

Chapter 7

DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT

One of the missions of the Military and Family Readiness Center (M&FRC) is to offer pre-deployment, deployment and sustainment, redeployment and post-deployment and reintegration services. These services provide information; improve skills by fostering competencies and coping mechanisms; and offer support that will help Airmen, Guardians, and their families deal with the demands of the expeditionary military mission. These services are available to all active duty, reserve and guard service members, DOD civilian employees and their families.

7.1 Pre-Deployment Support.

Pre-deployment support for service members and families begins with mandatory personnel and family readiness pre-deployment consultation for the member. The consultation includes information on deployment; prepare for and coping with the stress of deployment; unit and family connection through communication; sustainment services and programs offered during the deployment; personal and family readiness (emphasizing financial planning, powers of attorney, estate planning, and other legal matters and personal details); and return and reunion support. If family members are unable to attend the consultation, M&FRC staff members contact them to share resources and identify available support services.

7.2. Sustainment Programs.

Sustainment programs are available to families for the duration of the deployment and are designed to reduce the stressful experience of extended separations and/or deployment. These programs include free vehicle oil changes, limited free childcare, and respite care for families with special needs. Information about these and other programs is disseminated by the Readiness Noncommissioned Officer and other M&FRC staff via face-to-face meetings, newsletter, e-mail and telephone contact. Other sustainment support includes:

- The Hearts Apart Program, which includes morale calls, free e-mail/webcam access, peer support through coordinated dinners, and the unit-based Commander's Key Support (formerly Key Spouse) Program.
- Information and referral services, applicable to [Air Force Aid Society](#) (AFAS) programs such as "Give Parents a Break" and "Car Care Because We Care". AFAS is the official Military Welfare Society of both the Air Force and Space Force. See section 10.4.
- Partnering with the School Liaison Officer to ensure parents, local school authorities and teachers to help them better understand the unique stressors impacting children of deployed military, including the dissemination of materials addressing deployment; for additional information and to locate your School Liaison, please visit [Military OneSource](#).
- [Military OneSource](#), a Department of Defense-funded program providing comprehensive information on every aspect of military life at no cost to active duty, Guard and Reserve service members and their families. Information includes, but is not limited to, deployment, reunion, relationship, grief and loss, spouse employment and education,

parenting and childcare. Military OneSource also offers confidential free non-medical counseling.

- United Services Organization ([USO](#)), another great resource for programs aimed at assisting service members by keeping them connected to family and home throughout their service.
- [Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program \(YRRP\)](#), a DoD-wide effort to promote the wellbeing of National Guard and Reserve members, their families, and communities by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle. YRRP works in conjunction with federal partners, including the Small Business Administration and the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs, to provide up-to-date and relevant information to the members of the all-volunteer force and their families.
- [The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense Reserve Affairs website](#), which hosts mobilization and demobilization guides designed to provide Guard and Reserve members with valuable information concerning Presidential executive orders, DoD policy documents, pay and allowances, healthcare options, family support resources, financial assistance, demobilization, reemployment rights, and assistance for students and small business owners.

7.3. Redeployment Consultations.

Redeployment consultations are provided by M&FRC staff for families at the home station and by chaplain services for returning service members in theater. Services for families are typically provided in group settings; however, walk-in consultation and one-on-one services are also available. Topics such as managing expectations, reconnecting with unit and family, adapting to change, and signs and symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder are discussed.

In 2010, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF) directed the creation of the Deployment Transition Center (DTC) to address negative personal and family impacts attributed to deployment operations and combat exposures. As concerns identified for Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Security Forces, Transportation and Medical Airmen, most all redeploying service members, in any AFSC with Commander Nomination may participate in programs at the DTC at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, in the process of returning home. The DTC provides an opportunity for service members to receive post-deployment decompression and reintegration education, readjust to a more typical environment and learn resilience skills before redeploying to home station. Research has shown solid evidence that the DTC helps service members by decreasing symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as well as reducing problematic alcohol use, and negative outcomes regarding health and relationships. Most service members do not require mental health care, but if needed, all have access to mental health treatment in theater while deployed and again once they return home at their local Military Treatment Facility.

7.4. Post-Deployment and Reintegration Services.

Post-deployment and reintegration services for both service members and families include welcome home events, classes, and workshops on reintegrating back into the family, community, and unit and/or workplace. Non-clinical counseling and referral to other helping agencies is available as needed. Other post-deployment support includes:

- [Military & Family Life Counseling Program \(MFLC\)](#), which provides non-medical counseling before, during, and after deployment. Their most requested classes focus on stress management and relationship enhancement; one-on-one counseling is available.
- [DoD Transition Assistance Program \(TAP\)](#), DoD TAP is an outcome-based program that bolsters opportunities, services, and training for transitioning Service members in their preparation to meet post-military goals. The mandatory components of TAP are applicable for all service members who have at least 180 continuous days or more on active duty; this includes National Guard and Reserve.”
- [TRICARE Transitional Assistance Management Program \(TAMP\)](#), a program that provides 180 days of transitional health care to certain uniformed services members and their families. To be eligible, National Guard and Reserve members must have been ordered to active duty for more than 30 consecutive days in support of a contingency operation.
- [DoD Deployment Health Clinical Center \(DHCC\) website](#), which provides information, guidance, and related links on healthcare and service member/family support services specifically for National Guard and Reserve members and their families.
- [The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act \(USERRA\)](#), a federal law that provides service members and former service members protections related to the civilian jobs they held before being called up for active duty. USERRA applies to all public and private employers in the United States, regardless of size, and applies to any foreign company with a physical branch or location in the United States. Public employers include all federal and state government offices and political subdivisions. A service member may qualify for USERRA protection if he or she left a civilian job to enter military service for duty. The law covers all categories of military training and service, and applies to both National Guard and Reserve members, as well as active component personnel.

Chapter 8 PERSONNEL-RELATED MATTERS

8.1. Resources.

8.1.1. Total Force Service Center. The [Total Force Service Center \(TFSC\)](#) provides 24/7 customer support to the Total Force, including active duty, National Guard and Reserve members, as well as Air Force civilian personnel, via its call center and the myFSS website (more information below). The TFSC centralizes processes to include assignments, benefits and entitlements, casualty, duty history, retraining, separations, retirements and re-enlistments. The TFSC provides customers with seamless access to personnel information services.

Professionals at the TFSC are available by phone Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. MST and in support of Unit Training Assemblies on the first three Saturdays of each month from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

To speak with a TFSC professional, call (800) 525-0102 or (210) 565-0102.

8.1.2. The myFSS Website. All Total Force Airmen and Guardians including active duty, National Guard and Reserve members, as well as Department of the Air Force civilian personnel, may access [myFSS](#), the Air Force and Space Force's personnel support website. Either a user ID and password or a Common Access Card (CAC) is required of service members to gain access. The site is categorically tailored to each segment of the Total Force and allows all Airmen and Guardians, regardless of status, to electronically perform a wide array of personnel actions, make requests for assistance and learn more about a variety of topics.

For example, myFSS provides all Airmen and Guardians the means to view their records, correct duty history, update DEERS information, change/correct retirement points, and request a correction to a Defense Department (DD) Form 214. The site also hosts detailed information on the following topics: assignments, benefits and entitlements, career management, classification, compensation, deployment, evaluations, force development, mobilization/demobilization, new hire, promotion, recognition, retention, retirement, separation, systems support and training.

8.2. Personnel Records.

8.2.1. Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR). The [AFBCMR](#) is the highest level of administrative review within the Department of the Air Force. As such, an applicant must exhaust all available administrative remedies before applying to the AFBCMR. In accordance with DAFI 36-2603, *Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR)*, the Board will deny any case where an applicant has not exhausted lower levels of administrative appeal. There are many lower levels of appeal that should be exhausted before seeking relief through the AFBCMR. These include, but are not limited to, the Evaluation Reports Appeals Board (ERAB), Purple Heart Review Board (PHRB), Fitness Assessment Appeal Board (FAAB), Air Force Remissions Board, Air Force Discharge Review Board (for discharges less than 15 years old), various forms of waivers that are available through servicing finance and military personnel offices, etc. For veterans seeking decorations, there are several

avenues of possible relief, some of which are described in the section below. Veterans and those who are currently serving should contact the TFSC to obtain advice on what administrative remedies are available prior to submitting an application to the AFBCMR.

The Board is composed of civilians from the executive level of the Department of the Air Force who are appointed by the Secretary of the Air Force and have statutory authority to correct any military record when the evidence presented substantiates the applicant is the victim of an error or injustice. The Board thoroughly examines matters submitted, then renders a recommendation to the Secretary of the Air Force or his/her delegees, who direct the correction of military records. Applications must be submitted within three years of a service member's last active-duty tour or, if already separated, within three years of reasonable discovery of the error or injustice. However, the Board may excuse the failure to file within three years, provided it is in the interest of justice to do so.

The burden of proof of an error or injustice rests with the applicant and it should not be assumed the submission of an application will result in an approval. The Board is also not an investigative body. As such, it is in an applicant's best interest to provide all supporting documentation at the time their application is submitted, to include personal copies of documents from their military records; this is advisable because numerous records were destroyed at the National Personnel Records Center in 1973 by fire. The final determination is based on the information submitted, and the case is decided based upon the evidence of record. An applicant may request a hearing; however, there is no right to a hearing and the Board has sole discretion in determining whether an applicant's presence before the Board is essential in making a reasoned and knowing decision in any case. A decision by the board is final and conclusive on all officers of the United States, unless it is procured by fraud.

The applicant may use DAFI 36-2603 as a guide in applying for a correction of military records. The AFBCMR requires the signed, original copy DD Form 149, Application for Correction of Military Record - submitted via the Air Force Review Boards Agency (AFRBA) Information Website and Application Portal located at <https://afrba-portal.cce.af.mil/> - prior to officially accepting the application. Once pertinent military records have been obtained, an application may be referred to an office of primary responsibility (OPR) for an advisory opinion. The advisory opinion assists the AFBCMR in the decisional process by addressing the regulatory guidance in effect at the time of the alleged error or injustice; however, the OPR advisory opinion does not represent the final decision on a case but is advice to the Board. Copies of advisory opinions are provided to applicants who then have 30 days in which to respond or submit additional evidence in support of the request. Upon receipt of the applicant's response, or expiration of the comment period, whichever occurs first, the case is presented to the Board in its turn.

The AFBCMR receives around 4,500 to 6,000 cases annually. To be fair to all applicants, the AFBCMR considers applications in their turn. Because of the sheer volume of cases and the Board's limited staff, delays are customary. While the Board has a statutory mandate to adjudicate 90 percent of its cases within ten months, it has 18 months to adjudicate any single case. Due to a variety of factors, including a fluctuating workload, it is impossible to predict when any single case will be decided.

8.3. Military Awards & Decorations.

8.3.1. Process for Award Consideration. The Air Force strives to grant members their recognition as soon as possible, but federal law and Air Force policy require recommendations for military awards and decorations to be formally submitted through official channels from the date of the act or achievement for which the recognition is sought. Section 1130, Title 10, United States Code, offers a means for considering military decorations that would otherwise not be eligible for consideration due to existing federal law and Air Force policy.

Under this law, any award or decoration that was not previously submitted within the prescribed time limitations and upgrades of previously issued awards may be considered if referred to the Secretary of the Air Force by a Member of Congress. The individual making the request is responsible for gathering all relevant supporting documentation, which should include details about the Airman or Guardian and their unit of assignment during the period for which they are being recognized. Each recommendation must specify the award being recommended, the reason for recognition, and the inclusive dates of the act. It should also include a narrative citation of the action(s) for which the Airman or Guardian is being recognized, eyewitness statements, sworn affidavits, certificates, and any other related documentation. Corroborating evidence is best provided by former commanders, leaders, and fellow comrades who had personal knowledge of the circumstances and events relative to the recommendation

To initiate the process, a recommendation letter from the Member of Congress should be addressed to the Air Force Director of Legislative Liaison, who acts on behalf of the Secretary. Upon receiving and reviewing the recommendation and the veteran's official military personnel record from the National Personnel Records Center, the Secretary will determine the merits of approval through a representative. The Secretary's staff will then notify the applicant of the decision.

In the case of recommendations for World War II veterans, the Army Air Force Transfer Agreement of 1948 grants the Department of the Air Force the authority to act on and process all recommendations for decorations, for acts which occurred prior to July 1, 1948, if the member was transferred to the Air Force, regardless of whether they served with the Army, Air Corps, Army Air Forces, or the United States Air Force. If the member served in the Air Force after 1947, inquiries must be directed to the Department of the Air Force.

Given the significant passage of time in some instances, constituents may not have immediate access to the documentation required to justify a military decoration. The following agencies may be able to help:

[Air Force Historical Research Agency](#)

AFHRA/RSA
600 Chennault Circle
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6424
(334) 953-5697 / 5342
AFHRANEWS@maxwell.af.mil

* The agency may be able to provide information recorded in unit/group history.

Air Force Safety Center

HQ USAF/SE
9700 Avenue G Southeast Suite 240
Kirtland AFB, NM 87117-5670

Washington National Records Center

4205 Suitland Road
Suitland, MD 20746-8001

**National Archives & Records Administration
Veterans Service Records**

700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408

National Personnel Records Center

NPRC/NCPMAO
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138
(314) 801-0800
MPR.center@nara.gov

Air Force Worldwide Locator

AFPC/DSIW
550 C Street West, Suite 50
Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4752
(210) 565-2660

* The Air Force Worldwide Locator may assist service members in locating active duty, Reserve, Guard, retired and civil service personnel.

8.3.2. Medals. A complete list of Department of the Air Force medals, their establishment dates and other information may be found at the [Air Force Personnel Center's Awards and Decorations website](#). The following medals are listed in order of precedence.

8.3.2.1. Medal of Honor. [The President awards the Medal of Honor \(MOH\)](#) in the name of Congress to a person who distinguishes himself or herself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty as a member of the Air Force: while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

Each recommendation for the MOH must incontestably prove that the self-sacrifice or personal bravery involved conspicuous risk of life, the omission of which could not justly cause censure.

In the case of World War II decorations, the Army Air Force Transfer Agreement of 1948 gives the Department of the Army authority to act on and process all recommendations for decorations

(except the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal) for acts which occurred prior to July 1, 1948, regardless of whether the military service was performed with the Army, Air Corps, Army Air Forces or the United States Air Force.

The Secretaries of the military departments establish the procedures for processing MOH recommendations for their respective Service. Those recommendations will contain the endorsement of the component commander to the Unified Combatant Command or Joint Task Force Commander, if involved, and the Unified Combatant Commander concerned.

8.3.2.2. Distinguished Flying Cross. [The Distinguished Flying Cross \(DFC\)](#) is awarded to any officer or enlisted member of the Armed Forces of the United States who distinguishes him or herself in actual combat in support of operations by heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight. See information below concerning changes to the award criteria for the DFC.

8.3.2.3. Purple Heart. [The Services award the Purple Heart \(PH\)](#) for wounds received as a direct result of enemy actions (i.e., gunshot or shrapnel wounds, hand-to-hand combat wounds, forced aircraft bail out injuries, etc.). Eligibility for the PH now extends to former prisoners of war who were held prior to April 25, 1962, and who suffered wounds or injuries at the hands of their captors. A caveat is that the wound(s) must have required or received treatment by medical personnel; indirect injuries do not meet the PH criteria. These include, but are not limited to, injuries received while seeking shelter from mortar or rocket attacks, aircraft bombings or grenades, and injuries incurred while serving as an aircrew member or in a passenger status as a result of the aircraft's evasive measures against hostile fire.

The Purple Heart Review Board (PHRB) has the authority, on behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force, to determine a veteran's entitlement to the PH. The PHRB considers each request based on the policies and criteria effective at the time of the injury, and the determination depends on the documentary evidence presented. The PHRB requires the following:

- A detailed personal account of the circumstances surrounding the injury, to include specifics as to how it occurred, exact date of injury, unit of assignment and rank held at the time of injury. If the board approves the request, the member's rank and date of the injury must appear on the special order and certificate.
- Medical documents to substantiate receipt of medical treatment. If medical documents are not available, applicants may submit a statement from a medical officer (military or civilian) attesting that an examination reveals that an injury of the type incurred would or should have received medical treatment. Statements from individuals, not substantiated by either medical or official records, will not constitute sufficient evidence of wounds. In this respect, entries on Discharge Certificates are not official. For service-related conditions noted by the VA, the injury must have been a direct result of the enemy and meet the PH criteria. Not all service-connected injuries were caused by enemy forces.
- An eyewitness account from an individual who saw the event that caused the injury and can attest to the circumstances surrounding the applicant's personal account.

8.3.2.4. Air Medal. [The Air Medal \(AM\)](#), established by Executive Order 9158, dated May 11, 1942, and amended by Executive Order 9242, dated September 11, 1942, is awarded to any officer or enlisted member for single acts of heroism or meritorious achievements while participating in aerial flight and, in the case of foreign military personnel, in actual combat in support of operations. Required achievement is less than that required for the DFC but must be accomplished with distinction above and beyond that expected of professional Airmen. It is not awarded for peace time-sustained operational activities and flights.

See information below concerning changes to the award criteria for the AM.

8.3.3. Changes to Award Criteria for the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal. The requirements for the DFC and AM changed dramatically early in World War II. Major General Henry H. Arnold, Chief of the Air Corps, traveled to Europe to investigate the large numbers of medals awarded. This investigation caused General Arnold to change the award criteria by eliminating the “scorecard” (number of missions completed) approach to awards. Effective August 14, 1943, new criteria included heroism or extraordinary achievement. Heroism is a voluntary action taken in the face of great danger, above and beyond the call of duty, while participating in aerial flight. Extraordinary achievement is an act accomplished while in aerial flight, the results of which are so exceptional that it clearly sets one apart from his comrades.

This change had a dramatic effect on the awards program at the time. Many Air Corps members were “promised” the DFC or AM based on the scorecard criteria, but many could not meet or substantiate awards under the new criteria. Also, many members believed they were going to receive the DFC or AM because the new criteria may not have received effective publicity.

When reviewing requests for these awards, Air Force officials must use the criteria in effect at the time the achievement took place.

Application for the DFC and AM changed from a nomination to a fully justified recommendation submitted by an immediate supervisor; the recommendation must outline the heroic acts in combat flight or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight that warrant the award. Officials occasionally used missions to substantiate the award, but missions could not constitute the sole basis for automatic award of these medals. The immediate supervisor or commander had to submit a recommendation that outlined the meritorious achievement in flight that warranted the award. To be recommended for these awards, former commanders, supervisors and fellow comrades who had personal knowledge of the circumstances and events relative to the heroic act in combat flight or the extraordinary achievement must make the recommendation.

8.3.4. Sample Citation.

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS TO
[FULL RANK, NAME OF RECIPIENT] [SSN]

[Full rank, Name of recipient] distinguished himself by exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the United States as a B-24 Aerial Gunner on high-altitude bombing missions on December 4, 1944, and March 2, 1945. During both missions *[Rank, Name of recipient i.e. Sergeant Smith]* risked his life to save the aircraft and crew despite extreme low temperature and heavy enemy anti-aircraft fire. On the first mission, after the bomb run, two armed bombs hung precariously in the bomb bay, precluding closing the doors. *[Rank, Name of recipient]* removed his parachute and oxygen mask, climbed into the open bomb bay and somehow managed to jettison the bombs. On the second mission, the bomb bay doors were jammed open, severely limiting the aircraft's range. Again, *[Rank, Name of recipient]* removed his parachute and oxygen mask, climbed into the open bomb bay and unjammed the doors. These selfless actions prevented the aircraft and crew from performing an emergency landing in enemy territory or ditching. The superior initiative, outstanding leadership and tremendous courage displayed by *[Full Rank, Name of recipient]* reflect great credit upon himself and the United States *[Air Force or Army Air Corps]*.

8.3.5. Replacement Medals/Ribbons/Certificates.

Replacement Medals/Ribbons/Certificates

There is a service available to Air Force veterans and retirees for replacing medals, ribbons, and certificates either previously issued but lost, stolen, or has become unserviceable or for some reason - never received by the Airman. Title 10 U.S.C. Section 1135 authorizes the Secretary of the Air Force to replace a military decoration, on a one-time basis and without charge, upon a request of the recipient of the military decoration or the immediate next of kin of a deceased recipient.

Veterans may choose to request replacement medals/ribbons by completing a Standard Form 180, *Request Pertaining to Military Records*, at: <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html>.

When completing the form, submitters must ensure to mark block 7 (1) and write in "Request Replacement Medals". Once the form is completed, it needs to be mailed to the appropriate address listed on page three of the form, depending on the period of service of the veteran.

The processing time for requests is determined by the period of service of the veteran. If additional research is required, a request may take up to six months for a response.

8.3.6. Cold War Recognition Certificates. In accordance with section 1084 of the Fiscal Year 1998 National Defense Authorization Act, the Secretary of Defense has authorized the issuance of Cold War Recognition Certificates to all members of the Armed Forces and eligible federal government civilian personnel who served the United States honorably and faithfully at any time during the Cold War period (September 2, 1945, to December 26, 1991).

To request a certificate, individuals must certify that their service was honorable and provide proof of service. Any official government or military document that includes the recipient's name, social security number/military service number/foreign service number, and date of service is acceptable.

To request a Cold War Certificate, interested parties should mail their documentation along with the following sample letter to the Department of the Army:

<p style="text-align: center;">John Doe P.O. Box 000 Pleasantville, Virginia 00000 October 1, 2012</p> <p>CDR HRC Cold War Recognition ATTN: AHRC-PDP-A 1600 Spearhead Division Avenue Fort Knox, KY 40121</p> <p>Please send me a Cold War Recognition Certificate for my service to the United States government during the authorized period of September 2, 1945 to December 26, 1991.</p> <p>Enclosed is a copy of source document with my Social Security Number/Military Service Number/Foreign Service Number, which verifies my service during the Cold War Era. I understand that the enclosed source document will not be returned.</p> <p>Please mail my Cold War Recognition Certificate to the following address:</p> <p>John Doe P.O. Box 000 Pleasantville, Virginia 00000</p> <p>Submission of this request confirms my faithful service to the nation during the Cold War Era. If my service was in the Armed Forces, I further certify that my discharge was honorable or general under honorable conditions. If I served as a Federal civilian employee, I further certify that the character of my service was honorable.</p> <p>Sincerely, John Doe</p>

8.3.7. Commemorative Medals. Commemorative medals are offered for sale by private vendors and are not issued by the Department of the Air Force. These medals are manufactured for sale by private dealers in military insignia and are not recognized as official U.S. military decorations and cannot be recorded on the individual's DD Form 214, WD AGO 53-33, or WD AGO 53-58.

Chapter 9

EDUCATION BENEFITS

Detailed information on veterans' education benefits, including the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB), the Post 9/11 GI Bill, the Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) and the Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program, is available at the [Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\) Education & Training website](#).

It should be noted that the VA does not approve schools or programs for benefits. Each individual state approves schools and courses within its purview. To find out if a school or program is approved for VA educational benefits, individuals should contact the school's VA Certifying Official.

Eligible members may receive a total of 48 months of benefits from more than one VA educational program. For example, a member who uses 30 months of Dependents Educational Assistance (Chapter 35, Title 38, United States Code, or USC) may also qualify for Chapter 1606 (MGIB-Selected Reserve) or MGIB Active-Duty Chapter 30 benefits.

9.1. The Montgomery GI Bill for Active-Duty.

On October 19, 1984, Congress enacted what is known as the [Montgomery GI Bill for Active Duty \(MGIB-AD\)](#), Chapter 30, Title 38, USC. As of July 1, 1985, the Air Force began enrolling individuals in the MGIB program unless they disenrolled during Basic Military Training. Since January 5, 2023, members entering active duty on or after that date will be enrolled on day 271 in service, unless they disenroll during the election window (day 180-270 in service). Once enrolled, active-duty members contribute to the MGIB program through a non-refundable pay reduction (prior to tax deductions) of \$100 per month for 12 months for the first 12 full months of active duty. Eligible individuals may also contribute a maximum \$600 (post tax) to increase the full-time monthly benefit by \$150.

