

# RETIREE OFFICE NEWS – 171<sup>st</sup> ARW



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"Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone's face? Did I say words of healing? Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love? These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and the life to come. " ~ *Henri Nouwen*

## **"New" Retiree Office Email Address:**

A new email account has been created for the 171 Retiree Office at [171retireeoffice@gmail.com](mailto:171retireeoffice@gmail.com). Please use this email address for all correspondences, i.e., email changes, retiree news, luncheons, benefits, etc.

## **Retiree Lunch: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday** in October

Please note, beginning in 2016, the Retiree Luncheons are held on **Tuesdays!** This change was made because the Commissary and PX are closed on Mondays and the 171ARW off-days fall on every other Monday

**When:** CY 2017 - **January 17<sup>th</sup>**, April 18<sup>th</sup>, July 18<sup>th</sup>, and October 17<sup>th</sup>

**Where:** Golden Corral, 900 Park Manor Blvd, Pittsburgh, PA 15205  
(Near Mall at Robinson) (412) 788-1776

***"Don't forget to ask for your military or senior discount!!!"***

**Time:** 1100 hours

*Come join the fun and catch up with old friends over a delicious lunch.*

*Hope to see you all at the next Retiree Luncheon on January 17th!*

## **Retirements:**

Congratulations to our recent retirees who retired from October through December 2016. Please do not hesitate to contact the Retiree Office, if you need assistance.

Rank	Last Name	First Name	Retired
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### **OCT 2016**

COL	POST	WILLIAM	01-OCT-16
SMS	MOLLIK	MICHAEL	01-OCT-16
MSG	RYCKMAN	RONALD	01-OCT-16
MSG	HEINEN	DEAN	31-OCT-16
SSG	WILLIAMS	SHELDON	31-OCT-16

### **NOV 2016**

COL	HODGDON	ALAN	01-NOV-16
TSG	DIEHL	TIMOTHY	16-NOV-16

### **DEC 2016**

SMS	JAMES	DENISE	07-DEC-16
MSG	SKRTICH	DAVID	08-DEC-16
MSG	BRADDICK	MICHAEL	10-DEC-16
TSG	COSTOLO	RICHARD	29-DEC-16
CMS	HUTSLER	MARK	31-DEC-16

**Sympathies:** We extend 'Our Deepest Sympathy' to the families and relatives of the following retirees who passed away. Please inform our office if you hear of the passing of one of our fellow 171<sup>st</sup>, 112<sup>th</sup>, or 258<sup>TH</sup> members. Click on each name to view the obituary.

Col Peter "Bill" Palfreyman – 25 Oct 16 – Age 67 – 171ARW/Vice Commander  
<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/observer-reporter/obituary.aspx?n=peter-palfreyman&pid=182157558>

MSGt Leonard D. Swatling – 12 Nov 2016 – Age 82 – 112TFG/Maintenance  
[http://www.schellhaasfh.com/home/index.cfm/obituaries/view/fh\\_id/15175/id/4004635](http://www.schellhaasfh.com/home/index.cfm/obituaries/view/fh_id/15175/id/4004635)

SMSGt Charles E. Glas – 23 Oct 2016 – Age 85 – 171ARW/Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor  
<http://www.menkefuneralhome.com/obituaries/charles-edward-glas/>

CMSGt William A. Schempp – 1 Dec 2016 – Age 86 – 171ARW/Maintenance & Operations  
<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/postgazette/obituary.aspx?n=william-a-schempp&pid=182913656&fhid=9865>

CMSGt Ralph E. Graff – 3 Feb 2016 – Age 91 – 171ARW/Civil Engineers  
<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/triblive-tribune-review/obituary.aspx?pid=177607580>

## **2017 Cost-of-Living Adjustment:**

The 2017 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Military Retirees and for Social Security recipients and annuitants in both the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) increased 0.3 percent.

## **Guard and Reserve Retirees finally receive “Veteran” status:**

A recently signed law gives official veteran status to National Guard members who served 20 years or more. Previously, Guard members were considered veterans only if they served 180 days or more in a federal status outside of training. Also, anyone eligible for reserve component retirement benefits is considered a veteran. The change in status, however, does not entitle Guard members to any additional retirement benefits.

Until now, Guard and Reserve personnel were considered veterans only if they served in a federalized capacity for more than 179 days other than training. Even a reservist who attended regular training and drill for two decades, but never was federalized, could not claim to be a veteran. Now, Guard and Reserve members will be recognized as veterans if they serve honorably for 20 years.