To receive full post-service benefits as veterans, members must serve at least three years of continuous active duty after June 30, 1985; obtain a high school diploma or equivalent prior to application for benefits; and separate from the service with a fully "honorable" discharge. The following exceptions exist for required service: individuals will be eligible for one month of benefits for each month served if separated for disability, certain medical conditions, reduction in force, or hardship; or individuals honorably discharged for convenience of the government must serve at least 30 months to earn benefits.

Graduates of Service Academies are not eligible for MGIB benefits unless they earned the benefit during an earlier period of service as an enlisted Airman or Guardian or are involuntarily separated for disability, certain medical conditions, reduction in force, or hardship. Officers who received a commission after September 30, 1996, upon completing an ROTC scholarship program (and received less than \$3,400 during any one year of ROTC) are eligible for MGIB benefits. Those receiving more than \$3,400 are ineligible unless they established the benefit during a previous term of active duty.

Department of the Air Force members can begin using in-service benefits after two years of active duty (provided they are not participants of the loan repayment program). Benefits expire ten years after the last discharge or release date from active-duty service. As of October 1, 2019, the program pays for academic institution education at the rate of \$2,050.00 a month for students in full-time status for up to 36 months. The program pays a three-quarter-time student at the rate of \$1,537.50 a month, and a half-time student at a rate of \$1,025.00 a month. Increases occur based on an adjustment to the consumer price index or specific legislation.

The program pays for studies at post-secondary institutions approved by the VA. Certain apprenticeships and other on-the-job training, cooperative, farm cooperative, correspondence training and flight training programs also qualify for payment. The rates at which individuals in such programs are paid differ from the academic institution rates.

Effective March 1, 2001, individuals may be reimbursed up to \$2,000 per test for VA-approved licensing and certification programs. As of October 1, 2022, correspondence courses are paid at 55 percent and flight training at 60 percent of the approved charges.

9.1.1. Vietnam-Era GI Bill: “Rollover” to the Montgomery GI Bill. The Vietnam Era GI Bill, Chapter 34, Title 38, USC, was available to all individuals who served at least 180 days of active duty between January 31, 1955, and January 1, 1977. Included are individuals who entered with delayed enlistment contracts prior to January 1, 1977, and later served on active duty. The benefit expired on December 31, 1989. However, individuals who remained on active duty between October 19, 1984, and at least through June 30, 1988, became MGIB participants (Chapter 30, Section 3011, Title 38, USC).

9.1.2. Post-Vietnam Veteran’s Educational Assistance Program (VEAP): Converting to the Montgomery GI Bill. Two categories of individuals were provided opportunities to convert their [Veterans Educational Assistance Program \(VEAP\)](#) benefits to the MGIB (Chapter 30, Section 3018C, Title 38, USC).

The VEAP (Chapter 32, Title 38, USC) was available on a contributory basis for individuals who first entered active duty between January 1, 1977, and June 30, 1985. Their contributions, totaling a maximum of \$2,700, were matched by the government on a \$2-for-\$1 basis. Two conversion “open season” opportunities allowed VEAP participants to convert to the MGIB between October 9, 1996, and October 8, 1997, and between November 1, 2000, and October 31, 2001. Those who converted their benefits were required to pay \$1,200 or \$2,700, respectively. These individuals gave up all claims to VEAP benefits.

9.1.3. Transferring the Montgomery GI Bill to Dependents. The law, as outlined in Section 3020 of Chapter 30, Title 38, USC, may authorize MGIB participants in critical skills an opportunity to transfer education benefits to spouses and/or qualifying children. A maximum of 18 months of entitlements may be transferred to a spouse or child. To participate, individuals must complete at least six years of service and agree to serve an additional four years of active duty. The Air Force conducted a one-year test program in Fiscal Year 2003, but only approximately 65 individuals enrolled.

9.1.4. In the recent Supreme Court ruling of *Rudisill v. McDonough*, 144 U.S. 945 (2024), the Supreme Court addressed the issue of what happens when a servicemember has separate entitlements to both Montgomery and Post 9/11 educational benefits. The Court ruled that servicemembers who separately accrue benefits under both the Montgomery and the Post-9/11 GI Bills are entitled to both benefits - up to a 48-month cap. Prior to this ruling, servicemembers gave up education benefits under one bill in order to use the other. This meant that once a servicemember's education benefits from one program were exhausted, they could not receive more support from the other program.

9.2. The Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR).

The [Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve](#) (Chapter 1606, Title 10, USC) is an education program enacted by Congress to attract high-quality men and women into the reserve components of the Armed Forces. This program is for members of the Selected Reserve of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, as well as members of the Army and Air National Guard.

Chapter 1606 helps eligible individuals further their education after high school. It provides education assistance for people enrolled in approved programs of education or training. Remedial, refresher, deficiency training, tutorial assistance and work study benefits are available under certain circumstances. It is the first such program that does not require service in the active Armed Forces in order to qualify. A member may be entitled to receive up to 36 months of education benefits.

To participate, individuals must accept a six-year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve. An officer must agree to serve these six years in addition to any current obligation. Individuals must earn a high school diploma or equivalency certificate and complete initial active duty for training before applying for benefits. Individuals must also drill in a Selected Reserve unit and remain in good standing (i.e., participate regularly).

As of October 1, 1990, a member of the Selected Reserve with a bachelor's degree can become eligible for MGIB-SR benefits by signing a new contract that will result in a six-year obligation. As of November 30, 1993, a member of the Selected Reserve can become eligible for graduate level education without signing a new six-year contract.

If a member's eligibility for this program began on or after October 1, 1992, his or her period of eligibility ends 14 years from the beginning date of eligibility, or on the day the member leaves the Selected Reserve. If a member's eligibility for this program began prior to October 1, 1992, his or her period of eligibility ends 10 years from the beginning date of eligibility, or on the day the member leaves the Selected Reserve.

Individuals who leave the Selected Reserve before the end of their six-year commitment can still use the full years of eligibility if their separation was not due to misconduct, if the Air Force deactivated their unit between October 1, 1991, and September 20, 1999, or if the Air Force Reserve involuntarily separated them under Section 286(b), Title 10, USC, between October 1, 1991, and September 30, 1999. In all other cases, if a member leaves the Selected Reserve

before completing the six-year obligation, Chapter 1606 benefits will end and recoupment action will be taken.

9.3. The Post-9/11 GI-Bill.

The [Post-9/11 GI Bill](#) (Chapter 33, Title 38, United States Code) became effective August 1, 2009, and provides up to 36 months of educational benefits for qualified Airmen. The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) oversees the program and determines eligibility. To be eligible, Airmen must have served on active duty (for as little as 90 qualifying days of aggregate service) on or after September 11, 2001. Those who have already separated or retired from service (after September 11, 2001) must have received an honorable discharge to qualify for benefits. Eligibility for Reserve Component members is based on the statutory authority used to call the member to active duty. Additionally, individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days may also be eligible. Generally, benefits are payable for 15 years following release from active duty; however, benefits do not expire if release from active duty is on or after January 1, 2013.

Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits may be used for an approved program of education offered by an Institution of Higher Learning (IHL). The Post-9/11 GI Bill pays tuition based upon the highest in-state tuition charged by a public educational institution in the state where the school is located. Additionally, tutoring assistance (up to \$100 per month, not to exceed a total of \$1,200), and licensing and certification test reimbursement (not to exceed a total of \$2,000) is also available. The amount of support for which an individual may qualify depends on where he or she lives and what type of degree he or she is pursuing.

One of the greatest benefits of the Post-9/11 GI Bill is the ability to transfer entitlement to eligible dependents. In order to transfer benefits to dependents, Airmen must be serving in the armed forces at the time of transfer. Additionally, they must have at least six years of time in service and agree to serve an additional four years. Purple Heart recipients may qualify to transfer benefits regardless of time in service or the ability serve additional years.

The DVA pays tuition and fees directly to the school. Benefits also include a monthly stipend generally equal to the basic allowance for housing (BAH) payable to an E-5 with dependents. A yearly stipend of up to \$1,000 per year for books and supplies is also available and paid directly to the Airman. There is also a one-time payment of \$500 available to certain Airmen relocating from highly rural areas. The effective Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) rate for individuals enrolled solely in distance learning is ½ the national average MHA. Individuals on active duty will not receive the housing allowance but will receive the books and supplies stipend. Members should contact their local Air Force Base Education Center if they have any questions.

9.4. Tuition Assistance.

9.4.1. The Top-Up Program. The [Top-Up Program](#) (Chapter 30, Section 3014, Title 38, United States Code) pays the difference between the cost of a college course or courses and the amount of tuition assistance (TA) paid by the Department of the Air Force toward the course(s).

Individuals must qualify for TA, be enrolled to receive MGIB benefits, and have served at least two years on active duty.

Individuals may receive 36 months of Top-Up payments. The benefit per course is limited to the maximum MGIB monthly pay rate. In no instance can the total TA and Top-Up payment exceed the total course cost.

If an individual receives the Top-Up benefit, his or her regular MGIB benefits will be reduced. The amount of entitlement charged for Top-Up payment is determined by dividing the amount of the payment by the claimant's full-time monthly rate.

9.4.2. Off Duty Education While On Active Duty. Section 2007, Title 10, United States Code, provides payment of tuition for military personnel and reads, . . . the Secretary of a military department "may pay all or a portion of the charges of an educational institution for the tuition or expenses of a member of the armed forces enrolled in such educational institution for education or training during the member's off-duty periods." TA for active-duty personnel is a uniform policy for all services.

The latest update to this policy was effective October 7, 2022, and provides 100 percent of the cost of tuition for active-duty individuals attending on-line, on-base and off-base accredited degree programs with a cost cap of \$250 per semester hour and annual total cap of \$4,500. TA is, generally, not authorized for a second Masters degree or a Doctorate. An individual must repay TA should he or she not complete the course or receive a failing grade. TA will cease if the member fails to maintain a 2.0 GPA for undergraduate work or 3.0 for graduate work. A member will incur the expense to raise his or her GPA to meet defined standards, specifically Department of Defense Instruction 1322.25 and Air Force Instruction 36-2670, *Total Force Development*.

9.4.3. The Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP). On November 25, 2015, The National Defense Authorization Act of 2016 ended REAP. Some individuals remained eligible for REAP benefits until November 25, 2019. Prior REAP beneficiaries may be eligible to receive Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits and should contact the Department of Veterans Affairs with questions.

Chapter 10

MONEY MATTERS

10.1. Pay Issues.

Department of the Air Force active duty pay issues are best handled by the Military Pay section of the member's Wing/Base Financial Services Office (FSO) in the Wing/Base Comptroller Squadron. Members should work with the Wing/Base Military Pay office (i.e., FSO) to resolve issues. When a pay issue is determined to be more complex, the FSO or the Military Personnel Flight (MPF) if the issue is personnel-related, can enter the issue into the Case Management System (CMS). Once submitted via CMS, the pay issue is electronically routed to the office that can best fix the problem.

Air National Guard and Reserve pay issues are best handled by the Military Pay section of the Wing/Base/Unit Reserve Payroll Office (RPO). Members should work with the Wing/Base/Unit Military Pay section (i.e., RPO) to resolve issues. When a pay issue becomes more complex, the Military Pay section or the Military Personnel Flight (MPF) if the issue is personnel-related, can enter the issue into the Case Management System (CMS). Once submitted via CMS, the pay issue is electronically routed to the office best equipped to fix the problem.

Active duty, National Guard and Reserve members may obtain more information or assistance concerning military pay issues by visiting the [Defense Finance and Accounting Service's military pay website](#) or by calling (888) 332-7411.

Civilian employees with pay issues should submit inquiries using the [Air Force Comptroller Services Portal](#).

[Air Force military retiree pay issues](#) including those having to do with deaths, annuities, Voluntary Separation Incentive (VSI), myPay assistance and garnishment actions, should be referred to the DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay Contact Center at (800) 321-1080, option 1, or (888) 332-7411 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST.

Mail and faxes concerning general retiree pay issues should be sent to:
Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Retired Pay
P.O. Box 7130
London, KY 40742-7130
Fax: (800) 469-6559

Annuitants, beneficiaries and survivors, as well as those claiming non-receipt of payment, should reference [DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay office's "Need help?"](#) before sending documents.

10.2. Military Commercial Debt and Civilian Commercial Garnishment.

The Department of the Air Force expects its members to pay their just financial obligations in a proper and timely manner. A just financial obligation is a legal obligation, acknowledged by the

member, in which there is no reasonable dispute as to the facts or law, or one reduced to judgment. The judgment must conform to the Servicemember's Civil Relief Act (Title 50, United States Code, Appendix 501), if applicable.

The Department of the Air Force does not arbitrate disputed cases, admit or deny validity of the complaint or confirm the liability of its members. The Air Force has no legal authority to require members to pay a financial obligation, nor can it divert any part of their pay for the satisfaction of financial obligations, even if reduced to final judgment by court order. Enforcement is a matter for civil authorities.

By enacting Public Law 103-94, the Hatch Act Reform Amendments of 1993 (codified at Section 5520a, Title 5, United States Code), Congress authorized involuntary allotments from the pay of active duty and reserve (on active duty for a period more than 180 days pursuant to Title 10) military members to satisfy commercial debts, as well as the garnishment of federal civilian employees' pay to satisfy commercial obligations.

As the paying agency for the DoD, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) is responsible for collecting commercial debt from military members via involuntary allotments and for processing commercial garnishments against DoD civilian employees.

For more information concerning commercial debt collection from military members, visit [DFAS' Military Commercial Debt webpage](#). The DFAS site provides information on how to apply for an involuntary allotment, interest, the maximum involuntary allotment amount, DFAS' application review process, the process by which a military member may contest an involuntary allotment and the related laws and implementing regulations.

For more information concerning civilian commercial garnishment, visit [DFAS' Civilian Commercial Garnishment webpage](#). The DFAS site outlines the information to include with garnishment requests and provides information on the time to process, challenges, payment amount and schedule, and the related laws and implementing regulations.

It should be noted that commercial obligations and garnishments do not include those for child support or alimony. Civilian employees are subject to garnishment for child support and alimony obligations under Sections 659, 661 and 662, Title 42, United States Code (USC).

Congressional inquiries concerning military commercial debt or civilian commercial garnishment may be directed to DFAS by phone at (866) 793-2256 or e-mail at dfas.indianapolis-in.jck.mbx.cloincomingcases@mail.mil. Public inquiries may be addressed by calling (888) 332-7411.

10.3. Combat Zone Tax Benefits.

Special tax benefits apply to service in combat zones (CZ) and qualified hazardous duty areas (QHDA), as well as to service in areas providing direct support of operations in CZs. An enlisted person or warrant officer (including commissioned warrant officers) may exclude from gross income all military pay received for military service in a month during which he or

she served any period of time in a CZ, QHDA or designated direct support area. For commissioned officers, the monthly income exclusion is limited to the highest enlisted pay amount, plus any hostile fire or imminent danger pay received. Amounts excluded from gross income are not subject to federal income tax.

Military pay received by enlisted personnel who are hospitalized as a result of wounds, injuries or illnesses sustained while serving in a CZ or QHDA is excluded from gross income for the period of hospitalization, subject to the two-year limitation. Commissioned officers have a similar exclusion, limited to the maximum enlisted pay amount per month. These exclusions from gross income during periods of hospitalization end two years after the date of termination of the CZ or QHDA.

Extensions of the deadlines for income tax returns filings, payment of taxes owed, and other tax actions also apply. For those who have served in a CZ, QHDA or a designated direct support area, the extension runs for 180 days after the last day the taxpayer is in such area (or the last day the area qualifies as such) or the last day of any continuous qualified hospitalization for wounds, illness, or injury sustained from service in the area. In addition to the 180 days, the deadline is also extended by the number of days remaining for the member to take action with the IRS at the time they entered the CZ, QHDA or designated direct support area.

The Military Family Tax Relief Act, signed into law in November 2003, extends to contingency operations designated by the Secretary of Defense the extensions of deadlines to file income tax returns, pay taxes owed, and take other tax actions already available to members assigned to, or in direct support of operations in CZs and QHDAs. Personnel serving in a designated contingency operation do not qualify for the exclusion of income.

State tax treatment of military pay earned in a combat zone varies from state-to-state, as do the rules pertaining to the extension of deadlines to file state income tax returns, paying state taxes owed, and take other tax actions at state level. A service member should contact the base tax program manager or base legal office for assistance in determining and abiding by the applicable rules for his or her state.

More information may be found at the [Internal Revenue Service's Combat Zone Tax Provisions webpage](#).

10.4. Air Force Aid Society: Emergency Assistance.

The Air Force Aid Society was incorporated in 1942 as a private, non-profit organization and is the official charity of the U.S. Air Force. The society's mission is to support and enhance the lives of Department of the Air Force members and their families by providing emergency financial assistance, educational support, and community programs. Effective immediately, all eligible Airmen, Guardians, and their families with a financial need, regardless of location, can apply for AFAS emergency financial assistance online directly through the online Air Force Aid Society portal at <https://portal.afas.org/my-applications/>.

Inquiries should be directed to (703) 972-2604 or the local Military & Family Readiness Center.

Chapter 11

MEDICAL AND HEALTHCARE MATTERS

11.1. Compensation and Benefits for Wounded, Ill and Injured Members.

Wounded, ill and injured service members can find extensive and detailed information concerning compensation and benefits in the [Department of Defense Compensation And Benefits Handbook](#).

The handbook was designed to answer service members' questions in the order in which they are most likely to arise. It is intended as a quick reference for both the member and their loved ones during rehabilitation and reintegration. The handbook will answer most of the immediate questions and will link users to the right resource sites to answer the rest of their questions.

11.2. Disability Evaluation.

In accordance with Department of the Air Force (DAF) Instruction 36-3212, Physical Evaluation for Retention, Retirement and Separation, to maintain a fit and vital force, the Secretary of the Air Force (SecAF) may remove service members from duty who (1) can no longer perform the duties of their office, grade, rank or rating; (2) whose medical conditions represent a decided or obvious medical risk to themselves or others, or (3) whose medical conditions impose unreasonable requirements on the military to protect or maintain their health or safety. Service members who meet one or more of these criteria (Chapter 1.3. Criteria for Referral) are referred to the Disability Evaluation System (DES) for a fitness for duty assessment. The DES determines if the service member is fit to be returned to duty or unfit for continued military service. When deemed unfit, the DAF transitions the member from service and, as appropriate, provides compensation when the member's military career ends due to a physical disability (refer to DoDI 1332.18, Section 1).

When a military medical care provider refers an Airman or Guardian to the DES, they are assigned a Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officer (PEBLO) as a guide to help navigate the system and make sure he or she is aware of his or her options and the many decisions that must be made. Additionally, they are assigned a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Military Service Coordinator (MSC) to assist in filing a VA benefits claim. Both the PEBLO and the MSC are non-clinical case management specialists who are trained and available to provide assistance and information to the Airman or Guardian and their family and/or representative. Specific questions about the DES program should be directed to your local PEBLO, MSC or the Air Force Medical Service DES Office at: usaf.jbsa.afmoa.mbx.af-ides@health.mil.

Once referred into the Integrated Disability Evaluation System ([IDES](#)) process, a Service member's case will be reviewed by DoD and VA medical and non-medical personnel to help determine fitness for duty and the appropriate level of DoD and VA benefits, if appropriate. The IDDES consists of four main phases:

1. Medical Evaluation Board (MEB): The MEB is the medical phase of the IDDES process. The MEB consists of referral into the process, medical exams, and review of conditions that

potentially affect the Service member's fitness for duty.

2. Physical Evaluation Board (PEB): The PEB is the personnel phase of the IDES where a Service member's fitness for duty is determined. The PEB phase consists of an informal board, receipt of disability ratings and disposition, and a formal board (if requested by the Service member).

3. Transition: Service members found fit return to duty while those with a final disposition of unfit are separated or retired from military service.

4. Final Benefits: The VA processes the final disability rating and the former Service member, now veteran, receives his or her VA benefits.

Specific questions about the IDES should be directed to the Airman or Guardian's assigned PEBLO or MSC.

11.3. Medical Records.

[Medical and health records](#) for all Airmen discharged, retired or separated from active duty before May 1, 1994, and from the Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard before June 1, 1994, are stored permanently at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). Veterans' medical and dental records may be requested online, by mail or by fax per the guidance outlined at [NPRC's website](#).

From May 1, 1994 to Dec 31, 2013, the [Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\) Records Management Center](#), in St. Louis, MO, became responsible for maintaining active-duty health records and managing their whereabouts when on loan within the VA. To identify the current location of specific health records and to find out how to obtain releasable documents or information, individuals may call (888) 533-4558.

Medical and dental health records for all Airmen and Guardians discharged, retired, or separated from active duty from January 1, 2014, to present are scanned and maintained at the [Air Force Service Treatment Records Processing Center](#) in San Antonio, Texas. Veterans' medical and dental records are available electronically and may be requested from the nearest Military Medical Treatment Release of Information Office or at usaf.jbsa.afmra.mbx.afstrpc@mail.mil.

11.4. TRICARE.

[TRICARE](#) is the healthcare program for almost 9.6 million beneficiaries worldwide - including active-duty service members, National Guard and Reserve members, retirees, their families, survivors, certain former spouses, and others registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).

TRICARE offers several different [health plans](#), all of which meet the requirements for minimum essential coverage under the Affordable Care Act. Plan availability depends on an individual or sponsor's eligibility and where he or she lives.

Congressional inquiries regarding TRICARE should be directed to:

[Defense Health Agency](#)

7700 Arlington Blvd., Ste. 5701

Falls Church, VA 22042

Office: (703) 681-5990

Fax: (703) 681-0628

E-mail: dha.ncr.prog-integ.list.pi-list@mail.mil

11.5. Dental Care.

While active-duty Airmen and Guardians receive dental care through the uniformed services, dental care coverage is available to active-duty family members, National Guard and Reserve members and their family members, and retired service members and their family members, as well as survivors, through the voluntary [TRICARE Dental Program](#) and/or the [TRICARE Retiree Dental Program](#).

Congressional inquiries regarding TRICARE dental care should be directed to:

[Defense Health Agency](#)

7700 Arlington Blvd., Ste. 5701

Falls Church, VA 22042

Office: (703) 681-5990

Fax: (703) 681-0628

E-mail: dha.ncr.prog-integ.list.pi-list@mail.mil

11.6. Immunizations.

The [Defense Health Agency's Immunization Healthcare Division \(IHD\)](#) serves as the office of primary responsibility for information related to DoD vaccination programs, including information on diseases and their related vaccines; vaccine science; guidelines from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices; an immunization clinic finder; service messages and policies; related forms and guidance on reporting health problems that may be related to a vaccine through the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System.

Public inquiries may be addressed to the IHD by phone at (877) GET-VACC [438-8222] or by email at dha.dodvaccines@health.mil.

Congressional inquiries regarding DoD vaccination programs should be directed to:

[Defense Health Agency](#)

7700 Arlington Blvd., Ste. 5701

Falls Church, VA 22042

Office: (703) 681-5990

Fax: (703) 681-0628

E-mail: dha.ncr.prog-integ.list.pi-list@mail.mil

11.7. Gulf War Veterans.

A number of service members who served in the Persian Gulf War suffer from health conditions that are medically unexplained. For this reason, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was designated the lead agency for all federally funded research into the health effects of the Gulf War.

The VA's webpage for [Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses](#) provides information on the free Gulf War Registry health examination for eligible veterans; the medically unexplained illnesses related to military service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations from August 2, 1990, to present, a benefits overview for Gulf War veterans, as well as their dependents and survivors, as concerns healthcare, disability compensation and survivors' benefits; as well as information on various Gulf War exposures and Gulf War-related research studies.

Additionally, the [Defense Department's Gulf LINK](#) provides service members, veterans, and any interested person with information on what happened during the Gulf War that might have affected the health of those who served.

11.8. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Agent Orange Exposure Claims.

As of October 1, 2020, and in accordance with 38 CFR 3.159 and 38 US Code 5106, the Joint Services Records Research Center (JSRRC) is no longer conducting unit record research for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Agent Orange claims, with a few exceptions for Army claims where the Army holds the required records. The U.S. Military Service Branches are required to provide records to the Department of Veterans Affairs. However, the VA is responsible for conducting the research. JSRRC has been working with the VA since 2019 to assist them with the creation of their own Records Research Center (RRC) within VBA's Compensation Service Department.

For more information, call (703) 428-6801 for the JSRRC or the VA at (800) 827-1000.

11.9. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Department of the Air Force medical, manpower and personnel policies related to HIV reflect the risks incident to military service to the infected individual, the risk of transmission, the effect of infected personnel on Air Force units, and the safety of military blood supplies.

On June 6, 2022, the Secretary of Defense updated the Department's policies on Human Immunodeficiency Virus-positive personnel serving within the Armed Forces in view of significant advances in the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of HIV.

Under the Department's updated [policies](#), individuals who have been identified as HIV-positive, are asymptomatic, and who have a clinically confirmed undetectable viral load will have no restrictions applied to their deployability or to their ability to commission while a servicemember solely on the basis of their HIV-positive status. Nor will such individuals be discharged or separated solely on the basis of their HIV-positive status.

As of this writing, DoD and DAF policies for accession of HIV positive applicants is currently in litigation and under review.

Congressional inquiries concerning the medical management of HIV should be directed to:

[Defense Health Agency](#)

7700 Arlington Blvd., Ste. 5701

Falls Church, VA 22042

Office: (703) 681-5990

Fax: (703) 681-0628

E-mail: dha.ncr.prog-integ.list.pi-list@mail.mil

11.10. Medical Care Specific Congressional Inquiries

Congressional inquiries regarding Medical Care on Air Force Installations should be directed to:

[Defense Health Agency](#)

7700 Arlington Blvd., Ste. 5701

Falls Church, VA 22042

Office: (703) 681-5990

Fax: (703) 681-0628

E-mail: dha.ncr.prog-integ.list.pi-list@mail.mil

Chapter 12

LEGAL MATTERS

12.1. Military Justice.

12.1.1. Uniform Code of Military Justice. [The Uniform Code of Military Justice \(UCMJ\)](#) is codified in Sections 801 through 946a, Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.). Congress enacted the UCMJ in 1950 as a major revision of then-existing military criminal law. Congress often amends the UCMJ, with significant changes in 1968, 1983, 1984, 2012-2014, 2015-2016, 2019 and 2021. The Military Justice Act of 2016 (passed in the Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act ((NDAA)) went into effect on January 1, 2019. The President implements the UCMJ through Executive Orders issued under Article 36, UCMJ (Title 10, U.S.C. § 836). The military services may also issue regulations implementing certain aspects of the UCMJ. These Executive Orders, together with the substantive and procedural provisions of the UCMJ, are contained in electronic and hardcopy volumes of the Manual for Courts-Martial, United States (MCM). These and other sources of military law are available at the Joint Service Committee on Military Justice's website at <https://jsc.defense.gov>.

The Preamble to the MCM explains “[t]he purposes of military law are to promote justice, to deter misconduct, to facilitate appropriate accountability, to assist in maintaining good order and discipline in the armed forces, to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the military establishment, and thereby to strengthen the national security of the United States.” In the opinion of many legal scholars, the UCMJ has not only kept pace with innovations in civilian criminal jurisprudence but has led the way in establishing more procedural safeguards to protect the rights of those accused of criminal offenses. For instance, the military had its own, broader version of the Miranda rights 15 years before the Supreme Court of the United States recognized this right for civilians undergoing custodial interrogations. In addition, an accused facing the potential of a general court-martial (the most serious level of courts-martial) has greater rights during an Article 32, UCMJ, preliminary hearing than does a civilian suspect before a grand jury.

12.1.2. Defense Counsel. Area Defense Counsel (ADC), assisted by Defense Paralegals, represent Airmen and Guardians facing adverse administrative action, nonjudicial punishment under Article 15, UCMJ, or court-martial. ADCs are provided at no cost to the member and are fully qualified attorneys whose duty is to represent their clients' legal interests, even when those interests run contrary to the best interests of the Department of the Air Force. Airmen and Guardians may also employ civilian counsel, at their own expense. The Department of the Air Force promotes and requires zealous advocacy of an accused's rights.

ADCs and Defense Paralegals provide independent legal representation and advice outside the chain of command of accusers, convening authorities, and their respective staff judge advocates (SJA). The performance rating system for ADCs and Defense Paralegals is within this independent chain-of-command. Moreover, to ensure independence, ADCs have their own office facilities and logistical support, to include Defense Investigators.

12.1.3. Victims' Counsel (VC) Program. On January 28, 2013, the Air Force established the Department of Defense's first Special Victims' Counsel (SVC) Program as a pilot program for

the Department of Defense; the program was established to provide independent judge advocates to represent sexual assault victims eligible for military legal assistance under 10 U.S.C. § 1044 and 1565b. The Air Force Judge Advocate General directed the creation of the program to provide specialized legal assistance to adult victims of sexual assault; to help victims better understand the investigative and legal processes; and to ensure victims' rights are protected and victims' voices are heard. In 2021, the program officially changed its name to Victims' Counsel Division as a reflection of the expansion in services to victims of domestic violence and other violent crimes.

VCs deliver crime victim-centered advice and advocacy through comprehensive, independent representation to sexual assault and domestic violence victims worldwide, assist clients in obtaining support and recovery resources, and promote greater confidence in the military justice process in the United States Air Force and United States Space Force. VCs accomplish this mission by developing victims' understanding of the investigative and military justice processes, providing advocacy to protect the rights of victims during the military justice process, removing barriers to victims' participation in the military justice process, and ensuring victims receive services after the commission of the crime.

To receive VC representation, the victim must request representation by a VC either through a helping individual, program or office such as the SARC, the Family Advocacy Program, the Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP), the Office of Special Investigations, or by contacting a VC office directly. After the request is submitted and a determination of eligibility is made, a VC will enter into an attorney-client relationship with the victim. The victim, not the Air Force, is the client to whom all the VC's ethical obligations are owed.

Eligibility for VC services has changed over the years, and was first codified for military sexual assault victims by the Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) under 10 U.S.C. §1044e. Since that time, Section 1044e has been amended to expand eligibility to sexual assault victims who are child dependent victims, Reservists, National Guard members, and DoD civilian employees (when VC services to civilian employees are authorized by the service secretary concerned). Additionally, in the Fiscal Year 2016 NDAA, crime victims were granted authority to seek enforcement of their rights under Article 6b, UCMJ, in their service Court of Criminal Appeals. The VC Program has filed briefs on behalf of their clients and amicus curiae briefs at the Courts of Criminal Appeals and the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.

Legal representation for domestic violence victims was codified by section 548 of the Fiscal Year 2020 NDAA, which requires the military services to implement a program to provide legal counsel to victims of domestic violence offenses. Effective December 1, 2020, individuals eligible for military legal assistance services who are victims of a domestic violence offense allegedly committed by a spouse, intimate partner, or family member subject to the UCMJ may request services from legal counsel provided by the military services. The Department of the Air Force implemented Section 548 by offering eligible domestic violence victims a full spectrum of legal support services through VWAP, VC, and legal assistance attorneys. VCs will provide services to eligible domestic violence victims who request representation related to the most serious violent crimes throughout the military justice process.

Effective March 8, 2022, The Air Force Judge Advocate General expanded VC services to provide eligible DAF victims of interpersonal violence (IPV) with privileged, confidential legal advice and information to educate and empower IPV victims on legal standards for various crimes under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. IPV victims receive advice, information, limited correspondence, and referrals under the protection of an attorney-client relationship through the form of a one-time consultation.

12.1.4. Special Victim Investigation and Prosecution Capability. The Air Force established the Special Victim Investigation and Prosecution Capability (SVIP) in accordance with Section 573 of the Fiscal Year 2013 NDAA. The SVIP applies to three types of cases: all unrestricted reports of adult sexual assault; all unrestricted reports of domestic violence involving sexual assault and/or aggravated assault with grievous bodily harm; and child abuse involving sexual assault and/or aggravated sexual assault with grievous bodily harm.

The SVIP is composed of specially trained prosecutors, paralegals and victim and witness assistance personnel who work collaboratively with specially trained Office of Special Investigations (OSI) agents to ensure effective, timely, and responsive worldwide victim support and to safeguard the capability to investigate sexual assault offenses to hold perpetrators appropriately accountable. SVIP personnel also collaborate with Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs), sexual assault prevention and response (SAPR) victim advocates, family advocacy program (FAP) managers, and domestic abuse victim advocates (DAVA) during all stages of the investigative and military justice process to ensure an integrated capability to the greatest extent possible.

All Air Force judge advocates receive significant trial advocacy training and preparatory mock trial experience during the Judge Advocate Staff Officer Course, the initial training course required to become a judge advocate. After completing this course, specially trained judge advocates receive additional advanced litigation and sexual assault-focused training.

In December 2023, pursuant to the FY22 NDAA, the DAF stood up the Office of Special Trial Counsel. The Office of Special Trial Counsel is led by a judge advocate in the grade of Brigadier General, designated as the Lead Special Trial Counsel. The Lead Special Trial Counsel reports directly to the Secretary of the Air Force with no intervening authority. The Lead Special Trial Counsel oversees the DAF's legal representation in the investigation and trial-level litigation of covered offenses, which includes sexual assault, pursuant to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, 10 U.S.C. § 801(17). The Office of Special Trial Counsel operates independently of the military chains of command of both the victims of alleged covered offenses and those accused of covered offenses. Special Trial Counsel within the Office of Special Trial Counsel are judge advocates specializing in the prosecution of particularly complex cases such as sexual assaults, crimes against children, domestic violence, and homicides. Special Trial Counsel have the highest level of advanced litigation training. Special Trial Counsel are assigned to six district offices worldwide.

Complex litigation not under the authority of the Office of Special Trial Counsel are generally led by District Trial Counsel. District Trial Counsel report to the DAF's Chief Prosecutor and are responsible for serving as senior litigation support at bases worldwide. District Trial Counsel

assist base level prosecutors with reviewing evidence, drafting charges, consulting with investigators, and by serving as lead prosecutors in court.

12.1.5. Nonjudicial Punishment. The UCMJ permits certain officials, including commanders, to take disciplinary action for minor offenses via nonjudicial punishment (also known as, “NJP”) proceedings under Article 15, UCMJ. Part V of the MCM and Department of the Air Force Instruction 51-202, Nonjudicial Punishment, implement Article 15, UCMJ. This option gives commanders a forum to dispose of minor offenses without trial by court-martial but includes an option for the accused member to object and demand trial by court-martial.

Commanders must first provide notification that they are considering the imposition of nonjudicial punishment. The notice must include certain information, including but not limited to a statement describing the alleged offense(s), a summary of the evidence supporting the offense(s), a statement that the member will be afforded certain rights, and other information if the right to demand trial by court-martial applies. According to Air Force policy, the member has three duty days to consult with an ADC to determine whether to accept nonjudicial punishment proceedings or demand trial by court-martial. Accepting nonjudicial punishment proceedings is not an admission of guilt; it is simply a choice of forum. To impose nonjudicial punishment, commanders must determine that the offenses specified are supported by a preponderance of the evidence, meaning it is more likely than not the member committed the offense(s).

A member accepting nonjudicial punishment proceedings may have a personal appearance with the commander. The member may have a spokesperson at the personal appearance in certain circumstances, may request that witnesses appear to testify, and may present matters in defense, extenuation, or mitigation, on their own behalf. After considering all written and oral matters presented, the commander must determine—using the preponderance of the evidence standard—whether the member committed the offenses as alleged and, if so, whether nonjudicial punishment is appropriate, and what punishment will be imposed and/or suspended. The types of punishments authorized under Article 15, UCMJ and its implementing regulations are more limited than punishments authorized at trial by court-martial, and may include restrictions on liberty, reduction in rank (for enlisted personnel), forfeiture of pay and extra duties. There are maximum limits for each category of punishment based on the rank of the member and the rank of the commander imposing nonjudicial punishment.

Receiving nonjudicial punishment does not constitute a criminal conviction. However, members who wish to contest their commander’s determination or the severity of the punishment imposed may appeal within five days of the imposition of punishment to the next higher commander. The appeal authority may set aside the findings or punishment of the imposing commander, decrease the severity of the punishment, or deny the appeal.

12.1.6. Courts-Martial. There are three types of courts-martial: summary, special, and general. Members tried before any court-martial have the right to be represented by defense counsel, free of charge. Trial by summary court-martial provides a simple procedure, with the consent of an accused, for prompt resolution of charges against enlisted members alleged to have engaged in minor incidents of misconduct. The summary court-martial consists of one commissioned officer who receives the evidence and determines whether the Airman or Guardian is guilty or not

guilty. A finding of guilty by summary court-martial does not constitute a criminal conviction, as it is not a criminal forum but a disciplinary proceeding. The maximum punishment a summary court-martial may impose is considerably less than a special or general court-martial and is further restricted if the accused is above the grade of E-4. No summary court-martial may impose a sentence that includes death, a punitive discharge, or more than one month confinement.

A special court-martial is the intermediate level court-martial presided over by a military judge and has jurisdiction to hear cases against both officer and enlisted Airmen and Guardians accused of violating the UCMJ. There is a sub-type of special court-martial called a special court-martial by military judge alone (also known as a limited special court-martial), at which an accused is tried by a military judge alone and does not have the right to a panel of military members (akin to a civilian jury), but the maximum punishment authorized is confinement of six months and forfeiture of two-thirds pay per month for six months, as well as any lesser punishments authorized in the standard special court-martial. An accused brought before a standard special court-martial has the right to select either a trial by military judge sitting alone, or trial consisting of a military judge and a panel of four military members. An enlisted member is entitled to have at least one-third of the panel be enlisted members. For enlisted members, the maximum punishment authorized by a special court-martial is one year confinement, forfeiture of two-thirds pay per month for one year, a bad-conduct discharge, and certain lesser punishments (e.g., a reprimand, hard labor without confinement, restriction, reduction in rank and, if appropriate, a fine). A commissioned officer may not be reduced in rank, sentenced to confinement, or dismissed from the service by a special court-martial.

A general court-martial is the most serious level court-martial and has jurisdiction to hear cases against both officer and enlisted Airmen and Guardians accused of violating any punitive article of the UCMJ. Before a case goes to a general court-martial, a commander must order a preliminary hearing under Article 32, UCMJ. The purpose of a preliminary hearing is to determine whether each specification alleges a UCMJ offense, whether there is probable cause the accused committed the offense(s) charged, whether the convening authority has court-martial jurisdiction over the accused and the offense, and the recommended disposition of the case. Following the preliminary hearing, the commander with general court-martial convening authority, typically, Numbered Air Force commanders, or a special trial counsel, may refer the case to trial. As with standard special courts-martial, an accused brought before a general court-martial is guaranteed the right to select either a trial by military judge alone or one with a military judge and a panel of eight military members. Again, an enlisted member is entitled to request at least one-third of the panel be enlisted members. The UCMJ sets the maximum punishment for each offense in a general court-martial; punishment may include death (for certain capital offenses where aggravating factors are present), confinement for up to life without the possibility of parole, a dishonorable discharge for enlisted personnel or a dismissal for officers, total forfeitures of pay and allowances, reduction in rank (for enlisted personnel only), or the lesser punishments available in a special court-martial.

A finding of guilty at a summary court-martial does not amount to a federal conviction, while a finding of guilty at a special court-martial or general court-martial does amount to a federal conviction.

12.1.6.1. Convening Authority Decision on Action. Every court-martial receives post-trial review, but the extent of appellate rights depends upon the punishment imposed by the court-martial and whether the commander exercising court-martial convening authority (the “convening authority”) has the statutory authority to affect the findings and sentence of the court-martial.

Depending on the offenses for which the accused was convicted, the court-martial convening authority may have the power to alter the findings and sentence of the court-martial. In general, a convening authority may not mitigate the findings and sentence for any conviction of sexual assault, any conviction where authorized maximum punishment exceeds two-years confinement, and any conviction where the sentence adjudged included a punitive discharge or greater than six-months confinement. Additionally, the convening authority’s action may not increase any sentence or change a finding of not guilty to one of guilty.

12.1.6.2. Review by the Office of The Judge Advocate General. After each summary court-martial in which a member was found guilty of an offense, a judge advocate, typically at the Numbered Air Force, reviews the record of trial to ensure that the court-martial had jurisdiction over the accused and the offense; each charge and specification stated an offense; and the sentence was legal. Additionally, if the accused alleged any error in writing, the judge advocate must respond to each one. If the judge advocate determines that there was an error requiring corrective action, or regulations of SecAF otherwise dictate, the judge advocate forwards the record, which includes their legal review as an attachment, to the general court-martial convening authority. The convening authority has several options, including but not limited to disapproving or approving the findings or sentence in whole or in part; remitting, commuting, or suspending the sentence in whole or in part; order a rehearing on the findings, on the sentence, or on both (when certain conditions apply); or dismiss the charges. If the judge advocate concluded that corrective action was required as a matter of law, and the general court-martial convening authority does not take action that is at least as favorable to the accused as the judge advocate’s recommendation, the record and the action must be forwarded to The Judge Advocate General for review. This is called an Article 64, UCMJ, review.

When a member is found guilty of an offense at a general or special court-martial, the record is transmitted to The Judge Advocate General under Article 65, UCMJ. In circumstances where the judgment includes a sentence of death, a punitive discharge, or confinement for two years or more, the record is automatically forwarded to the United States Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals (AFCCA) for review. In other circumstances, cases are eligible for direct appeal review by the AFCCA, and the process differs—the member will receive a notice of the right to file a direct appeal.

For cases that are not eligible for automatic or direct appeal review (for example, if the accused waives appellate review), a judge advocate, typically at the Numbered Air Force, reviews the record of trial and provides a written decision providing: a conclusion as to whether the court had jurisdiction over the accused and the offense, whether the charge and specification stated an offense; whether the sentence was legal; and a response to each allegation made in writing by the accused. If the judge advocate determines that there was an error requiring corrective action, the

judge advocate forwards the record to The Judge Advocate General, who may set aside the findings or the sentence, in whole or in part. This is called an Article 65(d), UCMJ, review. After each general or special court-martial in which a member was found guilty of an offense but received less than two years of confinement and no punitive discharge, the general court-martial convening authority, typically at the Numbered Air Force, provides notice of the member's right to request appellate review from the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals. If the member does not exercise that right, a judge advocate in the general court-martial convening authority's legal office reviews the record of trial to ensure that the findings and sentence are lawful. If the judge advocate determines that there was an error requiring corrective action, the judge advocate forwards the record to the general court-martial convening authority. The convening authority either takes corrective action or sends the case forward to The Judge Advocate General to take necessary corrective action. courts-martial. This is called an Article 65(d) review.

In any case where there was an Article 64 or 65(d), UCMJ, review, the accused may submit an application to The Judge Advocate General to modify or set aside the findings and sentence in a court-martial. However, The Judge Advocate General does not review cases that have been reviewed by the AFCCA.

The Judge Advocate General has the authority to modify or set aside the findings or sentence or both if any part of the findings or sentence is found to be unsupported in law or if reassessment of the sentence is appropriate. Relief is granted on the grounds of newly discovered evidence; fraud on the court; lack of jurisdiction over the accused or the offense; or error prejudicial to the substantial rights of the accused. The application must be filed within one year of completion of the post-trial review process. The Judge Advocate General may also certify a case to the AFCCA.

12.1.6.3. Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals. The Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals (AFCCA) is an appellate court that reviews convictions adjudged by general and special courts-martial. Every general and special court-martial conviction is eligible for appellate review. The AFCCA has automatic jurisdiction over each case in which the court-martial sentence extends to death, a punitive discharge or confinement for two or more years. Upon the timely request of the appellant, the AFCCA also has jurisdiction to review "direct appeals" in which the court-martial sentence included less than two years of confinement and no punitive discharge. Except for an approved sentence including the death penalty, an appellant may waive appellate consideration of his or her case or later withdraw from appeal. In addition to the situations outlined above, The Judge Advocate General may refer other court-martial cases to the AFCCA.

The AFCCA may act only with respect to the findings and sentence as entered in the judgment of the court-martial. It can correct legal error, overturn factually deficient convictions, and it can reduce a sentence. The AFCCA also has the power to take other actions (e.g., to order a new review and action by the same or a different convening authority) or to order a rehearing.

The AFCCA is composed of senior judge advocates who serve in three-judge panels. Normally, the Court has at least three panels with each panel having three appellate military judges. The Judge Advocate General assigns judges to the Court and designates one as the chief judge. The chief judge determines the composition of the various panels of the Court and designates a senior

judge on each panel. In some situations, the entire Court will consider a case or reconsider a decision of a panel.

12.1.6.3.1 Assignment of Counsel. The Department of the Air Force assigns each appellant Airman or Guardian an Air Force Defense Counsel, assigned to the Appellate Defense Division, to represent him or her at no cost. Counsel will contact appellant Airmen/Guardians, determine their desires, and keep them informed of the course of the case. In addition, appellant Airmen/Guardians may retain civilian counsel at their own expense. If the appellant hires civilian counsel, the military counsel will act as associate counsel if the appellant so desires. A military judge advocate from the Government Trial and Appellate Operations Division represents the government.

Counsel for both sides present their arguments to the Court in writing. The Court may also grant oral argument. With limited exceptions, the Court does not permit new evidence at these hearings and considers the case based on the trial record.

The length of time a case is before the Court will depend largely on the length of the record and the complexity of the issues. The Court prepares its decision only after the presentations and arguments of appellate defense counsel and appellate government counsel. The Court decides many cases within 90 days of completion of briefing and argument, but unusual factors may require a considerably longer period. If the initial decision of the Court requires further action by the convening authority, the Court will not reach a final decision until such action is complete.

12.1.6.3.2 Victims' Counsel (VC) Program. On January 28, 2013, the Air Force established the Department of Defense's first Special Victims' Counsel (SVC) Program as a pilot program for the Department of Defense; the program was established to provide independent judge advocates to represent sexual assault victims eligible for military legal assistance under Sections 1044 and 1565b, Title 10, U.S.C. The Air Force Judge Advocate General directed the creation of the program to provide specialized legal assistance to adult victims of sexual assault; to help victims better understand the investigative and legal processes; and to ensure victims' rights are protected and victims' voices are heard. In 2021, the program officially changed its name to Victims' Counsel Division as a reflection of the expansion in services to victims of domestic violence and other violent crimes.

VCs deliver crime victim-centered advice and advocacy through comprehensive, independent representation to sexual assault and domestic violence victims worldwide, assist clients in obtaining support and recovery resources, and promote greater confidence in the military justice process and the United States Air Force and United States Space Force. VCs accomplish this mission by developing victims' understanding of the investigative and military justice processes; by providing advocacy to protect the rights of victims during the military justice process; by removing barriers to victims' participation in the military justice process; and by ensuring victims receive services after the commission of the crime.

In order for a victim to receive VC representation, the victim must request representation by a VC either through a helping individual, program or office such as the SARC, the Family

Advocacy Program, the Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP), the Office of Special Investigations, or by contacting the VC offices directly. After the request is submitted and a determination of eligibility is made, a VC will enter into an attorney-client relationship with the victim. The victim, not the Air Force, is the client to whom all the VC's ethical obligations are owed.

Eligibility for VC services has changed over the years, and was first codified for military sexual assault victims by the Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) under Section 1044e, Title 10, U.S.C. Since that time, Section 1044e has been amended to expand eligibility to sexual assault victims who are child dependent victims, Reservists, National Guard members, and DoD civilian employees (when VC services to civilian employees are authorized by the service secretary concerned). Additionally, in the Fiscal Year 2016 NDAA, crime victims were granted authority to seek enforcement of their rights under Article 6b of the Uniform Code of Military Justice in their service Court of Criminal Appeals. The VC Program has filed briefs on behalf of their clients and *amicus curiae* briefs at the Courts of Criminal Appeals and the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.

Legal representation for domestic violence victims was codified by section 548 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2020, which requires the military services to implement a program to provide legal counsel to victims of domestic violence offenses. Effective December 1, 2020, individuals eligible for military legal assistance services who are victims of a domestic violence offense allegedly committed by a spouse, intimate partner, or family member subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice may request services from legal counsel provided by the military services. The Department of the Air Force implemented FY20 NDAA, Section 548, by offering eligible domestic violence victims a full spectrum of legal support services through VWAP, VC, and legal assistance attorneys. VCs will provide services to eligible domestic violence victims who request representation related to the most serious violent crimes throughout the military justice process.