## **Defense Personnel Records Information Retrieval System (DPRIS):**

The Defense Personnel Records Information Retrieval System (DPRIS) is an online electronic gateway to Official Military Personnel Records.

DPRIS provides a conduit for the secure electronic retrieval of document images from the Military Services' Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) systems, and narrative data from the Joint Services Records Research Center (JSRRC), in response to request initiated by authorized and approved government agency users, authorized subordinate agencies, and veterans.

Personnel records for veterans who served after 1997 should be accessible online and are usually retrievable within hours of a request through the Defense Personnel Records Information Retrieval System (DPRIS). To obtain one's personnel records from DPRIS, go to <https://www.dpris.dod.mil/>, then select “Individual Veteran Access” on the left side of the website and follow the instructions. Veterans will need to register for a logon and verify their current mailing address before requesting records. The whole process usually takes less than 10 minutes.

Those who served prior to 1997 or for whom electronic records are not available from DPRIS, can request their records from the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) using the **eVetRecs** website at: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>.

## **VA National Cemeteries Now Offering Pre-Need Eligibility Determinations, December 8, 2016:**

**WASHINGTON** - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced it now provides eligibility determinations for interment in a VA national cemetery prior to the time of need. Through the [Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility Program](#), upon request, individuals can learn if they are eligible for burial or memorialization in a VA national cemetery.

"MyVA is about looking at VA from the Veterans' perspective, and then doing everything we can to make the Veteran Experience effective and seamless," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. "This new program reaffirms our commitment to providing a lifetime of benefits and services for Veterans and their families."

Interested individuals may submit [VA Form 40-10007](#), *Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery*, and supporting documentation, such as a DD Form 214, if readily available, to the VA National Cemetery Scheduling Office by: toll-free fax at 1-855-840-8299; email to [Eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov](mailto:Eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov); or mail to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office, P.O. Box 510543, St. Louis, MO 63151.

VA will review applications and provide written notice of its determination of eligibility. VA will save determinations and supporting documentation in an electronic information system to expedite burial arrangements at the time of need. Because laws and personal circumstances change, upon receipt of a burial request, VA will validate all pre-need determinations in accordance with the laws in effect at that time.

VA operates 135 national cemeteries and 33 soldiers' lots in 40 states and Puerto Rico. More than 4 million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict, are buried in VA's national cemeteries. VA also provides funding to establish, expand and maintain 105 Veterans cemeteries in 47 states and territories including tribal trust lands, Guam, and Saipan. For Veterans buried in private or other cemeteries, VA provides headstones, markers or medallions to commemorate their service. In 2016, VA honored more than 345,000 Veterans and their loved ones with memorial benefits in national, state, tribal and private cemeteries.

Eligible individuals are entitled to burial in any open VA national cemetery, opening/closing of the grave, a grave liner, perpetual care of the gravesite, and a government-furnished headstone or marker or niche cover, all at no cost to the family. Veterans are also eligible for a burial flag and may be eligible for a Presidential Memorial Certificate. Information on VA burial benefits is available from local VA national cemetery offices, from the Internet at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov), or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 800-827-1000. To make burial arrangements at any open VA national cemetery at the time of need, call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117.

## **DoD Announces New Outreach Efforts to Veterans Regarding Discharges and Military Records:**

Press Operations  
Release No: NR-459-16  
Dec. 30, 2016

The Department of Defense today announced a renewed effort to ensure veterans are aware of the opportunity to have their discharges and military records reviewed. Through enhanced public outreach, engagement with Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), Military Service Organizations (MSOs), and other outside groups, as well as direct outreach to individual veterans, the department encourages all veterans who believe they have experienced an error or injustice to request relief from their service's Board for Correction of Military/Naval Records (BCM/NR) or Discharge Review Board (DRB).

To request an upgrade or correction:

Veterans who desire a correction to their service record or who believe their discharge was unjust, erroneous, or warrants an upgrade, are encouraged to apply for review. For discharge upgrades, if the discharge was less than 15 years ago, the veteran should complete DD Form 293 (<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/forms/eforms/dd0293.pdf>) and send it to their service's DRB (the address is on the form). For discharges over 15 years ago, the veteran should complete the DD Form 149 (<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/forms/eforms/dd0149.pdf>) and send it to their service's BCM/NR (the address is on the form).

For corrections of records other than discharges, veterans should complete the DD Form 149 and submit their request to their service's BCM/NR (the address is on the form).