Effective March 8, 2022, The Air Force Judge Advocate General expanded VC services to provide eligible DAF victims of interpersonal violence (IPV) with privileged, confidential legal advice and information to educate and empower IPV victims on legal standards for various crimes under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. IPV victims receive advice, information, limited correspondence, and referrals under the protection of an attorney-client relationship through the form of a one-time consultation.

12.1.6.3.3 Court Decisions. The court-martial jurisdiction Military Justice Law & Policy Division notifies the appellant of the decision of the Court. If an appellant is not satisfied with the decision of the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals, he or she can petition the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces (CAAF) for further review. The CAAF consists of five civilian judges and can correct legal errors in the findings or sentence. If a member petitions the CAAF, Air Force appellate defense counsel will represent him or her at no charge. The appellant may also retain civilian counsel at his or her own expense.

Decisions of the CAAF are subject to review by the United States Supreme Court by writ of

certiorari. Beginning December 22, 2024, every court-martial appealed to the CAAF will be eligible to petition for review by the United States Supreme Court.

12.1.7. Clemency and Parole. The Secretary of the Air Force established a system of clemency and parole under 10 U.S.C. §§ 952–53 respectively, to foster the safe and appropriate release of military inmates under terms consistent with inmate rehabilitation, societal needs, and victim rights and interests. An inmate is generally eligible for parole after serving one-third of a sentence or six months, whichever is greater. These inmates first meet a disposition board convened at their confinement facility.

The complete case files then go forward to the Air Force Clemency and Parole Board, located at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, for review and action. After the initial review, cases undergo periodic review, depending on the length of the sentence, or as directed by the commander of the confinement facility or the Air Force Clemency and Parole Board.

12.1.8. Drug Use or Possession. By Department of Defense Instruction 1010.04, Problematic Substance Use by DoD Personnel, unlawful drug and substance use by DoD personnel is “incompatible with readiness, the maintenance of high standards of performance, and military discipline.” An Airman or Guardian may voluntarily disclose evidence of personal drug use or possession to the unit commander, first sergeant, substance abuse evaluator, or a military medical professional. Commanders are required to grant limited protection for Airmen or Guardians who reveal this information with the intention of entering treatment. Commanders may not use voluntary disclosure against a member in a UCMJ action or when weighing characterization of their service when administratively discharging them from active duty. Self-referral provides limited protection in instances of drug abuse, but it does not prevent the Department of the Air Force from separating the individual under an administrative discharge.

Disclosure is not voluntary if the Airman or Guardian has previously been apprehended for drug involvement, placed under investigation for drug abuse, ordered to give a urine sample as part of the drug-testing program, or advised of a recommendation for administrative separation for drug abuse.

Once the Department of the Air Force recognizes a member as a drug user and identifies him or her for separation, the Department of the Air Force provides the individual with transitional counseling and refers him or her to the Department of Veterans Affairs for further evaluation and treatment.

12.1.9. Victim Witness Assistance Program and Transitional Compensation. The purpose of the Department of the Air Force Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP) is to mitigate the physical, psychological, and financial hardships suffered by victims and witnesses of offenses investigated by DAF authorities; to foster cooperation of victims and witnesses within the military criminal justice system; and to ensure best efforts are made to accord victims of crime certain enumerated rights. The program was established to meet the requirements of the Victims’ Rights and Restitution Act of 1990.

Each DAF installation commander appoints a victim coordinator from within the local legal

office to assist a victim during the military justice process. The coordinator is responsible for connecting victims and service agencies and for arranging for services, when appropriate. Victim coordinators receive specialized training on the military investigative and criminal justice processes as well as the requirements of the VWAP.

Transitional Compensation is authorized for certain victims of crime in accordance with 10 U.S.C. § 1059 as well as Department of Defense Instruction 1342.24, Transitional Compensation for Abused Dependents, and Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-3012, Military Entitlements. The purpose of transitional compensation is to provide monthly compensation payments and other benefits to dependents of members who are separated from the military service because of abuse committed against a current spouse or dependent child.

Payment is authorized, generally, when a DAF member is convicted by court-martial for a crime of dependent abuse and when the sentence includes a punitive discharge or forfeiture of all pay and allowances. Payment may also be authorized if the member is administratively separated when the basis for separation includes a dependent abuse offense. Effective September 22, 2014, eligible and approved applicants will receive up to 36 months of benefits. Benefits include ID cards, exchange and commissary privileges, and medical or dental care for treatment of problems as determined by the service secretary.

Title 10, U.S.C. §1059(m), allows for exceptional eligibility for transitional compensation for abused dependents. Under this provision, the service Secretary may authorize transitional compensation for an abused dependent and former dependent of a former member of the armed forces when such dependents are not otherwise eligible for benefits. This may happen in instances where the Secretary determines that the former member engaged in conduct that is a dependent-abuse offense, even if the basis for discharge or court-martial was not the abuse. However, to be eligible for this exceptional transitional compensation, the service Secretary must determine that the former member engaged in a dependent abuse offense, but was allowed to separate, voluntarily or involuntarily, under other circumstances before a determination was made and/or documented.

To receive transitional compensation under the exceptional eligibility criteria established by law, the applicant must petition the service Secretary. Eligible and approved applicants will receive similar benefits as discussed above. Eligible recipients of transitional compensation benefits may forfeit their eligibility through remarriage, cohabitation with the offending party, or through active participation in the conduct constituting the criminal offense.

12.1.10. Reporting Policy for Sexual Assault and Incidents of Domestic Abuse. It is Department of Air Force's policy to combat sexual assault within the Department by fostering a culture of prevention; education and training; response capability; victim support; reporting procedures; and accountability that enhances the safety and well-being of all its members. It is also DoD policy to prevent domestic abuse through public awareness, education, and family support programs; to promote early identification, intervention, and assessment; and to provide appropriate resources to victims of domestic abuse. To facilitate these goals, adult victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse incidents have two reporting options: unrestricted reporting and restricted reporting.

12.1.10.1. Unrestricted Reporting. Adult victims of sexual assault who want to pursue an official investigation of an incident have a number of ways to report the incident, including their chain of command; the SARC/Victim Advocate; or law enforcement. Eligible victims may receive medical treatment, support services, counseling, and a Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) if indicated.

Adult victims of domestic abuse, including intimate partner violence, who want to pursue an official investigation of an incident can report the matter to their chain of command, the Family Advocacy Program (FAP), or law enforcement. Upon notification of a reported domestic abuse incident, victim advocacy services and FAP clinical services will be offered to the victim.

12.1.10.2. Restricted Reporting. Restricted reporting allows confidential reporting of sexual assault and domestic abuse. An adult victim of domestic abuse, who is eligible to receive military medical treatment, has the option of reporting an incident of domestic abuse to the base victim advocate, a healthcare provider, or in some circumstances, their chain of command, without initiating the investigative process. Servicemembers or adult dependents who are sexually assaulted have the option of making a restricted report to the sexual assault response coordinator, sexual assault victim advocate or a healthcare provider without triggering the official investigative process. Before electing the restricted report option, the servicemember or adult dependent who was sexually assaulted may consult with a Victims' Counsel (VC) to receive advice on what type of report, if any, may be filed. If the domestic abuse or sexual assault victim elects restricted reporting, an investigation will not be initiated.

Restricted reporting is intended to give adult victims additional time, receiving support and care, to make more informed decisions about disclosing the sexual assault or domestic abuse incident to the appropriate commanders and possibly participating in a criminal investigation. Restricted reporting also allows eligible victims to receive medical treatment, victim advocacy services and/or counseling.

12.2. Civil Legal Issues.

12.2.1. Air Force Legal Assistance Program. The Air Force Legal Assistance Program makes Department of the Air Force attorneys available to service members, retirees, and dependents to provide legal assistance in connection with personal civil legal matters. Eligible clients can find their nearest legal assistance office (of any military service) by visiting the [Armed Forces Legal Assistance Locator](#). The purpose of the program is to support and sustain command effectiveness and readiness. Although legal assistance is not separately funded, it has been provided for members of the armed forces since 1943 and is now perceived as one of the benefits of military service.

Subject to the availability of legal staff resources and expertise, the categories of personnel listed below are eligible for legal assistance. Eligible beneficiaries, defined by Section 1044, Title 10, U.S.C. and Air Force Instruction 51-304, *Legal Assistance, Notary, Preventive Law, and Tax Programs*, include:

- 1) Active-duty personnel (including Reserve and National Guard members, US Air Force Academy cadets, and contract ROTC cadets serving on federal active duty);
- 2) Retirees from the armed services receiving retired, retainer or equivalent pay, including former members of reserve components entitled to retired pay and former members receiving retired pay as a result of retirement due to permanent disability or placement on the temporary disabled retired list;
- 3) Officers of the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service who are on active duty or entitled to retired or equivalent pay;
- 4) Reservists following release from active duty for more than 30 days issued under mobilization authority (as determined by the Secretary of Defense) for a period of time equal to twice the length of the period served on active duty under that call or order to active duty, as well as their family members who are entitled to a military identification card;
- 5) Dependents of those listed in categories 1 through 4 above; dependents are family members who are entitled to a military identification card;
- 6) Survivors of a deceased member or former member as described in each of these categories who were dependents of the member or former member at the time of death;
- 7) Air Reserve Component members performing Active Guard/Reserve (AGR) tours, including those under Sections 10211 and 12310, Title 10, U.S.C., or Section 502(f), Title 32, U.S.C.;
- 8) Civilian employees of the Department of Defense and the military departments, and their dependents residing with them, assigned outside of the United States and its territories;
- 9) Civilian employees deploying to or in a theater of operations are furnished the opportunity and assistance to prepare and execute wills and any necessary powers of attorney.

Military legal assistance establishes an attorney-client relationship. The scope of service covers advice and assistance on a wide range of personal civil legal matters but typically not representation before a court or administrative body. Common areas of legal assistance include preparation and execution of wills, living wills, advance medical directives, powers of attorney; domestic relations; landlord-tenant issues; Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) protections; veterans' reemployment rights under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA); consumer protection; immigration and naturalization services; education law (which includes special education matters); and taxes.

12.2.2. Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA). The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) is a federal law designed to ease financial and other burdens from service members whose duties might interfere with certain civil obligations and proceedings, allowing service members to devote full attention to their military duties and relieving stress on families of service members who are deployed. SCRA generally protects full-time active-duty personnel from all branches of the Armed Forces and commissioned officers of the Public Health Service or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration while on active service, all Reserve personnel when on active duty, and members of the Guard when on federal orders. SCRA should generally be read in favor of the service members it is intended to protect.

Among the most commonly invoked provisions of SCRA is the prohibition against evicting a service member and his or her dependents from a rental property without a court order, if the monthly rent is less than a certain annually adjusted amount established by law. Further, a service member who cannot participate in a civil court action or administrative proceeding because of military service may request a 90-day stay in the proceeding. The service member is automatically entitled to this delay if he or she follows all the requirements. The judge, magistrate or hearing officer may grant an additional 90-day stay. Proceedings may include actions for divorce, child paternity, and support cases, as well as foreclosure proceedings. A default judgment against a service member protected by SCRA is voidable, provided the service member was materially affected due to military service in defending against the action and had a meritorious defense to the action or some portion of it.

The SCRA clarifies interest in excess of six percent on pre-service debts is forgiven, not deferred. The SCRA also allows the termination of automobile leases by service members where the person later enters active military service for at least 180 days, or where the service member executes the lease while in military service and thereafter receives permanent change of station (PCS) orders outside the continental United States or deploys with a military unit for at least 180 days. It also allows the unilateral termination of residential leases by active-duty service members if they receive PCS orders or deployment orders for 90 days or more.

The 2009 Military Spouses Residency Relief Act (MSRRA) amended SCRA to provide protections to military spouses regarding voting rights and taxes. In 2018, the Veterans Benefits and Transitions Act (VBTA) further amended these rights. And was clarified again in 2023 through the Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act. Currently, servicemembers and their spouses have the following rights regarding taxation: servicemembers and their spouses may elect to use the servicemember's residence/domicile, the spouse's residence/domicile, or the permanent duty station of the servicemember.

The 2023 Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act also added a new provision to the SCRA regarding the Portability of Professional Licenses. Under this new provision, the SCRA allows for a servicemember or spouse with a recently active professional license to retain the use of that license even when military orders force them to move to a new jurisdiction. They will need to provide a copy of military orders to the licensing authority in the new jurisdiction, remain in good standing with the authority that issued the license (including all authorities which have issued the individual a similar type of license), and follow the standards and continuing education requirements of the new jurisdiction. Note: Licenses to practice law were explicitly not covered by this new provision.

A servicemember or spouse should consult a legal assistance attorney at the base legal office or his or her civilian attorney, if one has been retained, for more specific advice and assistance regarding the protections provided by the SCRA and the means to take advantage of them.

12.2.3. Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). [USERRA](#), Section 4301 et seq., Title 38, U.S.C., affords persons who enter or are called to active service in the armed forces the right to go back to a civilian job they held prior to military service. To qualify for the protection provided by USERRA, a member must have held the civilian job prior

to going on active duty; must give notice of the active duty commitment prior to leaving the civilian position (unless notice is impossible or unreasonable); must be gone from the civilian position for a total time of five years or less; must obtain an honorable or general discharge from the service; and must return to the civilian position within a reasonable period of time upon completion of the service commitment. USERRA also protects against all discrimination based on one's past, present or future military service. This includes protection against discrimination during the hiring phase as well as the employment and reemployment phases. The Department of Labor is the primary Federal agency responsible for enforcing USERRA.

USERRA defines the periods of time that are considered “reasonable” based on the number of days in the active-duty commitment. For absences of 30 days or less, the servicemember must return to work at their first shift following safe travel time plus eight hours for rest. For absences of 31 to 180 days, the service member must return to work no later than 14 days after completing the period of service. For absences of 181 days or longer, the service member must return to work no later than 90 days after completing service.

Upon returning to a civilian employer after performing active duty, USERRA provides the status, seniority and most pension rights be reinstated as if the employee never left. The employer must make “reasonable efforts” to train the returning servicemember on new equipment and techniques. A service-connected disability must be accommodated. USERRA also requires the employer to reinstate health benefits and protect the member from being fired other than for cause for a period of time varying with the length of the active-duty service.

A service member should consult a legal assistance attorney at the base legal office or his or her civilian attorney, if one has been retained, for more specific advice and assistance regarding the protections afforded by and the responsibilities created under USERRA.

12.2.4. Serving Legal Notice for Divorce Overseas. There are no federal statutes allowing Air Force officials to accept legal notice, also referred to as process, on behalf of Airmen or Guardians or to serve process on Airmen or Guardians. Consistent with the Posse Comitatus Act (Section 1385, Title 18, U.S.C.), which prohibits the unauthorized use of federal troops to execute the domestic laws of the United States, performing service of process is neither a function nor a responsibility of the military establishment or its personnel in their official capacity. Therefore, the law precludes Air Force personnel from effecting such service.

Although the Air Force may not serve civil process, Air Force policy specifically requires cooperation towards facilitation of service of process. Such cooperation entails allowing the civilian serving official (typically a local law enforcement official or private process server) access to the installation and making the member available to receive process. However, the Air Force does not have authority to order a member to accept the service of process.

In the event the service member elects not to accept service of process, the spouse should be able to effect service through other means. Like all U.S. citizens abroad, the most common way to serve process overseas is through the Hague Convention on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extra-Judicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters, hereinafter referred to as the “Hague Convention.” It is in force in Japan and most NATO countries, as well as other countries.

The Hague Convention provides for service of process by a central authority (the Department of Justice in the United States) pursuant to a formal request. [The USM-94, Request for Service Abroad for Judicial or Extrajudicial documents](#) form for making such a request is available both online and at the office of any United States Marshal. The text of the treaty, which is self-explanatory, as well as other practical information about the treaty (to include a list of central authorities, table of contracting states, translations and case law) is available on the [Hague Conference on International Law website](#). Attorneys assisting military family members in effecting service of process overseas should find this website a helpful reference for understanding the Hague Convention.

Chapter 13

FAMILY MATTERS

13.1. Birth Certificates.

13.1.1. Overseas Births. The Air Force does not provide birth certificates for children born to American parents outside the United States. When local law in overseas areas requires birth registration, Air Force medical facilities report births to local authorities on the forms that they prescribe. Medical personnel file these reports in addition to the reports required by U.S. consular offices. For more information concerning the birth of U.S. citizens abroad, visit the State Department's website for the [Bureau of Consular Affairs](#).

13.1.2. Domestic Births. The Air Force does not provide birth certificates. That function belongs to the states in which Air Force bases exist. To obtain copies of birth certificates for children born at Air Force bases in the United States, contact the Department of Health for the state in which the child was born.

13.2. Leave.

The below section is per Department of Defense Instruction 1327.06, Leave and Liberty Policy and Procedures, unless specified, the guidance is from Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-3003, Military Leave Program.

13.2.1. Emergency Leave. Unit Commanders may authorize up to 30 days of emergency leave. Requests for leave in excess of 30 days must be authorized by the Secretary concerned. Emergency leave is chargeable leave. Emergency leave and extensions thereto shall normally be granted to Service members for family emergencies involving members of their household, their immediate family, or a sole surviving relative whenever the circumstances warrant, and the military situation permits.

In Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-3003, Military Leave Program, immediate family is defined as, "the member's or spouse's:

1. Parents (including stepparents).
2. Children (including illegitimate children and stepchildren).
3. Brothers and sisters.
4. Sole surviving blood relative.
5. In-loco-parentis person. In-loco-parentis must meet both of the following conditions:
 - a. A person who stood in place of the member's parent for a period of at least 5 years before the member became 21 years of age or entered military service.
 - b. The person provided a home, food, clothing, medical care, and other necessities, and gave moral, disciplinary guidance, and affection.

Emergency leave may be appropriate when:

1. A member of the household or immediate family has died.
2. The service member's presence would contribute to the welfare of a dying member of the household or immediate family.

3. Serious illness of a member of the household or immediate family imposes a demand on the service member that must be met immediately and cannot be accomplished from the duty station or by any other means.
4. The service member's failure to return home places a severe or unusual hardship on the service member, his or her household, or immediate family.
5. When service members and/or their families have been personally affected by natural disasters or emergencies.

Emergency leave travel at Government expense is authorized in accordance with the Joint Federal Travel Regulation. Authorized transportation expenses are chargeable to the appropriated funds that support the temporary duty (TDY) travel of the service member's assigned unit. However, emergency leave shall not be denied solely because of lack of funds for authorized funded emergency leave travel, nor shall emergency leave be granted for the purpose of either increasing the service member's travel priority or to offset personal travel costs. Service members not authorized emergency leave travel under the provisions of the Joint Federal Travel Regulation may be authorized travel on Government owned or controlled aircraft in accordance with DoD 4515.13-R.

Members may obtain financial assistance with the expenses of emergency leave through the American Red Cross (ARC) or Air Force Aid Society. These agencies evaluate requests on a case-by-case basis.

13.2.2. Emergency Leave of Absence. The unit commander may authorize up to 14 consecutive days of an Emergency Leave of Absence due to a serious medical condition of an immediate family member of the service member, the death of an immediate family member, or any other hardship the commander determines appropriate. This is non-chargeable leave for the service member but can only be granted once during an entire career. The intent for this non-chargeable leave is to prevent the service member from entering advanced or excess leave status that could result in recoupment of any pay and allowances.

13.2.3. Red Cross Verification. The unit commander must ensure an emergency exists and that only the member's presence will alleviate the emergency. The Air Force normally requires American Red Cross (ARC) verification; however, commanders can independently determine if the situation warrants emergency leave based on knowledge of the circumstances and immediacy of the situation. Persons acting on behalf of the family should request emergency leave for the member through the ARC.

13.2.4. Bereavement Leave. Unit commanders may authorize up to 14 days of non-chargeable leave to be used in connection with the death of a spouse or child of the service member. Only service members with less than 30 days of accrued ordinary leave may be authorized bereavement leave for this purpose.

13.2.5. Military Parental Leave Program. This program authorizes 12 weeks of non-chargeable leave to covered service members after a qualifying birth event, adoption of a minor child or who have a minor child placed for adoption or long-term foster care with them to care for the child. The 12 weeks will be authorized during the 1-year period following a qualifying event.

Provisions are also in place to allow a service member to request an extension of the 1-year period for those who are unable to utilize their parental leave immediately due to mission or operational requirements.

13.3. Dependent Care.

13.3.1. Policy. The Air Force expects all its personnel to provide regular and adequate dependent support, based on the dependent's needs and the ability of the member to pay. The following does not remove support obligations: assumption of additional responsibilities, family, remarriage, pending court actions.

The Air Force, on its own, cannot deduct money from a member's pay to ensure dependent support without the individual's permission. The Air Force complies with valid garnishment actions for the enforcement of child support and alimony payments. An active-duty member's pay and allowances are also subject to a mandatory allotment to satisfy child and spousal support obligations where payments are in arrears for at least two months.

13.3.2. Provisions. Air Force members are required to arrange for proper care for their dependents if they are called away for duty. In addition, they will maintain arrangements for the care of family members to permit worldwide availability during circumstances such as duty hours, exercises, alerts, etc. Advance planning is the key to family care arrangements, with plans covering all possible short and long-term situations. Members must ensure the plans are sufficiently detailed and systematic to provide for a smooth, rapid transfer of responsibilities to another individual during the absence of the military sponsor. Commanders, first sergeants and supervisors assist members in developing family care plans. Members may also contact the staff judge advocate, the military personnel flight customer service, the chaplain and the family support center for assistance.

Commanders or first sergeants counsel all personnel with family members on Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2908, *Family Care Plans*, when they arrive at a new base. During this counseling, commanders and first sergeants stress the importance of, and confirm the need for, family care certification via completion of AF Form 357, *Family Care Certification*. The unit personnel office at the commander's location maintains a file copy of the Form 357. At least annually, commanders or first sergeants brief all military members in their organizations on this policy. They also individually counsel members required to complete an AF Form 357 to determine the actual feasibility of the family care plan. The supervisor's feedback on specific actions or behavior that could cast doubt on the member's reliability and sense of responsibility helps with this determination.

Members who are not required to fill out an AF Form 357, when briefed by the commander, must understand that even though they do not need to document family care arrangements, they are not relieved of their responsibilities to maintain adequate arrangements. There are situations in which commanders may find it necessary for members with civilian spouses to document family care arrangements on AF Form 357. Some examples include: a spouse has limited English language skills; a spouse has an illness, disability, or handicap; or a spouse does not reside in the local area, to include marital separation. Divorced members whose children

temporarily reside with them for an extended period may need to certify family care.

Other times when personnel may need to certify family care arrangements are during reenlistment, extensions and permanent change of station (PCS) notification (whether it be a stateside, overseas or family-restricted assignment). Personnel may also need to certify family care arrangements upon confirmation of childbirth of a military member who is unmarried, or married to another military member, and upon placing a child in the home of an unmarried military member or married military couple as a part of formal adoption proceedings.

13.3.3. Court-Ordered Support/Garnishment. The Air Force expects its personnel to comply with the financial support provisions of a court order or written support agreement. Federal law authorizes the Department of Defense (DoD) to garnish the pay of active, reserve and retired members of the military and the pay of civilian employees of the federal government for the payment of child and/or spousal support when such action is supported by a court order or written agreement. The law is found at Section 659, Title 42, United States Code (USC), and the implementing regulations are found at 5 CFR Part 581. Failure of a member to comply with Air Force policy can lead to administrative or disciplinary action. The Air Force takes such action to maintain discipline and prescribed standards of conduct, but the action cannot lead to a pay deduction without a court order.

Those entitled to child support and/or alimony may seek collection of unpaid obligations through civil authorities by legal process of garnishment or statutory allotment pursuant to federal law. In order to implement a garnishment or wage attachment against any member of the military or any civilian employee of the DoD, an income withholding order, or similar process, must be served on the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) at the following address:

[Defense Finance and Accounting Service](#)
[Garnishment Operations-HGA](#)

P.O. Box 998002
Cleveland, Ohio 44199-8002
Customer Support: (888) 332-7411
Fax: (877) 622-5930

The submitted order cannot be the divorce decree or other order that directs the individual (debtor) to make the payment. Rather, the order must direct the government, as the employer, to withhold moneys and remit payments to satisfy the support obligation. The withholding order need not name the specific government office which employs the obligor. The order must provide the appropriate information about the person to receive payment.

In order for a withholding order to be processed, it must include the debtor's full legal name and social security number. Other identifying information concerning the debtor, such as a home or work address, would expedite the processing of the order. Also, include a return address on any correspondence, not only on the mailing envelope.

Questions concerning the child support and alimony process should be directed to DFAS at (888) 332-7411.

13.3.4. Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP). The [SBP](#) provides a monthly income to the survivors of military retirees who choose to participate and to the surviving spouse (and in some cases, children) of members who die while on active duty and the Line of Duty (LOD) is determined to be “yes.” In cases of active-duty deaths in which LOD is “no,” SBP will be authorized only if the member had 20 or more years of active service. Members of the Reserve components may enroll in the Reserve Component SBP (RCSBP) as soon as they receive notification, they will qualify for retired pay at age 60 or they may defer their SBP elections until age 60. The survivors of retired members who elect not to participate in SBP or the RCSBP receive no monthly payments from the respective services upon the death of the retired member. According to Public Law 99-145, effective March 1, 1986, a spouse’s written concurrence is required to validate the elections of retiring married members who decline SBP, elect reduced coverage or elect to cover a child but not the spouse.

SBP participants accept reduced retired pay to provide financial protection for their named beneficiaries. The government does not subject the premiums deducted from retired pay to the federal income tax. DFAS suspends premium deductions during any period there is not an eligible beneficiary. Members who waive retired pay, as in the case of a federal civil service employee who elects a combined retirement annuity and do not elect the Civil Service version of the SBP, may not terminate Air Force SBP, and will be required to remit their SBP premiums directly to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service-Cleveland Center (DFAS-CL). It is the retiree’s responsibility to notify DFAS-CL of any changes in beneficiary status.

Possible beneficiary designations and periods of eligibility are as follows:

- a. Spouse/Former Spouse - Eligible for life but payments suspended if remarriage occurs before age 55. The spouse may have the SBP reinstated if the remarriage terminates.
- b. Spouse/Former Spouse and Dependent Children of Spouse/Former Spouse - Paid as long as eligible; annuity follows to eligible children in the event the spouse/former spouse remarries before age 55 or dies. All of the member’s children are potentially eligible in SBP coverage for a spouse and child. However, in the event SBP coverage is for the former spouse and children, only those children resulting from the marriage of the member and that former spouse are eligible as contingent beneficiaries.
- c. Children Only - Eligible until age 18 or age 22 if unmarried and in school full-time and not serving in the Uniformed Services Semester/quarterly certification of full-time student status is required. SBP pays benefits to unmarried children disabled before age 18, or age 22 while in school full time, as long as the disability renders them incapable of self-support.
- d. Insurable interest (natural interest person) - Applicable only if member is unmarried and has no dependent children. In some cases, a member may elect insurable interest coverage if there is only one dependent child at retirement. Person can be close relative (proof of insurability not required if more closely related than cousin), business partner or others with a financial interest in the member. Eligible for life, but the retiree may terminate coverage at any point. Annuity payable will be 55% of the full gross retired pay, less monthly costs.

Although DFAS deducts cost for coverage from participants’ retired pay before computing their

tax liability, SBP annuities are subject to federal income taxation. In some cases, annuities may be subject to state income tax and/or federal estate tax. Pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code, DFAS withholds tax at a flat rate of 30 percent on nonresident aliens if they reside in a country without a tax treaty with the USA. Annuitants should contact the Internal Revenue Service with regard to the taxability of their SBP annuities.

SBP base amounts, annuities and premiums are subject to the cost-of-living adjustments applied to military retired pay.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 modified the law that required an offset of SBP payments for surviving spouses entitled to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Under the previous law, surviving spouses of members who die of a service-connected cause and received DIC, were subject to a dollar-for-dollar reduction of SBP payments which resulted in either being partially or fully offset. The phased-in reduction of the offset began on January 1, 2021, and culminates with elimination of the offset in its entirety on January 1, 2023.

PL 105-261 (October 17, 1998, authorized a paid-up provision to the SBP). The law states that, effective October 1, 2008, no reduction may be made in the retired pay of a participant in SBP for any month after the later of the 360th month of retired pay reduction and the month during which the participant reaches 70 years of age. Implementation of this provision became effective October 1, 2008. No action is required by retirees to initiate the termination of premiums.

PL 105-85 (November 18, 1997) provides that retirees who elect SBP coverage at retirement have a one-year period, beginning on the second anniversary of the date of commencement of retired pay, during which they may choose to voluntarily discontinue participation in the SBP.

Once participation is discontinued under the disenrollment provision, no person (i.e., spouse, child, former spouse, etc.) may be paid an annuity in conjunction with any previous participation, no refund of any premiums properly collected will be made, and the member may not resume participation in SBP at any future time for any category of beneficiary.

SBP participants eligible to disenroll should submit a written request to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service using a DD Form 2656-2, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Termination Request. A valid DD Form 2656-2 must be signed, dated, and submitted to the address on the DD Form 2656-2 between the 25th and 36th month of receiving retired pay is required for disenrollment. Any premiums deducted for periods on or after such effective date will be refunded; however, there is no refund of any premiums properly collected before that date.

Former-spouse coverage can be established without the member's active participation when the following conditions exist:

- The member was required by a court order dated after November 14, 1986, to provide former-spouse coverage, or written agreement filed with the court of appropriate jurisdiction in accordance with applicable State law.
- The member failed or refused to make a former-spouse SBP election. Failure to elect could result in contempt of court.

- The former spouse submitted a DD Form 2656-10, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)/Reserve Component (RC) SBP Request for Deemed Election and a copy of the court order to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Garnishment Law Directorate, PO Box 998002, Cleveland OH 44199. The former spouse's deemed election request must be received by DFAS-CL within one year of the date of the court order or it cannot be honored; regardless of the member's retirement date.

The FY15 NDAA, PL 113-291 authorized military members and retirees to direct payment of a disabled dependent child Survivor Benefit Plan annuity directly to the Special Needs Trust (SNT) as an add-on election to a member or retiree's SBP election for coverage of a dependent child. OSD released policy guidance concerning this new legislation to the Services on December 31, 2015.

As a result of the legislation, a member or retiree who elects SBP coverage that includes coverage for a dependent child may now, at any time, irrevocably decide to substitute a SNT created for the benefit of a disabled dependent child as the SBP beneficiary to receive any SBP annuity payments that would otherwise be payable to or on behalf of the disabled dependent child. The irrevocable decision may be made during the life of the member/retiree or by the disabled dependent child's surviving parent, grandparent, or court appointed legal guardian if the member/retiree is deceased.

13.3.5. Uniformed Services Former Spouses' Protection Act. The [Uniformed Services Former Spouses' Protection Act](#), Section 1408, Title 10, USC, recognizes the right of state courts to distribute military retired pay to a spouse or former spouse (hereafter, the former spouse) and provides a method of enforcing these orders through the Department of Defense. The Act itself does not provide for an automatic entitlement to a portion of the member's retired pay to a former spouse. A former spouse must have been awarded a portion of a member's military retired pay as property in their final decree of divorce, dissolution, annulment, or legal separation (the court order). The Act also provides a method of enforcing current child support and/or arrears and current alimony awarded in the court order.

Court orders enforceable under the Act include final decrees of divorce, dissolution, annulment, and legal separation, and court-ordered property settlements incident to such decrees. The pertinent court order must provide for the payment of child support, alimony, or retired pay as property, to a spouse/former spouse. Retired pay as property awards must provide for the payment of an amount expressed in dollars or as a percentage of disposable retired pay (gross retired pay less allowable deductions). An award of a percentage of a member's retired pay is automatically construed under the Act as a percentage of disposable retired pay. A Qualified Domestic Relations Order is not required to divide retired pay as long as the former spouse's award is set forth in the pertinent court order.

In all cases where the member is on active duty at the time of the divorce, the member's rights under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) must have been observed during the state court proceeding. In addition, for orders dividing retired pay as property to be enforced under the Act, a member and former spouse must have been married to each other for at least 10 years during which the member performed at least 10 years of creditable military service (the 10/10

rule). Also, to enforce orders dividing retired pay as property, the state court must have had jurisdiction over the member by reason of (1) the member's residence in the territorial jurisdiction of the court (other than because of his military assignment), (2) the member's domicile in the territorial jurisdiction of the court, or (3) the member's consent to the jurisdiction of the court, as indicated by the member's taking some affirmative action in the legal proceeding. The 10/10 rule and the jurisdictional requirement do not apply to enforcement of child support or alimony awards under the Act.

The maximum that can be paid to a former spouse under the Act is 50% of a member's disposable retired pay. In cases where there are payments both under the Act and pursuant to a garnishment for child support or alimony under Section 659, Title 42, USC, the total amount payable cannot exceed 65% of the member's disposable earnings for garnishment purposes. The right to payments under the Act terminates upon the death of the member or former spouse, unless the applicable court order provides that the payments terminate earlier.

To apply for payments under the Act, a completed application (DD Form 2293) signed by a former spouse, a certified copy of the applicable court order certified by the clerk of court, and any applicable documents dictated by the application checklist should be served either by mail or fax upon:

DFAS Garnishment Law Directorate
PO Box 998002
Cleveland, Ohio 44199-8002
Customer service: (888) 332-7411
Fax: (877) 622-5930

The application form should state which awards the former spouse is seeking to enforce under the Act (i.e., alimony, child support, and/or division of retired pay as property). If the application form does not contain this information, then only awards of retired pay as property will be enforced under the Act. A former spouse should also indicate the priority of the awards to be enforced in case there is not sufficient disposable retired pay to cover multiple awards.

The court order should contain sufficient information for DFAS to determine whether the SCRA, and the Act's jurisdictional and 10/10 requirements (if applicable), have been met. If DFAS cannot determine the parties' marriage date from the court order, then the former spouse must submit a photocopy of their marriage certificate. If the former spouse is requesting child support, and the court order does not contain the birth dates of the children, the former spouse must provide photocopies of their birth certificates.

If the requirements of the Act have been met, payments to a former spouse must begin no later than 90 days after the date of effective service of a complete application. If the member has not yet retired at the time the former spouse submits his or her application, payments must begin no later than 90 days after the date on which the member first becomes entitled to receive retired pay.

Court orders awarding a portion of military retired pay as property that were issued prior to June

26, 1981 can be honored if the requirements of the Act are met. However, amendments issued after June 25, 1981, to court orders issued prior to June 26, 1981, which were silent as to providing for a division of retired pay as property, cannot be enforced under the Act. Also, for court orders issued prior to November 14, 1986, if any portion of a member's military retired pay is based on disability retired pay, the orders are unenforceable under the Act.

Section 1408(h) of the Act provides benefits to former spouses who are victims of abuse by members who, as a result of the abuse of a spouse or dependent child, lose the right to retired pay after becoming retirement eligible. A former spouse may only enforce an order dividing retired pay as property under this Section, and all of the other requirements of the Act must be satisfied. The right to payments under this Section terminates upon the remarriage of the former spouse, or upon the death of either party.

13.3.6. Spouse/Dependent Privileges.

20/20/15: To qualify for certain entitlements and a military identification (ID) card under the Uniformed Services Former Spouses' Protection Act, at the time of divorce, dissolution or annulment of marriage, the former spouse must meet all three of the following eligibility requirements:

- 1) Unremarried former spouse must have been married to a military member for at least 20 years;
- 2) The military member must have performed at least 20 years of service that is creditable in determining eligibility for retired pay; and,
- 3) There must have been at least a 15-year overlap of marriage and the former spouse's creditable service. The amount overlap determines the benefits to which the former spouse is entitled.

20/20/20: To qualify for all benefits (medical, commissary, base exchange and theater privileges under Morale, Welfare, and Recreation), an unremarried former spouse, at the time of divorce, dissolution, or annulment of marriage, must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- 1) They must have been married for at least 20 years to the military member who performed at least 20 years of service creditable in determining eligibility for retired pay; and,
- 2) There must have been a 20-year overlap of marriage and military service.

NOTE: If a former spouse participates in an employer-sponsored health plan, the Act does not authorize medical care. When the former spouse no longer participates in an employer-sponsored health plan, he or she may have medical care benefits reinstated.

A former spouse who qualified under the *20/20/20* criteria, but who lost eligibility because of remarriage, and who subsequently becomes unmarried through divorce or death of spouse, is entitled to reinstatement of commissary, base exchange, and theater privileges only. The Act does not authorize reinstatement of medical care.

Former spouses of military sponsors who are on active duty and have 20 years or more creditable service toward retired pay are eligible to apply for an ID card. The military sponsor does not have to be in retired status.

To qualify for a 4-year renewable ID card reflecting medical benefits only, an unremarried former spouse at the time of divorce, dissolution or annulment must meet the following requirements:

- 1) The individual must have been married for at least 20 years to a military member who performed at least 20 years of service creditable in determining eligibility for retired pay;
- 2) There must have been at least a 15-year overlap of marriage and military service (20/20/15); and
- 3) The divorce must have occurred before April 1, 1985.

NOTE: If a former spouse participates in an employer-sponsored health plan, the Act does not authorize an ID card. When the former spouse is no longer in an employer sponsored health plan, he or she may have medical benefits reinstated.

An unremarried former spouse who meets the 20/20/15 requirements, but whose divorce occurred on or after April 1, 1985, but prior to September 29, 1988, is no longer eligible for an ID card. The law authorized an ID card for this category of former spouses for two years from date of divorce or December 31, 1988, whichever was later.

An unremarried former spouse who meets the 20/20/15 requirements, but whose divorce occurs on or after September 29, 1988, qualifies for medical benefits only, limited to one year from date of divorce. If a former spouse participates in an employer-sponsored health plan, the Act does not authorize an ID card.

It should be noted that when the former spouse no longer participates in an employer-sponsored health plan, the spouse may have medical benefits reinstated and have an ID card issued with medical benefits only, not to exceed the one-year period of coverage from date of divorce.

A former spouse who qualified for benefits and privileges under the 20/20/20 provision of the USFSPA, who subsequently remarries, and that marriage ends by a legal court order annulment, may be eligible for consideration to have their ID card benefits and privileges restored.

13.4. Child and Youth Programs.

13.4.1. Child Development Centers. Department of the Air Force (DAF) Child Development Centers (CDC) are designed to provide a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for children and are uniquely designed to accommodate each child's developmental level. CDCs conduct activities for infants, pretoddlers, toddlers and preschoolers to promote developmental gains in the areas of communication or language and literacy, cognition, self-regulation, social-emotional and physical/health. To request care visit <https://militarychildcare.com>. DAF CDCs offer the following services:

- **Full Day/Weekly Child Care**
Full-time care offered Monday-Friday during the program's hours of operation.
- **Hourly Care**
May be offered to support short-term needs on the installation.

- **Part-Day Enrichment (PDE) Program**
May be offered to provide parents, who do not need full time childcare, the opportunity for their children to participate in an early childhood experience.
- **Give Parents A Break (GPAB)**
Sponsored by the Air Force Aid Society GPAB provides childcare for eligible parents who are subject to unique stressors due to the nature of military life including deployments, remote tours of duty, and extended working hours.

13.4.2. School Age Care. Department of the Air Force School Age Care (SAC) offers childcare (Before and After School Care and Full Day Care) for children and youth enrolled in kindergarten to 12 years of age. SAC is located in a separate facility or in a separate space in the Youth Programs (YP) facility. SAC promotes the cognitive, social, emotional, cultural, language, and physical development of children through programs and services that recognize differences in children and youth and encourages self-confidence, curiosity, creativity, self-discipline, and resiliency.

- **Full Day/Weekly Child Care**
Full-time care offered Monday-Friday during the program's hours of operation during summer months and school breaks.
- **Hourly Care**
May be offered to support short-term needs on the installation.
- **Before/After School Care**
Provides care "Before" school starts and "After" school ends. Transportation to and from school may be provided.
- **Give Parents A Break (GPAB)**
Sponsored by the Air Force Aid Society GPAB provides childcare for eligible parents who are subject to unique stressors due to the nature of military life including deployments, remote tours of duty, and extended working hours.

Eligibility for CDC and SAC:

- **Eligibility** - Child care eligibility is contingent on the status of the sponsor. For eligibility, please visit <https://militarychildcare.com>
- **Request Care** - Families may request care at <https://militarychildcare.com>
- **Fees** - Fees are based on Total Family Income.

13.4.3. Family Child Care. DAF Family Child Care (FCC) offers childcare to children and youth from two weeks to 12 years of age in homes of certified providers located on or off an installation. One of the hallmarks of FCC is its ability to offer care for many various family childcare needs. Families may request care at <https://militarychildcare.com>. DAF FCC offers the following childcare services:

- **Full Day/Weekly Child Care**
Provides full day weekly childcare.
- **Non-traditional/evening/weekend/24/7 care**
- **Hourly Care**

May be offered to support short-term needs based on provider availability.

- **Expanded Child Care**

The Expanded Child Care (ECC) Program assists families in obtaining non-traditional and intermittent high-quality childcare from certified providers at or near the installation. Childcare is available for children 2 weeks to 12 years.

13.4.4. Expanded Child Care (ECC). DAF ECC Program is typically offered in FCC homes. ECC is available at all DAF led Active-Duty locations with an active FCC Program or at other non-DAF led installations/locations where approved providers are available. Use of ECC is permitted once all requirements are completed and approved. Care is dependent on the availability of funding and providers.

13.4.5. Community Based Fee Assistance. The DAF Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN) program provides authorized Active-Duty personnel assistance in locating, selecting, and offsetting the cost of civilian childcare, when installation care is not available, or the on-base program has an extensive waiting list. MCCYN provides military subsidies to eligible providers in quality community childcare programs to assist military families by equalizing the cost of commercial childcare making it comparable to installation childcare fees.

13.4.6. Youth Programs. DAF Youth Programs (YP) offer opportunities for positive youth development by supporting the skills, interests, qualities, and abilities of all youth. The DAF operates YPs on DAF-led installations and provides opportunities for geographically separated youth. YP offerings include:

- Youth Sports and Fitness
- Core areas: Positive Youth Development, Leadership & Service, The Arts, Health & Wellness, Education & Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Initiatives
- Residential Youth Camps
- Youth Sponsorship
- Teen Programs

13.4.7. Child & Youth Education Services. The School Liaison Program is committed to outreach, advocacy, and partnership initiatives that generate real-time educational solutions for military-connected students in grades PreK-12 as they face global education-related challenges and transitions. As the installation subject-matter experts for PreK-12 education for military-connected children, School Liaisons help foster partnerships and facilitate communication between local educational stakeholders and installation leadership.

In addition, by providing military-connected families with consistent, impactful educational resources and support, School Liaisons help military youth establish strong foundations for success. Through these efforts, School Liaisons impact the educational experience for military-connected youth, ultimately supporting the students' academic, physical, social, and emotional needs and helping provide focus and stability during transitions such as Permanent Change of Station, family separation, etc. For additional information and to locate your [School Liaison](#).

13.4.8. Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account. This is an account within the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program which enables service members to contribute up to \$5,000 per household per year in pre-tax income to pay for dependent care expenses (\$2,500 if married filing separate tax returns) so that they (and their spouse, if married) can work, attend school full time, or look for work.

Chapter 14

RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

14.1. Presenting Complaints to the Appropriate Officials.

Department of the Air Force members should present complaints to the appropriate officials responsible for the area of their complaint. Personnel should not use the IG complaint program for matters normally appealed or redressed through other channels, unless there is evidence that those channels mishandled the complaint (e.g., an individual denied specific rights or there was a breach of established policy or procedure).

14.2. The Inspector General of the Department of the Air Force (SAF/IG).

The Inspector General of the Department of the Air Force (DAF) (SAF/IG) independently assesses and reports on the overall readiness, economy, efficiency, and discipline of the DAF to the SecAF through specified inquiries, investigations, and inspections. SAF/IG ensures effective inspection and investigative systems, which includes administrative guidance and oversight for the military criminal investigative organization mission conducted by the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) and provides administrative oversight for those mission areas specified to the Department of Defense (DoD) Cyber Crime Center (DC3). SAF/IG also manages the Air Force IG Complaints Resolution Program.

The Inspector General Act of 1978 (Title 5, United States Code (USC) App. 3) established duties and responsibilities for the DoD IG and other federal agency IGs. Section 9020, Title 10, USC established the Office of Inspector General of The Air Force. Per Title 10, when directed by the Secretary of the Air Force (SecAF), the Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF), the Chief of Space operations (CSO), the Inspector General of the Department of the Air Force (SAF/IG) shall inquire into and report upon the discipline, efficiency, and economy of the Department of the Air Force; and perform any other duties prescribed by SecAF, CSAF, or CSO. Title 10 also directs that SAF/IG “shall cooperate fully with the Inspector General of the Department of Defense in connection with the performance of any duty or function by the Inspector General of the Department of Defense under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App. 3) regarding the Department of the Air Force.”

14.2.1. Inspector General Complaints Resolution Program. The [Air Force Complaints Resolution Program](#) is a leadership tool that help commanders identify and correct systemic, programmatic or procedural weaknesses. This program ensures prompt and fair resolution of problems affecting the Department of the Air Force mission and morale.

Complaints and FWA disclosures help commanders discover and correct problems affecting the productivity and satisfaction of assigned personnel. Resolving the underlying cause of a complaint may prevent more severe symptoms or costly effects, such as reduced performance, accidents, poor work quality, poor morale and loss of resources.

The SecAF directs SAF/IG, via DAFFPD 90-3, to establish policies and procedures that ensure the implementation of credible and responsive Air Force complaints resolution program, and

compliance with the provisions of the applicable laws and directives. DAFPD 90-3 also directs major commands and field commands to appoint an IG for their organization who is directly responsible to the commander for carrying out assigned responsibilities. DAFI 90-301, *Inspector General Complaints Resolution*, permits the establishment of independent IGs throughout the Air Force, Space Force, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard and establishes that the IG reports directly to the commander. Additionally, all IGs are to establish procedures to manage the Department of the Air Force complaints resolution program at their level and below; and to follow the requirements and satisfy the responsibilities established in DAFI 90-301.

DAFI 90-301 provides for the receipt and processing of complaints and for the conduct and quality review of IG investigations. It also explains how individuals may present personal complaints for resolution. DAFI 90-301 formalizes the Department of the Air Force's commitment to prevent and eliminate FWA and gross mismanagement and to conduct IG investigations. Department of the Air Force members have a duty to report mismanagement, FWA, a violation of any Air Force policy or instruction, an injustice, a deficiency or a like condition to a superior or commander in their chain of command, to an inspector or IG, or to any established grievance channel.

14.2.2. Complaints Normally Not Handled by the IG. The IG exists to provide a means of redress where none already exists and to investigate concerns when there is evidence of a violation in the procedures established to address the complaint. The IG does not generally handle matters covered under other directives.

If a policy directive or Department of the Air Force Instruction provides a specific appeal or redress channel, a complainant should exhaust those channels before requesting IG assistance.

All IGs reserve the right to refer any complaint or disclosure received which belongs in another channel to the proper authority. IGs will notify complainants (except anonymous complainants) when a different agency is the primary office of responsibility for their complaint.

14.2.3. Complainant Procedures. The Department of the Air Force has a well-established IG complaints program that provides for confidentiality and safeguard from reprisal. Airman and Guardians have the right to communicate allegations of violations of law, policy, instruction, or procedures without fear of reprisal in accordance with public law and DoD directive. IGs process allegations of reprisal in accordance with procedures established in DAFI 90-301.

A Department of the Air Force member may file an IG complaint at any level without notifying or following the chain of command. Complainants normally do not travel at government expense to present a complaint.

IGs conduct investigations at a command level that avoids self-investigation or the perception of the same. When there is doubt that a given IG can conduct an impartial investigation, IGs generally transfer the matter to the next higher-level IG. The investigating officer must be impartial, unbiased, and objective.

When submitting complaints, individuals may identify themselves or remain anonymous. Complainants may also choose NOT to allow the IG to release their identity to other non-IG

agencies, although the IG may do so if the IG determines such disclosure is unavoidable during the course of the investigation and/or complaint analysis. IGs have a responsibility to safeguard to the maximum extent practicable the personal identity and complaints of individuals seeking assistance or participating in an IG process. The identity of complainants and disclosures will be strictly limited to an official need-to-know basis and not disclosed unless required by law or regulation, when needed for command action regarding a subject, or with the approval of SAF/IG. In making a disclosure (allegations), an individual is responsible for providing factual, unbiased, and specific information. DAFI 90-301 prohibits the release of records relating to IG investigations outside of IG channels without the approval of The Inspector General (SAF/IG) or their designated representative. To file an IG complaint, a Department of the Air Force member should contact the installation IG office. Each installation also maintains an IG Hotline that accepts complaints.

14.2.4. Fraud, Waste and Abuse (FWA). The Department of the Air Force Inspector General is an essential channel for reporting fraud, waste, or abuse. Detection and prosecution serve to deter fraudulent, wasteful, or abusive practices; however, the goal of reporting fraud, waste or abuse is preventing the loss of resources. Anyone may report fraud, waste, and abuse complaints to their commander, an Air Force IG, the Air Force Audit Agency (AFAA), Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI), security forces or other proper authority. As with personal complaints, constituents should try resolving FWA issues within command channels before elevating them to a higher level.

Support by both military and civilian members is crucial in preventing and eliminating FWA. Without full support from both military and civilian personnel, the Department of the Air Force cannot succeed in the fight against FWA. Any individual who is aware of ineffective controls that could lead to a waste of resources should report the situation to the proper officials. An individual may submit FWA disclosures on an DAF Form 102, *Inspector General Complaint Form*, by letter, in person or by calling the IG hotline at (800) 538-8429 or (202) 404-5354, or by using the Secretary of the Air Force Office of the Inspector General website. (<https://www.afinspectorgeneral.af.mil/File-an-IG-Complaint/>).

14.2.5. Release of IG Investigative Information. When a complaint is investigated within IG channels, complainants will receive a final response, in writing, with the findings of the investigation. The nature of the allegation(s), finding(s) and any corrective action required would determine what information is releasable. All information released must be in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) guidelines. DAFI 90-301 provides further detail.

The Department of the Air Force investigates and processes anonymous disclosures in the same manner as all other complaints and disclosures. However, the Department of the Air Force will not provide feedback information to inquiring individuals, including any individual claiming to be the disclosure source, unless provided for under applicable FOIA guidelines.

The IG will process all other requests for IG investigation reports in accordance with applicable law, FOIA, and the Privacy Act.

14.2.6. Contacts for the IG Complaint Resolution Program. The Secretary of the Air Force's Directorate of Legislative Liaison Congressional Inquiry Branch processes requests for investigation or information made by Members of Congress. SAF/LLCI tasks SAF/IG with issues such as reprisal, restriction, and allegations of IG misconduct or IG complaint mishandling. To prevent unnecessary resolution delays, SAF/LLCI may provide issues with a more appropriate command, agency, or grievance channel directly to the appropriate Air Force command or agency authority. This includes requests for IG investigations into issues that are not appropriate for IG investigation and best addressed within command or agency channels.

The Inquiry Branch is also the focal point for obtaining information on the status of IG investigations requested by a Congressional office and referred to the Department of the Air Force Inspector General by the Inquiry Branch. Status inquiries may be submitted by e-mail or fax, although email submissions allow for the most efficient processing: SAF.LLCI.Workflow@us.af.mil or fax 703-693-6340.

General questions regarding the IG Complaint Resolution Program at the [Secretary of the Air Force Office of the Inspector General website](#). Additionally, you may contact SAF/IG by phone directly at (202) 404-5354, toll free 1-800-538-8429, or via email: saf.ighotline@us.af.mil. The mailing address is:

Office of the AF Inspector General
1140 Air Force Pentagon
Washington DC 20330-1140

14.3. Avenues of Redress for Civilian Employees.

Grievance. Civilian personnel may file a grievance to request personal relief in any matter of concern or dissatisfaction relating to their employment, which is subject to the control of Air Force management. The first line supervisor, as well as staff members of the local Civilian Personnel Office, may provide guidance on this procedure. Types of grievances that can be filed:

Administrative Procedure. This procedure is available to civilian employees who receive their pay from appropriated funds, and who are either non-bargaining-unit or bargaining-unit employees in a unit where no collective bargaining agreement exists or where the negotiated procedure excludes the matter at issue. The first-line supervisor, as well as staff members of the local Civilian Personnel Office, may provide guidance on this procedure.

Negotiated Procedure. Negotiated procedures are available to civilian employees whose positions are part of the local bargaining unit, where the collective bargaining agreement provides for a procedure to address the matter at issue. The first line supervisor, as well as staff members of the local Civilian Personnel Office, may provide guidance on this procedure.

Appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board. The Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) is an independent government agency that adjudicates Federal employees' appeals of certain

agency personnel actions which are based on performance or which will promote the efficiency of the service, e.g., removal from Federal service, suspensions for more than 14 days. The management provides the employee with information on the filing of an appeal to the MSPB when he or she issues the final decision to take adverse action. The employee may also obtain this information from the local Civilian Personnel Office.

Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Process. An aggrieved person, who believes he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability, or has been sexually harassed, may contact an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) counselor on the local installation. The counselor will advise individuals in writing of their rights and responsibilities.

Complaint to Office of Special Counsel. The Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent government agency that investigates prohibited personnel practices, such as whistleblowing reprisal and nepotism. The local Civilian Personnel Office, or the Department of the Air Force Inspector General's Office can provide guidance on this procedure.

Classification Appeals. This is the resolution process for employee disputes involving the proper classification of their position descriptions. The first line supervisor, as well as staff members of the local Civilian Personnel Office, may provide guidance on this procedure.

Department of Defense Inspector General. The Department of Defense Inspector General (DOD IG) is also available to take civilian personnel complaints regarding reprisal. They can be reached via the [DOD IG Hotline](#).

14.4. Complaint Process for NAF Civilian Employees.

The Air Force Non-appropriated Fund (NAF) Personnel Program supports vital community service and combat support activities through the employment of approximately 27,000 employees worldwide. The salaries for NAF employees are self-generated through installation business activities similar to private sector enterprises. While the Secretary of Defense has overall policy oversight of personnel programs, the services have been delegated authority to tailor their policies to their specific needs.

Appointments. While the appropriated fund Civil Service rules and regulations are primarily statute-driven, the NAF program is highly flexible. There are only two employment categories, flexible and regular. Flexible positions entail temporary or sporadic duties that can range from 0-40 hours per week with no employee benefits. Regular employees, however, are assigned duties of a continuous nature and are guaranteed anywhere from 20-40 hours of work per week. Currently, flexible employees comprise approximately 51 percent of the Air Force NAF workforce.

Employee Appeals and Grievances. NAF employees have specified appeal and grievance entitlements that are detailed in AFMAN 34-310. The exceptions are any procedures negotiated in local labor-management relations contracts. Also, equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaints use the same complaint process as appropriated fund employees.

Chapter 15

LEAVING THE AIR FORCE

15.1. Voluntary Separation.

Enlisted members may voluntarily separate from the Air Force by declining their option to reenlist at the end of their current enlistment term, or they may apply for separation for a number of reasons including: entering an officer training program, early release to further education, early release from extension, miscellaneous reasons, hardship, conscientious objector, and pregnancy. Officers may also request to voluntarily separate when they no longer have an active duty service commitment, or when they have an active-duty service commitment to the Air Force but have an extenuating circumstance that they believe impacts their ability to continue their service. The following paragraphs provide details regarding some of the most common requests for early separation.

15.1.1. Palace Chase Program. The objective of the Palace Chase program is to release volunteers from active duty before completion of all active-duty service commitments in order to fill vacancies in Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units in support of the Total Force concept. In Service Recruiters and the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) officials evaluate each application on a case-by-case basis. The prime criteria authorities use in making this evaluation are manning conditions, retainability of the applicant, and vacancies in Guard and Reserve units. If the applicant is overseas, the member must submit an application six months prior to their Date Eligible for Return from Overseas (DEROS) for an early release equal to their DEROS. The member may apply for up to six months early release if their DEROS equals the Date of Separation (DOS). Airmen must have served at least two years of a four-year enlistment or three years of a six-year enlistment. Officers with an active-duty service commitment must have served at least two-thirds of their required commitment, and at least 24 months of active duty before being eligible for release from active duty. The final decision on each application depends upon the needs of the Total Force.

15.1.2. Hardship. An undue hardship exists when an Airman, Guardian, and/or their families must endure adverse conditions beyond those normally encountered by other service members and their families. Members may be authorized a hardship discharge when the evidence submitted establishes that undue and unforeseeable circumstances have arisen during the current enlistment or commitment and a discharge will contribute materially to the care or support of the member's family. Officials at any base personnel office will assist the member in completing an application and advise him or her of the documents required to support the request. Applications are forwarded to AFPC who makes the final decision on enlisted requests. Officer applications are forwarded to the SecAF Personnel Council (SAFPC) for decision.

15.1.3. Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Caregiver. Female Airmen or Guardians (officer and enlisted) may request voluntary separation based on pregnancy or childbirth if the Airman or Guardian finds pregnancy or childbirth to be incompatible with continued military service. If applying and approved for separation while pregnant the Airman or Guardian will separate prior to delivery of the child. If an Airman or Guardian has already given birth, she may request a childbirth separation for up to 12 months from the date of delivery. The Air Force has delegated authority

to approve enlisted applications to base discharge authorities (normally wing commanders). All officer pregnancy requests are forwarded to SAFPC for decision.

Effective 1 March 2022, the Department of the Air Force (DAF) expanded the Pregnancy and Childbirth provisions to include Caregiver Separation. This initiative allows either active-duty military member of the DAF to apply for voluntary separation no later than 12 months after the birth or adoption of a child. Only one member is allowed to separate under the Pregnancy, Childbirth, or Caregiver provisions.

15.1.4. Miscellaneous Reasons. Airmen or Guardians who are not eligible for separation consideration under other provisions may request separation under a “miscellaneous reasons” provision. Base discharge authorities review the reasons presented and evaluate other factors such as time in service, time since completion of training, time since the Airman or Guardian’s last permanent change of station, personnel shortages, if any, within the individual’s specialty, and any pending assignment actions. Base discharge authorities may approve or disapprove enlisted requests when the requested date of separation (DOS) is within 12 months of the normal DOS. If the requested DOS is more than 12 months before the normal DOS, and the request has merit, the base discharge authority recommends approval and sends it to the AFPC for a decision. All officer requests are forwarded to AFPC, who in turn forwards to SAFPC for final decision. The needs of the Air Force are paramount and are the controlling consideration in decisions.

15.1.5. Recoupment for VA Disability Compensation. The Air Force receives a number of queries each year from former members who separated with regular separation pay (IAW 10 U.S.C. 1174) or separation pay under a special program (10 U.S.C. 1174A, 1175, AND 1175A) and who later the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) determined are entitled to disability compensation. The common complaint by the former Airmen is that they have been notified they are entitled to disability compensation, but will not get it until the amount of compensation offsets the amount of separation pay they received.

The laws authorizing the separation pay include provisions requiring the deduction from disability compensation in the amount of any separation pay the Airman or Guardian received. Therefore, until the amount of deducted disability compensation matches the received separation pay, the former member is not entitled to the disability compensation. All airmen receiving separation pay are required to sign a statement that includes acknowledgement of the disability compensation recoupment provision.

15.2. Involuntary Separation.

The Air Force may involuntarily separate members for a number of reasons including: medical conditions which existed prior to service, fraudulent entry, alcohol or drug abuse rehabilitation failure, ineffective or unsatisfactory performance, misconduct, or conviction in a civil or military court after entry on active duty. The Air Force may also utilize Involuntary Separation programs during limited periods of force draw down. Additionally, commanders may deny airmen the privilege of reenlisting when they fail to meet required retention standards.

When involuntarily separated, the Air Force may characterize the member's separation as honorable, general, under other than honorable conditions, or as an entry-level separation. Separation of Air Force personnel prior to completion of their service obligations is of considerable concern at all levels of command. Our investment in recruiting, training, and equipping both officers and airmen is costly. Early separations waste funds and lead to more accessions. Therefore, the Air Force thoroughly evaluates each separation case to ensure compliance with established policy and procedures before making a final decision.

Commanders notify Airmen recommended for discharge, in writing, of the proposed discharge action and provide copies of all supporting documents forwarded to the separation authority. Airmen have the right to legal counsel and to submit statements in rebuttal. In some cases, the individual may be entitled to appear before an Administrative Discharge Board. An appointed discharge authority makes a final decision after the judge advocate reviews the findings and recommendations for legal sufficiency. The Air Force will not discharge any individual until a judge advocate (staff legal advisor) declares the case legally sufficient to warrant such action. These procedures safeguard the rights of individuals recommended for discharge and ensure the commander judges each recommendation solely on its own merit.

15.2.1. Medical Disability. Air Force members must be able to function in a normal military environment without adverse effect on their health, or the health of others, and without the need for an excessive amount of medical care. When the [Integrated Disability Evaluation System \(IDES\)](#) (see more in Chapter 11, Medical and Healthcare Matters) and more specifically the Informal and Formal Physical Evaluation Boards (IPEB and FPEB) determine an Airman or Guardian is no longer medically fit to perform the necessary military duties, Chapter 61, Title 10, United States Code (USC), governs the disability separation or retirement, either permanent or temporary, of Armed Forces members. The disability evaluation system ensures fair and impartial treatment for all members whose medical fitness for duty is under review.

The law specifies that eligibility to receive benefits requires a determination that the Airman or Guardian incurred the condition (rendering him or her physically unfit to perform military duties) in the line of duty while entitled to basic pay. Wounded, ill and injured service members can find extensive and detailed information concerning compensation and benefits in the [Department of Defense Compensation And Benefits Handbook](#) as well as the [Department of Veterans Affairs web site](#).

When the Secretary of the Air Force determines a member's disability resulted from the member's own misconduct or the member incurred it because of gross negligence, the Air Force must separate the member without disability benefits. In this regard, the fact an individual has a disability does not mean the Air Force cannot separate the individual under other provisions of law. Once the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force directs a member's discharge under Section 1207, Title 10, USC, the percentage of disability is no longer a factor in the case and the member becomes ineligible for disability retirement under the law.

15.2.2. Temporary Disability Retired List. Air Force members may be placed on the Temporary Disability Retired List (TDRL) when their conditions have not stabilized (i.e., may improve or become more severe). The TDRL protects both the member and the government. It protects the

individual from being permanently retired with a condition that may develop into a more serious one. It also provides a safeguard for the government against permanently retiring members who may be expected to recover, or nearly so, from the physical disability which caused them to be found unfit.

Section 1210, Title 10, USC, requires the Air Force to reexamine TDRL members at least once every 18 months to determine whether there has been a change in the condition for which they were retired. Following reexamination, the Air Force may retain members on the TDRL for a period of further observation or remove them from the TDRL if their conditions have stabilized. If the Air Force does not remove members' names sooner, the disability retirement pay of TDRL members terminates, by law, upon the expiration of three years after the date of their original placement on the TDRL. Upon removal from the list, the Air Force may determine the member is fit and may return to duty if that is their choice, permanently retire the member, or discharge the member, depending upon the circumstances in each individual case.

The Air Force is required by law to rate members' disabilities on their condition at the time of their latest evaluation, as opposed to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The VA, operating under Title 38, USC, provides compensation for members based on the average impairment in earning capacity resulting from service-connected diseases and/or injuries. As such, the VA, over a period of years, may require the periodic reevaluation of members for the purpose of changing their disability awards if their level of impairment changes. Since the military only rates those conditions that make a person unfit for continued military service and the VA rates all medical conditions connected to the member's military service, this often results in a difference between the military and the VA ratings.

15.2.3. Disability Ratings & the Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR). The National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2008 created the Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR). The objective of the PDBR is to examine an applicant's medical separation when the rating for the unfitting condition was 20 percent or less and the applicant was not allowed to retire; the PDBR determines whether the rating awarded was fair and accurate. To be eligible to apply for this review, a member must have been medically separated with entitlement to severance pay between September 11, 2001, and December 31, 2009. Unlike review by the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR), this review is limited to the rating awarded for the unfitting condition(s), as well as condition(s) identified but not determined to be unfitting by the Physical Evaluation Board of the military department concerned; review by the PDBR cannot evaluate whether other conditions should have been rated.

Detailed information about the review, including application procedures and frequently asked questions, may be found at [Health.mil's PDBR webpage](https://health.mil/Health-Resources/Physical-Disability-Board-of-Review). A former service member may apply for review by submitting [*DD Form 294, Application for a Review by the Physical Disability Board of Review \(PDBR\) of the Rating Awarded Accompanying a Medical Separation from the Armed Forces of the United States*](#). The PDBR is a paper-only review; applicants are not entitled to a hearing. Applicants may submit affidavits, witness statements or medical opinions. The applicant may be represented by counsel or another advocate, but the government will not pay for this assistance.

The PDBR will compare the rating awarded by the Department of Veterans Affairs with the service-awarded rating while paying particular attention to any rating with an effective date within 12 months of the medical separation. The PDBR reviews the rating and makes a recommendation to the Secretary or his or her designee as to whether the rating should be changed. In no instance will a member's rating be decreased. The decision is final, and an applicant must waive his or her right to petition the AFBCMR on the issue of the rating awarded, but not on other issues.

15.3. Retirement.

15.3.1. Voluntary Service Retirement. The laws governing voluntary retirement provide members who have attained minimum retirement eligibility to request retirement. However, the Secretary of the Air Force may withhold final approval pending resolution of any existing restriction. Completion of 20 years of active service does not automatically entitle a member to retirement if there are active-duty service commitments resulting from promotion, training, education, permanent change of station moves, medical deferment, or if the member has pending disciplinary action, etc. The Air Force may waive active-duty service commitments if the member can substantiate a severe personal hardship uncommon to other Air Force members or demonstrate that the waiver would be in the best interest of the Air Force.

15.3.2. Mandatory Service Retirement. Mandatory retirement laws maintain a vital and vigorous officer force through the orderly attrition of regular officers.

15.3.3. Overseas Retirement. A member on an overseas tour is not eligible to retire until completion of the active-duty service commitment associated with the tour unless the Air Force waives the commitment for severe personal hardship or when found to be in the best interest of the Air Force. The member has an option to return to the U.S. to retire or, if the member satisfies host nation requirements, may retire at the overseas location.

Information on retirement pay calculator, concurrent retirement, disability pay, wounded warriors, combat related special compensation, concurrent retirement, disability payments temporary disability retirement list and other pay related information can be found at <http://www.dfas.mil/>.

15.4. Discharge Characterizations.

15.4.1. Air Force Discharge Review Board (AFDRB). Former members of the Air Force, Space Force, Air National Guard, or Air Force Reserve can apply to the Air Force Discharge Review Board (AFDRB) to have the Board determine whether their discharge was proper and equitable. When the board determines an impropriety and/or inequity exist(s), it will direct a change, correction, or modification to the discharge characterization, narrative reason for separation and/or the reenlistment code.

Inequity means the policies and procedures under which the applicant was discharged differ in material respects from policies and procedures currently applicable on an Air Force-wide basis. Additionally, inequity means there is substantial doubt that the same discharge would have

occurred if current procedures and policies were to have been applied in the applicant's case.

Impropriety means an error of fact, law, procedure, or an abuse of discretion that prejudiced the rights of the applicant. However, not every error will support relief; to be considered a prejudicial error, under the facts and circumstances of the case, the error must raise substantial doubt as to whether the discharge would have remained the same if the error had not occurred.

Officers, enlisted, and civilian personnel assigned to the Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council constitute the members of the AFDRB. These individuals have backgrounds in the medical, legal, and personnel fields, and some have command experience. The grades of board members range from master sergeant to colonel (or civilian equivalent).

By law, the AFDRB may only accept those applications submitted within 15 years of the discharge date and from former members not discharged by sentence of a general court-martial. If either of the foregoing conditions exists, then the applicant must apply to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR, see above) for a review.

In addition, **only** Bad Conduct Discharges (BCDs) handed down by special courts-martial may be upgraded/reviewed as an act of clemency; the AFDRB cannot review BCD cases handed down by general courts-martial. This is because BCDs given by special courts-martial are all reviewed by Military Review Courts for legal errors and the factual basis of the conviction. Given that Discharge Review Boards (DRBs) are administrative in nature, they are only allowed to consider clemency issues (post-service conduct) when reviewing BCDs because such cases have already been reviewed for any error (impropriety) or injustice (inequity).

Clemency is an act of leniency which reduces the severity of the punishment imposed (often referred to as post-service clemency). The DRB may grant clemency relief based on lengthy, encompassing, creditable post-service conduct.

Using [DD Form 293, Application for the Review of Discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States](#), a former service member can request an upgrade of a discharge (e.g., general to honorable) a change in the reason for discharge (e.g., from misconduct to Secretarial Authority), a change to the reenlistment code, or all three. The AFDRB cannot grant relief beyond these three areas. For other issues, the applicant must appeal to the AFBCMR. Applicants may choose between a non-personal appearance (NPA) or a personal appearance (PA), where he or she appears before the board by video teleconference. If NPA is chosen and relief is not granted, the applicant may resubmit an application for a PA.

The application forms outline how cases are processed. Processing times vary from case-to-case. At present, cases are heard by the Board on average between 90 to 150 days following receipt of Applications.

Chapter 16 VETERAN AND RETIREE MATTERS

16.1. Personnel Records Requests.

The [National Archives' Veterans Service Records website](#) clarifies the process by which veterans or their next-of-kin may request military service records—regardless of date of separation or retirement from military service. Records that may be requested include Defense Department (DD) Forms 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*; separation documents; personnel records and/or medical and dental records. Instructions at the website outline how to submit a request online, by mail or by fax.

Veterans and the next-of-kin of deceased veterans who separated or retired on or after October 1, 2004, may also request copies of records such as DD Forms 214; performance reports; and other documentation by contacting the Air Force Personnel Center at:

AFPC/DP1OR
ATTN: MILITARY INCOMING
550 C St. West
JBSA-Randolph, TX 78150
Fax: 210-565-4021
E-mail: dp2ssm.MilRecs.Incoming@us.af.mil

Individuals requesting their records must send a completed [Standard Form 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records](#), or a letter that includes their name, full Social Security number, contact information, specific record requested and signature. Individuals requesting a deceased relative's record need to provide the above information, plus their relationship to the former Airman or Guardian so that next-of-kin relationship may be verified. Proof of death must also be furnished. **Veterans and the next-of-kin of deceased veterans who separated or retired after October 1, 2004** may also access their records by registering for a premium [eBenefits account](#).

16.2. VA Disability Claims Concerning Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Agent Orange Exposure.

As of October 1, 2020, and in accordance with 38 CFR 3.159 and 38 US Code 5106, the Joint Services Records Research Center (JSRRC) no longer conducts unit record research for PTSD and Agent Orange claims, with a few exceptions for Army claims where the Army holds the required records. The U.S. Military Service Branches are required to provide records to the Department of Veterans Affairs. However, the VA is responsible for conducting the research.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Military Records Research Center (MRRC) was established in May 2020. MRRC researches military service department records to verify stressor events and herbicide exposure. The research is done in support of VA disability claims to ensure Veterans receive benefits earned through their service.

For information regarding VA benefits, please visit www.va.gov or call (800) 827-1000.

16.3. Combat-Related Special Compensation and Concurrent Retirement Disability Pay.

[Combat-Related Special Compensation \(CRSC\) and Concurrent Retirement Disability Pay \(CRDP\)](#) are programs passed by Congress to allow eligible military retirees to receive additional monthly entitlements. The purpose of these entitlements is to recover some or all the waived retired pay that was exchanged for VA disability compensation.

CRSC is payable for disabilities that are found to be related to combat, including disabilities that were incurred in actual combat, while engaged in hazardous service, in the performance of duty simulating war, training for combat or because of an instrumentality of war. The amount of

CRSC payable is directly related to the evaluation(s) assigned to combat-related disabilities but cannot exceed the amount of withheld retired pay. Retirees cannot receive benefits simultaneously under both CRSC and CRDP programs.

All questions should be directed to the administrator of CRSC and CRDP, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service at (800) 321-1080, option 1.

16.4. Retiree Access to Privileges Overseas.

Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) provide active-duty military members, their dependents, and certain full-time civilian employees of the U.S. military stationed overseas with various exemptions from host nation law, but seldom grant similar privileges to retired military members for access to exchanges, commissaries, banks, post offices and other U.S. military facilities overseas. Every country, including the U.S., carefully guards its right to control the flow of persons, goods, currency, and mail into its territory, and to levy and collect taxes and customs duties. Fortunately, since the end of World War II, the U.S. successfully negotiated and concluded more than 96 permanent SOFAs with allied and friendly countries. These agreements grant members of the U.S. military forces and their dependents stationed in a particular host country certain privileges. Some examples are transportation of their household goods and privately-owned motor vehicles without the payment of customs duties, the right to purchase goods through U.S. exchanges and commissaries without the payment of local taxes and the right to use U.S. military postal facilities and banks.

These concessions are not for personal reasons, but because the military members, civilian employees, and their dependents are stationed temporarily in the foreign country for mutual defense. Host nations agree that these persons should not be subject to the additional burden of local customs, duties, and taxes and the U.S. should not be subject to increased defense costs through higher overseas cost-of-living allowances (COLAs). Moreover, in many places, customs, duties, and taxes run extremely high. This could make it economically impracticable, even if the U.S. government absorbed part of the cost through COLAs or otherwise, to import household goods or vehicles or to purchase U.S.-made goods locally from exchanges or commissaries.

SOFAs may grant partial relief from host nation laws. Consequently, host countries are sensitive to granting SOFA privileges because they provide exemptions not enjoyed by citizens of the host country to members of the U.S. forces and their dependents from local laws. In addition to tax and customs provisions, which include permitting U.S. control of the distribution of tax-free goods sold in U.S. exchanges and commissaries, SOFAs also contain other provisions of seminal

importance, such as those concerning entry and exit formalities, criminal jurisdiction, and claims. In a larger context, SOFAs frequently form part of an agreement on military base rights or access providing for U.S. military presence in the host country.

Retirees living or traveling overseas are fully subject to host nation law unless they are also an employee of the U.S. military and have SOFA status in the host nation due to that employment. Most SOFAs do not address retirees, and most host nations view retirees as present in their country for personal reasons, having only an incidental and remote connection with the visiting force. Accordingly, Department of Defense and Service directives recognize that host nations may limit retirees' privileges and these directives align eligibility to patronize overseas exchanges, commissaries, banks, and post offices within the provisions of applicable SOFAs. As SOFAs and implementing arrangements differ from host nation to host nation, the extent of these privileges may change depending on which country the retiree is located in.

The Air Force deeply appreciates the devoted service of its retired members and will continue to work on their behalf. On the other hand, we must conduct our operations overseas in full compliance with our international agreements with our friends and allies who permit us to operate in their countries.

16.5. Veteran Affairs (VA) Determination of Active-Duty Service of Civilians.

Under the provisions of Section 106, Title 38, USC, civilians who served in the Armed Forces of the United States during a period of armed conflict may apply to have this period of employment considered as "active duty" for the purposes of all laws administered by the VA. The Air Force is responsible for expressing Department of Defense (DoD) views on this matter.

The law establishes the DoD Civilian/Military Service Review Board (C/MSRB) which reviews a group application and makes a recommendation on the active-duty service determination to the Secretary of the Air Force, including its rationale. The Board reviews group applications only, not individual applications. The Board judges groups on the extent to which they were under the control of U.S. Armed Forces while rendering support. DoD Directive 1000.20, Determinations of Active Military Service and Discharge: Civilian or Contractual Personnel, describes criteria the C/MSRB uses to assess the extent of this military control.

Potential applicants should realize that since these applications are essentially claims against the government, the burden of proof rests with them. In addition, it is not possible to accept a group application for review unless the group seeking recognition has a clearly defined membership. This statute does not cover persons formerly in singularly unique employment circumstances (i.e., not part of a definable group).

After approval of a group application, members of the group may submit a DD Form 2168, Application for Discharge of Member or Survivor of Member of Group Certified to Have Performed Active Duty with the Armed Forces of the United States, to the appropriate Service, with evidence verifying their membership in the group, and thereby receive discharge documents. Federal Register notices and Public Affairs releases follow group approvals and outline these application instructions. After the Service verifies an individual's membership in a

group, the Service will issue a discharge certificate which the individual, in turn, may present to their local DVA office for determination of benefits.

Individuals or representatives of interested organizations may write to SAF/MRBB, 1500 West Perimeter Road, Suite 3700, Joint Base Andrews NAF Washington, MD 20762-7002 for a copy of DoD Directive 1000.20, which provides instructions for submitting a group application, or to request the status of group applications previously submitted.

16.6. Military Honors for Interment.

The rendering of Military Funeral Honors for an eligible veteran, free of charge, is mandated by law. An honor guard detail for the burial of an eligible veteran shall consist of not less than two members of the Armed Forces and, at a minimum, performs at the funeral a ceremony that includes the folding of the United States flag, presentation of the flag to the veteran's Family, and the playing of Taps. Additionally, the provisions of Military Funeral Honors consist of one member of the detail that shall be a representative of the parent Service of the deceased veteran.

Family members should request honors through their funeral director at the funeral home or crematory who is providing services to care for the veteran. In order for the funeral home or crematory to schedule Military Funeral Honors, the family will be required to provide the veterans final DD Form 214, Certificate of Discharge from Military Service, to establish eligibility. The funeral director can receive assistance in the scheduling of honors in two ways:

(1) Log onto the [Military One Source website](#), type in the state funeral honors will be rendered in the search block, and a list of counties will be displayed with corresponding numbers to be called to arrange honors directly with the base with responsibility for that geographic area.

(2) Call Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations at (800) 531-5803, Option 2. They will provide the number of the nearest Base Honor Guard that has the responsibility to support the Military Funeral Honors requested in the geographic area of the interment.

16.6.1. Honors at Arlington National Cemetery. Requests for burial at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) should be addressed to the Arlington National Cemetery Customer service call center at (877) 907-8585. Call center representatives are available to answer calls from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. EST Monday through Friday and from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. EST on Saturday. The caller will be asked to provide the veteran's eligibility service document (DD214 or equivalent), the death certificate and cremation certificate (if applicable). Additional information will be required as appropriate. It is essential that the caller inform ANC of any previous interments or special requests at the time of the initial contact to ensure timely processing of the burial request. Arlington National Cemetery requires 100% of the cremated remains received by the family from the crematorium. Additional information can be found at <https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil>.

Arlington National Cemetery is prohibited from making pre-need (prior to death) eligibility determinations or gravesite reservations. The process of determining eligibility begins at the time of need (after death) when the necessary documents required to confirm eligibility are available.

16.6.2. Eligibility for Interment. The cemetery is available for service members who have served in the active-duty military and were honorably discharged. The veteran's surviving spouse, minor children, and (at the discretion of the Secretary of the Army), unmarried adult dependent children, are also eligible to be interred with the service member in the same grave or niche.

Those eligible for in-ground burial include:

- Any active-duty member of the Armed Forces, except those serving on active duty for training purposes only;
- Any retired member of the Armed Forces, who has served on active duty (other than for training), is carried on an official retired list, and is entitled to receive retired pay stemming from service in the Armed Forces on or before the date of death;
- Any former member of the Armed Forces awarded one of the following decorations:
 - Medal of Honor
 - Distinguished Service Cross (Air Force Cross or Navy Cross)
 - Distinguished Service Medal
 - Silver Star
 - Purple Heart
- Any former prisoner of war who, while a prisoner of war, served honorably in the active military, naval, or air service; whose last period of service terminated honorably; and who dies on or after November 30, 1993.

16.6.3. The Columbarium/Niche Wall. Eligibility for inurnment in the Niche Wall or Columbarium includes all persons eligible for inground burial and former members of the Armed Forces whose last service finished honorably (other than for training) and members of the Reserves, Army National Guard, or Air National Guard who die while on active duty for training or full-time service. Additionally, a person whose service has been determined to be active duty pursuant to Section 401 of the GI Bill Improvement Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-202; 38 USC 106) as of May 20, 2016, is deemed eligible.

The cemetery staff at Arlington National Cemetery will coordinate the military honors for services scheduled in Arlington.

16.6.4. Memorial Markers. Title 38, United States Code, Section 2409 authorizes areas in ANC to commemorate veterans who are missing in action, whose remains are not recovered, identified, or were buried at sea, donated to science or whose cremated ashes were scattered without any portion of the remains interred. Spouses of those veterans commemorated on a memorial marker at ANC may be interred in an active interment section and the memorial marker removed with the veteran commemorated at the spouse's gravesite. Spouses cannot be commemorated on "in memory of" or memorial markers and memorial commemorations are not authorized on niches in the Columbarium or Niche Walls at ANC.

16.6.5. Burial in National and Veteran Affairs Cemeteries. Burial benefits in a VA national cemetery include the gravesite, a headstone or marker, opening and closing of the grave and perpetual care. Many national cemeteries have columbarium or gravesites for cremated remains.

Veterans, service members and dependents are eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery. An

eligible veteran must have been discharged or separated from active duty (characterization of discharge cannot be 'Dishonorable') and have completed the required period of service. Persons entitled to retired pay because of 20 years' creditable service with a reserve component are eligible. A United States citizen who served in the armed forces of a government allied with the United States in a war may also be eligible. A 1997 law bars the VA from allowing the burial or memorialization of any veteran convicted of a federal or state capital crime in one of the VA national cemeteries or in Arlington National Cemetery.

Burial in a national cemetery is also available to spouses and minor children of eligible veterans and service members. If a surviving spouse of an eligible veteran marries a non-veteran, and death or divorce of the nonveteran terminated remarriage, the spouse is eligible for burial in a national cemetery.

Gravesites may not be reserved in national cemeteries. Funeral directors or others making burial arrangements must apply at the time of death. The VA honors reservations made under previous programs. Cemeteries do not provide military honors but may make referrals to military units or volunteer groups. The National Cemetery System normally does not conduct burials on weekends. The VA will direct a weekend caller to one of three VA cemetery offices that remain open during weekends to schedule burials at the cemetery of the caller's choice during the following week.

16.6.6. Funeral Flyovers. Funeral flyovers are authorized if the deceased is an active duty or currently serving reserve or Air National Guard (ANG) aviation-rated officers or Career Enlisted Aviators (CEA). Additionally, active duty or currently serving reserve or ANG non-rated officers, non-CEAs and operations support flyers are eligible if death occurs in the line of duty while performing aviation duties. Furthermore, concerning retired personnel: three and four-star generals; Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force; recipients of the Medal of Honor or Air Force Cross; Prisoners of War; and aviators who have achieved at least one or more officially recognized aerial victories are authorized funeral flyovers without an exception to policy. The Assistant Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force considers requests for exceptions to policy on a case-by-case basis based on appropriate use of limited resources, and typically approves only those for service marked by valor or heroism, and those that have significantly impacted the aviation community or aviation history. The deceased is entitled to only one flyover.

The request for the funeral flyover must be initiated by the next-of-kin (spouse if married; otherwise, parents, children, siblings, or proxy) and should normally be sent to the servicing base Mortuary Affairs office or Honor Guard office. Additionally, Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations, (800) 531-5803, Option 2 or afmao.hg.honorguard@us.af.mil, can process the flyover request. Staff will require proof of military service (DD Form 214 or similar discharge documentation recording the individual's honorable discharge, rank, and decorations); a letter from next-of-kin requesting the flyover; and biographical information of the individual's service (including commands and significant acts or service to the Department of the Air Force and the country) to provide proper protocol.

The United States Space Force does not provide "burial at space".

Chapter 17

AIR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC EVENTS

17.1. Policy.

While Air Force Public Affairs (SAF/PA) is pleased to process any request for the participation of military assets and people in public parades, celebrations, fairs, national-level sporting events and a host of other local activities, Air Force participation in public events must meet eligibility requirements as outlined on the related Defense Department forms and online at the appropriate request portals.

It is impossible to support every request because there are only a finite number of Air Force bands, and only so many pre-programed flying training hours with which to schedule flyovers and static displays. For this reason, even if an event meets the DoD approval criteria and Air Force Public Affairs approves the event, insufficient operational resources may prevent support of the event. The Air Force cannot task flying units to support events. All aircraft support is voluntary and determined by local commanders. Memorial Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day are three patriotic holidays for which demand commonly exceeds supply.

17.2. Requesting Aviation Support.

17.2.1. U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds. The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds are the official Air Force aerial demonstration team. To request the Thunderbirds, air show organizers must submit their request to SAF/PA by July 1, two calendar years before the show is scheduled to occur. All requests for the Thunderbirds must be submitted using the electronic Defense Department Form 2535, *Request for Military Aerial Support*, on the [U.S. Air Force Aerial Events website](#). A two-year schedule, including any changes in the following year's schedule, is released in December. The Thunderbirds do not routinely perform single-pass flyovers at events.

Further information on the scheduling of these units may be obtained by contacting the SAF/PA Outreach Division at (703) 695-9664 or by visiting the [U.S. Air Force Aerial Events website](#).

17.2.2. Air Shows, Flyovers and Static Displays. To initiate a request for an Air Force flyover, air show static display and/or tactical aircraft or parachute demonstration, the requester or sponsoring organization must complete and sign the electronic Defense Department Form 2535, *Request for Military Aerial Support*, on the [U.S. Air Force Aerial Events website](#); the "owner" of the event site must certify the form; and the local Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) must approve the event before the request is submitted to the SAF/PA via e-mail: arialevents@us.af.mil.

Contractors are not permitted to request aerial event support on behalf of the sponsoring organization. An organization or sports team employee must make the request.

Request procedures and additional information may be found at the U.S. Air Force Aerial Events website www.airshows.pa.hq.af.mil or by contacting the Aerial Events program manager at (703) 695-9664 or arialevents@us.af.mil.

FAA coordination is **not** required for aerial events in Canada or for requests solely for static displays. The local FAA FSDO's contact information may be found in a local phone directory under "government" or via the [Federal Aviation Administration's FSDO locator website](#).

Requests should be submitted at least 45 days in advance of an event to allow requesters adequate time to seek and secure operational support if the request is approved. SAF/PA will not consider requests received within 14 days of the event nor will it consider incomplete forms.

SAF/PA cannot schedule or task specific aircraft or units for events; SAF/PA determines if the event itself is eligible for potential operational support. It is the event requester's responsibility to coordinate the possible participation of Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard flying units once SAF/PA grants eligibility approval. A definitive resource for flying unit locations, aircraft type by unit and installation phone numbers is available at the [U.S. Air Force Aerial Events website](#).

After eligibility approval, SAF/PA posts the event and sponsor information to the [U.S. Air Force Aerial Events website](#). This site serves as the official source for approved events for aircrews, scheduling coordinators and public affairs offices for all active-duty Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard flying units. Requesters are solely responsible for notifying the Air Force Aerial Events Office if the event's date changes, or the event is cancelled so that the information provided to system users can be updated.

Once a requester has secured unit support for his or her event, it is his or her responsibility to ensure the Air Force Aerial Events Office is aware of the volunteer flying unit. Requesters must recognize that "real-world" contingency and/or training requirements, and budgetary constraints take precedence over public affairs events and any aircraft assets "promised" may very well be required to perform assigned taskings or cancel support, therefore, may be subject to nonavailability at the last moment.

Air Force Public Affairs can only consider events for potential Air Force support. To request Navy support, please call (901) 874-5803. For Army requests, call (703) 614-9039. For Marines requests, call (703) 692-7434.

SAF/PA approves only those requests for potential Air Force operational support that adhere to Department of Defense and Department of the Air Force policy. The Air Force can only approve aviation support requests for dedicated observational events that are open and advertised to the public and held within seven calendar days of the five patriotic holidays (Veterans Day, POW/MIA Day, Armed Forces Day, Independence Day, and Memorial Day) or for aviation-related events, such as air shows, or fly-ins. This does not mean, for example, that you can request a flyover for a non-ceremonial event on July 2 by justifying the request based on the fact it falls within seven days of one of the DoD-approved patriotic holidays. The event itself must be one in which an Air Force flyover contributes immeasurable meaning.

Any aviation support request that does not meet DoD approval criteria may meet the criteria for an exception-to-policy as a one-time-only event, provided sufficient rationale exists. The

Secretary of the Air Force must approve such requests, through appropriate delegated chain-of-command channels, including Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs or through the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs. Examples of exceptional events include the Super Bowl and World Series, major NASCAR racing events, other professional sporting events, STEM events, as well as significant recruiting events. The following events, however, will not be considered for aviation support (please note this list is not all-inclusive):

- Events after the end of evening civil twilight and before the beginning of morning civil twilight;
- Events closed to the public or by invitation-only (company picnics, company family days, individual fundraising events, etc.);
- Fundraising or charity events;
- Political events (support to candidates, rallies, etc.);
- Movie premieres;
- Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) events;
- High school, middle school, or elementary school events (exception: Wings of Blue demonstrations and rotary static displays at primary and secondary schools and high school state football championship games will be determined on a case-by-case basis);
- Religious events;
- Little League games (exception: World Series in Williamsport, PA, may be supported);
- Endorsements of specific organizations/industries (i.e., agricultural expo);
- Grand openings/dedications (without direct military tie);
- Amusement park and casino events;
- Single-industry events (i.e., civic only);
- Graduations (not military-related);
- Individual Boy Scout/Girl Scout events (exception: national Jamboree may be supported);
- Fairs, festivals, and parades not directly tied to local community relations or not local, or state sponsored;
- Concerts not in direct support of a military appreciation event.

17.3. Requesting Band Support.

17.3.1. Bands and Marching Units. Bands and marching units may be requested through DoD or directly from the military services. Those requesting the support of an Air Force Band must submit requests using the electronic DD Form 2536, *Request for Armed Forces Participation in Public Events (Non-Aviation)*, on the [Air Force Outreach Request System website](#); request procedures and additional information may be found at this website. The Outreach Request System - used to request Air Force bands only - requires specific information about the event to allow for proper evaluation and processing of the request. The requester should be prepared to defray costs as indicated for performances beyond the unit's area of responsibility.

It is important to plan ahead and submit band-related requests at least 90 or 120 days in advance of the event, or sooner if possible. However, submitting a request early does not guarantee support. Bands cannot operate on a "first-come, first-served" basis because they must prioritize official military events, many of which are not finalized until shortly before they occur. A word

of caution: some short-notice military requirements may take precedence over civilian commitments, resulting in last-minute non-availability.

Air Force musical units may perform musical programs as prescribed by Department of Defense guidelines. Parade support is normally authorized as per DoDI 5410.19, v4 3.1.(1): “One local band or local composite marching band element per Military Service, including the National Guard, is authorized to participate in a parade that is of general interest or benefit to a local, State, regional, national, or broadly representative community,” this is intended to assure widest possible participation in public events of local interest, particularly around national holidays. In addition, by public law, any performance must not place military musicians in competition with professional civilian musicians. For instance, bands can perform background, dinner, dance or other social music for official United States Government functions but cannot provide the same for most civilian-sponsored events. The specific programs that bands may provide for civilian audiences are concerts, parades or short opening or closing patriotic presentations. In the latter case, musical selections normally consist of the National Anthem or military/patriotic songs and music to accompany the presentation of colors by a color guard.

Musical units may provide patriotic presentations at official nonpartisan government and civic functions. Official government functions include those in which senior officials of the federal government are involved in the performances of their official duties. Official civic functions include such state, county or municipal events as inaugurations, dedications of public buildings and projects, the convening of legislative bodies and ceremonies for officially invited government visitors. Additionally, musical units may provide patriotic presentations at national conventions of designated national military and veteran associations.

Air Force units may not participate when:

- The event directly or indirectly endorses or selectively benefits or favors (or appears to do so) any private individual, commercial venture, sect, fraternal organization or political group, or if it is associated with the solicitation of votes in a political election;
- Admission, seating and other accommodations or facilities are restricted in any manner with regard to race, color, creed, national origin or sex;
- The sponsoring organization or group excludes any person from its membership or practices any form of discrimination in its functions based on race, color, creed, national origin or sex;
- An admission charge is levied on the public primarily to see participation by an Air Force unit; or
- There is fundraising connected with the event.

All participation in international and national events for Air Force units based in Washington, D.C., should be addressed to the:

11th Operations Group/CCS
20 MacDill Boulevard, Suite 100
Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling
Washington, D.C., 20032-0201

<https://www.music.af.mil/Bands/The-United-States-Air-Force-Band/sponsor-info/>

Participation by Air Force units assigned outside the Washington, D.C. area is within the authority of local military commanders, and requesters should submit their requests for support using the electronic DD Form 2536, Request for Armed Forces Participation in Public Events (Non-Aviation,) <https://www.music.af.mil/Book-a-Band/>.

17.3.2. Air Force Bands. A current list of Air Force Bands may be found at www.music.af.mil/Bands.

Chapter 18

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

18.1. Air Force Worldwide Locator.

The [Air Force Worldwide Locator](#) may assist individuals locate service members who are currently receiving compensation from the Department of the Air Force (active duty, guard, reserve, and retired personnel). Customer service professionals are available at (210) 565-2660 Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST.

If the sought-after individual has separated from the Air Force, no information is available. Public law prohibits the Locator from releasing address information. However, the Locator can forward a letter to the individual upon request. If this service is desired, then place the letter to be forwarded in a sealed envelope with a return address, affix postage and the individual's name in the addressee portion of the envelope. Place the envelope to be forwarded in a larger envelope, along with the request to forward the letter. To establish a positive identification, the Locator requires information such as the member's rank, full name, including middle initial, service number or social security number, date of birth, unit of assignment, base, and month and year of assignment after June 1970 (no assignment information is available prior to 1970).

The Department of Defense has established a research fee of \$3.50 per name. Active duty military, Reserve, and Guard members, with proper identification, are exempt from the fee. The Locator also provides a Statement or Verification of Service used to substantiate an individual's service in the Air Force. The fee for this service is \$5.20 per name. Make the check or money order payable to "DAO-DE RAFB" and mail it to the Locator with the request.

18.2. Transportation Matters.

18.2.1. Space-Available Travel. Section 2648, Title 10, USC, is the legal basis for the Space-Available (Space-A) program, and Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 4515.13 (Air Transportation Eligibility) outlines DoD policy. According to this regulation, Space-A travel is a privilege (not an entitlement) which accrues to uniformed services members as an avenue of respite from the rigors of their duty. Retired uniformed services members are given the privilege in recognition of a career of such rigorous duty and because they are eligible for recall to active duty. The underlying criteria for extending the privilege to other categories of passengers is their support to the mission being performed by uniformed services members and to the enhancement of active-duty service members' quality of life.

While the Air Force greatly values the contribution of every veteran, and their families, especially those who have sacrificed in the service of their country, we do not support granting the Space-A privilege to new categories of travelers. Several repeated questions arise concerning Space-A privileges: (1) DoD policy does not permit unrestricted, unaccompanied dependent travel; (2) Space-A travel is a privilege, and DoD has not authorized retired reserve members or their dependents to travel overseas until the retired member reaches age 60; (3) aircraft and associated support equipment are designed primarily for specific mission requirements. As such, accommodations are extremely limited for disabled travelers; (4) for all categories, mission

requirements can divert the aircraft to unexpected destinations, which could place the travelers in austere areas, with limited or no assistance.

Numerous individuals and organizations frequently seek to use Space-A travel and ask for an expansion of the groups eligible to participate in the Space-A travel program, including veterans not retired from the service, and others. All such requests have merit and are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Expanding the pool of eligible members would diminish the travel opportunity for active-duty members -- the primary beneficiaries of the program.

The office of primary responsibility for the DoD Space-A program is the Office of the Assistant Under Secretary of Defense, Transportation Policy (OASD/TP), and in coordination with the military components provide oversight for the policy. In today's fiscally challenged environment, the entire space-available program, including both seats on aircraft and air terminal functions necessary to support travel, is resource constrained. These constraints prevent considerations for extending space-available travel privileges to disabled veterans (with a disability rating of less than 100%), or to others, since it could overtax present resources and diminish the limited benefit currently available to active-duty personnel and their families. It would also impact our ability to effectively accomplish airlift mission support activities with the heavy operational demands placed on our air mobility forces.

18.2.2. Humanitarian Airlift. Subject to certain conditions, 10 USC § 402 and 10 USC § 2561 authorize the SECDEF to transport humanitarian relief supplies to foreign countries. The SECDEF may authorize the transportation without charge, or as stated in both statutes, the SECDEF is permitted to require that the DoD be reimbursed for costs incurred by the transport of supplies. The DoD currently administers two programs that arrange transportation for privately donated cargo to foreign countries.

The Denton Program applies only to humanitarian cargo donated to international relief efforts. This specifies that DoD assets may carry validated humanitarian cargo internationally on a space available (opportune) basis. The Air Force will only transport the cargo if the destination will coincide with germane Air Force mission objectives. Transportation of the cargo may take several months, depending on the destination and space availability on U.S. military transports. There is a requirement to have a minimum of 2,000 pounds of cargo and the Air Force must transport the cargo on a non-interference basis. The Department of State (DoS), DoD and the Agency for International Development (AID) jointly administer the Denton Program. The Denton program point of contact may be reached at (703) 697-9628 (Monday – Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST).

The DoD Funded Transportation Program is a commodities transportation program. The DoS and the DoD jointly administer the DoD Funded Transportation program. The Funded Transportation Program offers transportation specifically scheduled and funded by DoD to destinations approved by the DoS. The program received its funding from the DoD appropriation for Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster and Civic Aid. The transportation provided is primarily by truck and ship in whole container loads (1,200 cubic foot minimum). The point of contact for requests under this program is the DoS Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. You may reach that office at (202) 647-8757 or by fax at (202) 647-4055.

Online applications and additional guidance regarding both the Denton and Funded Transportation Programs can be found by visiting hatransportation.ohasis.org.

18.2.3. Aeromedical Transportation. The Secretary of Defense has designated the United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) to coordinate movement of United States Uniformed Services members to receive appropriate medical care. Assets used for this purpose include specialized, fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft, land transportation, and sea-going vessels, as is appropriate and cost effective. The Global Patient Movement Requirements Center (GPMRC) at Scott AFB, Illinois, is responsible for coordinating all continental United States (CONUS) patient movement. Theater Patient Movement Requirements Centers (TPMRCs) in Europe and the Pacific coordinate overseas patient movement.

The Economy Act (Section 686, Title 31, USC) provides that any non-DoD United States Government agency may purchase services, including aeromedical transportation, from the Air Force if funds are available and the service provided is in the best interest of the government. The Air Force may also provide aeromedical transportation services for United States civilians in certain circumstances. Since the system can provide only a limited amount of support, we reserve its use exclusively for the most critically ill and only when no alternative means of movement are available.

The DoD, in complying with Section 1535, Title 31, USC, prohibits competition with the commercial transportation industry. The Air Force may not provide aeromedical transportation to move terminally ill patients, to respond to requests based solely on a lack of funds, for personal or family convenience or for medical experimentation.

Aeromedical repatriation of United States citizens from overseas to the United States under other than lifesaving circumstances may also be provided when: (1) the DoS requests the transportation, certifying it to be in the national interest; (2) commercial transportation is neither available nor suitable for meeting the requirements; (3) the patient is medically validated by the theater surgeon for intra-theater moves and by GPMRC for movement into the CONUS; and (4) the DoS provides a billing address. The USTRANSCOM provides movement of non-DoD eligible patients on a reimbursable basis. Charges are determined based on the circumstances of the move and the type of aircraft used.

In every case of citizen repatriation from overseas, the State Department's Citizens Emergency Services function (202) 647-5225 is the primary point of contact. The Air Force may provide aeromedical support only after the State Department has completed its actions and requested aeromedical support from the Air Force.

USTRANSCOM participates in patient movement support for catastrophes and local disasters within the United States not qualifying for national disaster relief. These are catastrophes or disasters causing numerous casualties, which require specialized medical care, or which saturate medical facilities in the immediate vicinity and require emergency movement to save lives. The Federal Emergency Management Agency shall initiate requests for movement during disasters in CONUS.

18.2.4. Air Transportation of Non-DoD Materiel. Authorizes use of DoD transportation resources to move non-DoD traffic only “when the DoD mission is not impaired and movement of such traffic is of an emergency, lifesaving nature, specifically authorized by: (a) A statute, an acquisition and cross-servicing agreement, or a cooperative airlift agreement; (b) An international agreement, in direct support of the DoD mission; or (c) An agreement with the head of another Federal agency pursuant to Sections 1535 and 1536 of Title 31, U.S.C.”

If a constituent’s request for transportation does not fall under any of these criteria, there are a number of options that can be pursued: (1) contact USAID Denton Amendment Program Office (see Humanitarian Airlift paragraph above), (2) contact commercial airlines or surface carriers to determine if they can provide non-reimbursable transport, or (3) contact a service organization such as the [United Services Organization](#) or [Operation America Cares](#) for movement of “care packages” to military men/women serving abroad. They may also wish to contact another federal agency for sponsorship or transportation funding assistance. DoD cannot provide free transportation for non-DoD entities with the limited exception of Humanitarian lift IAW 10 USC 402 (Denton cargo).

18.3. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) Related Inquiries.

For 22 years (from 1947 to 1969), the Air Force investigated UAPs (previously known as Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs)) under Project Blue Book, at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. Of the 12,618 sightings reported to Project Blue Book, 701 remained “unidentified.” The Project concluded that: no UFO reported, investigated, and evaluated by the Air Force was ever an indication of threat to our national security; that there was no evidence submitted to or discovered by the Air Force that sightings categorized as “unidentified” represented technological developments or principles beyond the range of modern scientific knowledge; and that there was no evidence indicating that sightings categorized as “unidentified” were extraterrestrial vehicles.

The Air Force transferred its documentation regarding the project to the U.S. National Archives & Records Administration where it is available for public review and analysis. The public should address inquiries in one of the following ways:

- a. E-mailing: inquire@nara.gov
- b. Visiting: www.archives.gov
- c. Writing: U.S. National Archives & Records Administration - Textual Archives Services Division, Modern Military Records Branch, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD, 20740-6001.
- d. Calling: (301) 837-3510

Since the publication of the report entitled *Roswell Report: Case Closed*, the Department of the Air Force no longer responds to inquiries regarding the Roswell incident. The report fully explains the DAF position on the incident. We cannot provide a copy of the report to constituents because of the prohibitive cost. Constituents who want a copy of the report may contact the Government Publishing Office (GPO) at (202) 512-1957, fax (202) 512-1998, or write to the

GPO Public Relations Office, 732 North Capitol Street, NW, Mail Stop PR, Rm C802, Washington, DC 20401. The report is 231 pages.

There are a number of universities and professional scientific organizations that have considered UAP/UFO phenomena during periodic meetings and seminars. “Gale’s Encyclopedia of Associations” lists private organizations interested in aerial phenomena. Interest in and timely review of UAP/UFO reporting by private groups ensures the scientific community does not overlook sound evidence. We recommend those wishing to report UAP/UFO sightings contact their local law enforcement agencies.

On July 15, 2022, Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks, in coordination with the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), amended her original direction to the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence & Security by renaming and expanding the scope of the Airborne Object Identification and Management Group (AOIMSG) to the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO), due to the enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2022, which included a provision to establish an office, in coordination with DNI, with responsibilities that were broader than those originally assigned to the AOIMSG.

The mission of the AARO will be to synchronize efforts across the Department of Defense, and with other U.S. federal departments and agencies, to detect, identify and attribute objects of interest in, on, or near military installations, operating areas, training areas, special use airspace and other areas of interest, and, as necessary, to mitigate any associated threats to safety of operations and national security. This includes anomalous, unidentified space, airborne, submerged and transmedium objects.

The AARO Executive Council (AAROEXEC), led by the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence & Security (USD(I&S)), will provide oversight and direction to the AARO along these primary lines of effort:

1. Surveillance, Collection and Reporting
2. System Capabilities and Design
3. Intelligence Operations and Analysis
4. Mitigation and Defeat
5. Governance
6. Science and Technology

18.4. Surplus Aircraft, Missiles, And Spacecraft for Museum and Static Display Usage.

In accordance with Section 2572, Title 10, United States Code (10 USC § 2572), the Department of the Air Force may make available for loan to eligible and certified civilian entities condemned or obsolete combat materiel. Within the DAF, such materiel is loaned through programs administered by the National Museum of the United States Air Force (NMUSAF), located at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. These programs have three goals: To bring DAF air and space history and heritage to a wider, civilian audience; to foster a deeper appreciation and interest in aerospace history, education, and technology; and to memorialize the accomplishments of American Airmen and Guardians.

The NMUSAF has been delegated the sole authority and responsibility by the SecAF to administer loans to civilian entities in accordance with the provisions of 10 USC § 2572, Department of Defense (DoD) Manual 4160.21M (Defense Material Disposition Manual), and DAF Instruction 84-103 (Department of the Air Force Heritage Program) contain supplemental policies, guidance, and procedures. The NMUSAF staff evaluate, certify, and inspect recipients to ensure that items are properly placed and cared for while on loan.

In their decision-making process, civilian entities must be aware of certain issues and consider the ongoing financial and legal responsibilities they will incur before submitting a request for loan of an aircraft.

18.4.1. Availability and Condition. Aircraft, missiles, and spacecraft are only made available via the loan program when all DAF, DoD, and Federal Civilian Agency requirements have been satisfied. This means even if a civilian entity meets the approval criteria and NMUSAF provides them certification to become a borrower, insufficient resources may prevent support of a civilian entity's request.

Surplus aircraft, missiles, and spacecraft are items that have met all USAF active fleet requirements and, due to their potential historical significance, have been assigned to the NMUSAF inventory for preservation and display. They have not been maintained to flight standards and the NMUSAF allows their use only for non-functional static display. Combat configured items require demilitarization prior to loan in accordance with law and regulation. Demilitarization actions may affect an item in such a way that restoration is needed to achieve an appropriate and accurate historical configuration for display.

18.4.2. Eligibility. The following civilian entities are eligible to apply for loans in accordance with 10 USC § 2572:

- a. A municipal corporation, county, or other political subdivision of a State.
- b. A servicemen's monument association.
- c. A museum, historical society, or historical institution of a State or a foreign nation or a nonprofit military aviation heritage foundation or association incorporated in a State.
- d. An incorporated museum or memorial that is operated and maintained for educational purposes only and the charter of which denies it the right to operate for profit.
- e. A post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or of the American Legion or a unit of any other recognized war veterans' association.
- f. A local or national unit of any war veterans' association of a foreign nation which is recognized by the national government of that nation (or by the government of one of the principal political subdivisions of that nation).
- g. A post of the Sons of Veterans Reserve.

18.4.3. Requirements, Application, and Certification. All prospective borrowers must meet certification requirements as set forth in NMUSAF loan program instructions. Surplus aircraft are a significant responsibility, and civilian borrowers should plan and budget for all aspects for the entire length of the loan.

Requesting civilian entities must submit a written application package for evaluation and certification. The NMUSAF staff review the entity to ensure they have a demonstrated record of performance, institutional viability, and the assets or resources sufficient to provide the required care and security of aircraft that may be placed on loan.

In accordance with legislative as well as implementing Federal, DoD, and DAF guidance, the US Government and its components may not incur costs in connection with the loan. Certified civilian borrowers are responsible for all costs, charges, and expenses incident to the loan. This includes the cost of preparation, demilitarization, hazardous material removal, disassembly, packing, crating, handling, maintenance, repair, restoration, transportation, and all other costs incidental to the movement to and re-assembly at the entity's location; preservation and display while at the location; and disposition at the conclusion of the loan. Additionally, borrowers should consider the amount, location, and suitability of land needed for the static display and must maintain sufficient liability and casualty insurance while the aircraft is on loan.

18.4.4. Loan Conditions. If approved to receive a surplus DAF aircraft, missile, or spacecraft, civilian borrowers must adhere to DoD and DAF expectations for the loan. Specific responsibilities are implemented through a signed loan agreement with the NMUSAF.

Civilian borrowers will preserve and display assets in a prudent, dignified, and respectful manner. Borrowers are informed that items are loaned for static display purposes only; as such they will not be restored to flying condition or utilized for flying purposes under any circumstance; nor will they be licensed with the Federal Aviation Administration or other agency. Surplus items will not be treated as toys or substitutes for playground equipment. Borrowers must perform annual upkeep, periodic painting, repair of damage, and day-to-day care. Borrowers are liable for the items while in their possession and must maintain sufficient liability and casualty insurance.

The NMUSAF assesses compliance with the agreement terms on a continuous basis throughout the loan period and retains the option to renew the agreement, provided conditions are met and there are no higher priority requirements. Failure to observe the loan agreement conditions may result in the asset's repossession by the NMUSAF, at the entity's expense, and possible criminal prosecution.













































For more information about surplus aircraft for static display, please see <https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Collections/Loan-Program/>, or contact:

National Museum of the U.S. Air Force
1100 Spaatz Street
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH 45433-7102







Civilian Museum Certification Program
NMUSAF.MUC.Certification@us.af.mil























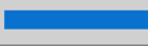
















Community Static Display Loan Program
NMUSAF.MUC.StaticDisplay@us.af.mil











































Figure 18.1. U.S. Military Rank Insignia.





ENLISTED INSIGNIA						
Enlisted Paygrade	 Army	 Marine Corps	 Navy	 Air Force	 Space Force	 Coast Guard
E-1	Private	Private	Seaman Recruit (SR)	Airman Basic	Specialist 1 (Spc1)	Seaman Recruit (SR)
E-2	Private (PV2) 	Private First Class (PFC) 	Seaman Apprentice (SA) 	Airman (Amn) 	Specialist 2 (Spc2) 	Seaman Apprentice (SA) 
E-3	Private First Class (PFC) 	Lance Corporal (LCpl) 	Seaman (SN) 	Airman First Class (A1C) 	Specialist 3 (Spc3) 	Seaman (SN) 
E-4	Corporal (CPL) 	Corporal (Cpl) 	Petty Officer Third Class ** (PO3) 	Senior Airman (SrA) 	Specialist 4 (Spc4) 	Petty Officer Third Class ** (PO3) 
	Specialist (SPC) 					
E-5	Sergeant (SGT) 	Sergeant (Sgt) 	Petty Officer Second Class ** (PO2) 	Staff Sergeant (SSgt) 	Sergeant (Sgt) 	Petty Officer Second Class ** (PO2) 
E-6	Staff Sergeant (SSG) 	Staff Sergeant (SSgt) 	Petty Officer First Class ** (PO1) 	Technical Sergeant (TSgt) 	Technical Sergeant (TSgt) 	Petty Officer First Class ** (PO1) 
E-7	Sergeant First Class (SFC) 	Gunnery Sergeant (GySgt) 	Chief Petty Officer ** (CPO) 	Master Sergeant (MSgt) 	Master Sergeant (MSgt) 	Chief Petty Officer ** (CPO) 
				First Sergeant 		

E-8	Master Sergeant (MSG) 	Master Sergeant (MSGt) 	Senior Chief Petty Officer ** (SCPO) 	Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt) 	Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt) 	Senior Chief Petty Officer ** (SCPO) 
	First Sergeant (1SG) 	First Sergeant 		First Sergeant 		
E-9	Sergeant Major (SGM) 	Master Gunnery Sergeant (MGySgt) 	Master Chief Petty Officer **** (MCPO) 	Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt) 	Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt) 	Master Chief Petty Officer **** (MCPO) 
	Command Sergeant Major (CSM) 	Sergeant Major (SgtMaj) 	Fleet/Command Master Chief Petty Officer **** 	First Sergeant 		Fleet/Command Master Chief Petty Officer **** 
E-9	Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA) 	Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps (SgtMajMC) 	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) 	Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force (CMSAF) 	Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force (CMSSF) 	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard (MCPOCG) 

OFFICER INSIGNIA						
Officer Paygrade						
	Army	Marine Corps	Navy	Air Force	Space Force	Coast Guard

W-1	<div>Warrant Officer 1</div> <div>WO1</div> <div></div>	<div>Warrant Officer 1</div> <div>WO</div> <div></div>	<div>USN Warrant Officer 1</div> <div>WO1</div> <div> </div> <div>WARRANT OFFICER W-1</div>	N/A	N/A	
W-2	<div>Chief Warrant Officer 2</div> <div>CW2</div> <div></div>	<div>Chief Warrant Officer 2</div> <div>CWO2</div> <div></div>	<div>USN Chief Warrant Officer 2</div> <div>CWO2</div> <div> </div> <div>CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER W-2</div>	N/A	<div>Chief Warrant Officer 2</div> <div>CWO2</div> <div></div>	
W-3	<div>Chief Warrant Officer 3</div> <div>CW3</div> <div></div>	<div>Chief Warrant Officer 3</div> <div>CWO3</div> <div></div>	<div>USN Chief Warrant Officer 3</div> <div>CWO3</div> <div> </div> <div>CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER W-3</div>	N/A	<div>Chief Warrant Officer 3</div> <div>CWO3</div> <div></div>	
W-4	<div>Chief Warrant Officer 4</div> <div>CW4</div> <div></div>	<div>Chief Warrant Officer 4</div> <div>CWO4</div> <div></div>	<div>USN Chief Warrant Officer 4</div> <div>CWO4</div> <div> </div> <div>CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER W-4</div>	N/A	<div>Chief Warrant Officer 4</div> <div>CWO4</div> <div></div>	
W-5	<div>Chief Warrant Officer 5</div> <div>CW5</div> <div></div>	<div>Chief Warrant Officer 5</div> <div>CWO5</div> <div></div>	<div>USN Chief Warrant Officer 5</div> <div>CWO5</div> <div> </div> <div>CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER W-5</div>	N/A	N/A	
O-1	<div>Second Lieutenant</div> <div>2LT</div> <div></div>	<div>Second Lieutenant</div> <div>2ndLt</div> <div></div>	<div>Ensign</div> <div>ENS</div> <div> </div>	<div>Second Lieutenant</div> <div>2d Lt</div> <div></div>	<div>Second Lieutenant</div> <div>2d Lt</div> <div></div>	<div>Ensign</div> <div>ENS</div> <div> </div>
O-2	<div>First Lieutenant</div> <div>1LT</div> <div></div>	<div>First Lieutenant</div> <div>1stLt</div> <div></div>	<div>Lieutenant Junior Grade</div> <div>LTJG</div> <div> </div>	<div>First Lieutenant</div> <div>1st Lt</div> <div></div>	<div>First Lieutenant</div> <div>1st Lt</div> <div></div>	<div>Lieutenant Junior Grade</div> <div>LTJG</div> <div> </div>

O-3	<p>Captain CPT</p> 	<p>Captain Capt</p> 	<p>Lieutenant LT</p> 	<p>Captain Capt</p> 	<p>Captain Capt</p> 	<p>Lieutenant LT</p> 
O-4	<p>Major MAJ</p> 	<p>Major Maj</p> 	<p>Lieutenant Commander LCDR</p> 	<p>Major Maj</p> 	<p>Major Maj</p> 	<p>Lieutenant Commander LCDR</p> 
O-5	<p>Lieutenant Colonel LTC</p> 	<p>Lieutenant Colonel LtCol</p> 	<p>Commander CDR</p> 	<p>Lieutenant Colonel Lt Col</p> 	<p>Lieutenant Colonel Lt Col</p> 	<p>Commander CDR</p> 
O-6	<p>Colonel COL</p> 	<p>Colonel Col</p> 	<p>Captain CAPT</p> 	<p>Colonel Col</p> 	<p>Colonel Col</p> 	<p>Captain CAPT</p> 
O-7	<p>Brigadier General BG</p> 	<p>Brigadier General BGen</p> 	<p>Rear Admiral Lower Half RDML</p> 	<p>Brigadier General Brig Gen</p> 	<p>Brigadier General Brig Gen</p> 	<p>Rear Admiral Lower Half RDML</p> 
O-8	<p>Major General MG</p> 	<p>Major General MajGen</p> 	<p>Rear Admiral Upper Half RADM</p> 	<p>Major General Maj Gen</p> 	<p>Major General Maj Gen</p> 	<p>Rear Admiral Upper Half RADM</p> 
O-9	<p>Lieutenant General LTG</p> 	<p>Lieutenant General LtGen</p> 	<p>Vice Admiral VADM</p> 	<p>Lieutenant General Lt Gen</p> 	<p>Lieutenant General Lt Gen</p> 	<p>Vice Admiral VADM</p> 
O-10	<p>General GEN</p> 	<p>General Gen</p> 	<p>Admiral ADM</p> 	<p>General Gen</p> 	<p>General Gen</p> 	<p>Admiral ADM</p> 

General of the Army (Reserved for wartime only)	N/A	Fleet Admiral (Reserved for wartime only)	General of the Air Force (Reserved for wartime only)	N/A	Fleet Admiral (Reserved for wartime only)
					

GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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DODI 4515.13-R, *Air Transportation Eligibility*, 11 January 2024

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Public Law 105-261, *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999*, 17 October 1998

Public Law 105-85, *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998*, 18 November 1997

Public Law 113-291, *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015*, 19 December 2014

Public Law 95-202, *95th Congress*, 23 November 1977

Uniform Code of Military Justice

United States Codes Titles 5, 10, 38, 42 and 50

Adopted Forms

DD Form 149, *Application for Correction of Military Record*

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

DD Form 293, *Application for the Review of Discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States*
DD Form 2168, *Application for Discharge of Member or Survivor of Member of Group*
DD Form 2293, *Application for Former Spouse Payments From Retired Pay*
DD Form 2535, *Request for Military Aerial Support*
DD Form 2536, *Request for Armed Forces Participation in Public Events (Non-Aviation)*
DD Form 2656-1, *Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Election Statement For Former Spouse Coverage*
DD Form 2656-2, *Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)*
DD Form 2656-6, *Survivor Benefit Plan Election Change Certificate*
DD Form 2656-8, *Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) – Automatic Coverage Fact Sheet*
DD Form 2656-10, *Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)/Reserve Component (RC) SBP Request for Deemed Election*
DD Form 2656-10, *Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)/Reserve Component (RC)*
DAF Form 102, *Inspector General Complaint Form*
DAF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*
DAF Form 357, *Family Care Certification*
SF-180, *Request Pertaining to Military Records*
USM-94, *Request for Service Abroad for Judicial or Extrajudicial documents*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADC – Area Defense Counsel
ADSC – Active-Duty Service Commitment
AFROTC – Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps
FOIA – Freedom of Information Act
FSS – Force Support Squadron
HIPPA – Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
IG – Inspector General
JA – Judge Advocate
JAG – Judge Advocate General’s Corps
MEO – Military Equal Opportunity
OTS – Officer Training School
VC – Victims Counsel
EQUAL – Enlisted Quarterly Assignment Listing
EQUAL-Plus – Special Duty Assignment Consideration
EFMP – Exceptional Family Member Program
PCS – Permanent Change of Station
AFBCMR – Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records
VEAP – Post-Vietnam Veteran’s Educational Assistance Program
MGIB-SR – Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reserve
REAP – Reserve Educational Assistance Program
PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus
UCMJ – Uniformed Code of Military Justice
SCRA – Servicemembers Civil Relief Act
USERRA – Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
SBP – Survivor Benefit Plan

ECC – Expanded Child Care
PDBR – Disability Ratings & the Physical Disability Board of Review
AFDRB – Air Force Discharge Review Board
VA – Veteran Affairs
UAP – Unidentified Aerial Phenomena
MAJCOM – Major command
MPF – Military Personnel Flight
CPF – Civilian Personnel Flight
GED – General Education Diploma
AFQT – Air Force Qualification Test
ASVAB – Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery
AFRS – Air Force Recruiting Service
AFSC – Air Force Specialty Code
DAF – Department of the Air Force
THC – Tetrahydrocannabinol
DAT – Drug and Alcohol Test
RE – Reenlistment Eligibility
DAFI—Department of the Air Force Instruction
DAFMAN—Department of the Air Force Manual
DAFPD—Department of the Air Force Policy Directive
AFI—Air Force Instruction
AFMAN—Air Force Manual
AFPD—Air Force Policy Directive
DOD – Department of Defense
OPR— Office of Primary Responsibility