Key information to include in requests:

There are three keys to successful applications for upgrade or correction. First, it is very important to explain why the veteran's discharge or other record was unjust or erroneous—for example, how it is connected to, or resulted from unjust policies, a physical or mental health condition related to military service, or some other explainable or justifiable circumstance. Second, it is important to provide support, where applicable, for key facts. If a veteran has a relevant medical diagnosis, for example, it would be very helpful to include medical records that reflect that diagnosis. Third, it is helpful, but not always required, to submit copies of the veteran's applicable service records. The more information provided, the better the boards can understand the circumstances of the discharge.

BCM/NRs are also authorized to grant relief on the basis of clemency. Veterans who believe their post-service conduct and contributions to society support an upgrade or correction should describe their post-service activity and provide any appropriate letters or other documentation of support.

Personnel records for veterans who served after 1997 go to <https://www.dpris.dod.mil/>. Those who served prior to 1997 go to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) using the eVetRecs website at: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>.

## **MyVA Call Line:**

As of 15 Nov 2016, VA launched 1-844-MyVA311 (1-844-698-2311) as a 24/7 one-stop information service platform for all VA services. Veterans, families and caregivers who call MyVA311 can be connected to disability, pension, health care eligibility, enrollment, and burial benefits, the veteran's crisis line, the homeless veteran's helpline and to a self-service locator to find the nearest VA facility. This is an effort to ensure veterans no longer have to know what number to call for specific programs and services, instead, veterans can call MyVA311 and be connected to the correct call center. If you know what number you're calling – keep calling it. None of the existing VA numbers will go away.

## **Donate Serviceable Military Clothing and Equipment:**

Contact Brian Finnegan at (412) 915-0352 if you have outdated serviceable uniforms and equipment to donate to the Civil Air Patrol Squadron 603, located on the 911<sup>th</sup> AFRES base. **NEW UPDATE:** The Civil Air Patrol will be changing over in the near future to the ABU uniform, so they are now accepting donations of both the ABU uniform (Airman Battle Uniform) and the BDU uniform (Battle Dress Uniform). Your continued donations are very much appreciated.

## **IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND LINKS:**

171<sup>st</sup> Air Refueling Wing: <http://www.171arw.af.mil/>

911<sup>th</sup> AW Casualty Assistance Office: (412) 474-8558, Fax: (412) 474-8987

Address: 911<sup>th</sup> FSS/FSMPS, 2475 Defense Ave, Bldg 316, Rm 112, Coraopolis, PA 15108

Email contact: Melinda J. Arbogast, [Melinda.arbogast.1@us.af.mil](mailto:Melinda.arbogast.1@us.af.mil)

Provides assistance to a retiree/spouse/dependent upon the passing of a retired military member or dependent in processing the required documentation and survivor benefits.

Air Force Retiree Services: <http://www.retirees.af.mil/>

AMC Space-A Travel: <http://www.amc.af.mil/amctravel/index.asp>

Department of Veteran Affairs (VA): <http://www.va.gov/> or 1-800-827-1000

Express Scripts – TRICARE Pharmacy: <http://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE/>

Toll-Free within the U.S.: 1-877-363-1303

### ***Retired and Annuitant Pay:***

For news updates, general information, and forms: visit the Retired Pay Site, **Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) – Retired Military & Annuitants** <http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary.html>

- Questions about your retired or annuity pay account: 1-800-321-1080, Press 1 then 4, Press 0 (zero) for operator.
- Reporting a Death or Following-Up on a Claim: 1-800-321-1080, Press 1, then Press 1 again, Enter social security number.

For specific questions: Ask DFAS <https://corpweb1.dfas.mil/askDFAS/askRA.jsp>

For discussion on retired pay issues: Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/DefenseFinanceandAccountingService?ref=ts>

Military.com/Benefits: <http://www.military.com/benefits>

Military.com free membership sign-up:

[http://www.military.com/Registration/Universal\\_Registration\\_Page?ESRC=TAF.bb](http://www.military.com/Registration/Universal_Registration_Page?ESRC=TAF.bb)

**National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records:** NPRC Customer Service Line 314-801-0800

myPay: <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx> or 1-888-332-7411 Option 5

PA Veteran Affairs: <http://www.dmva.pa.gov/veteransaffairs/Pages/default.aspx> - .Vw-6qj81BJM

**Social Security:** <http://www.ssa.gov/agency/contact/> or Call the toll-free number, 800-772-1213. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call the toll-free "TTY" number, 711

**TRICARE Health Insurance Coverage & Benefits Plans:** <http://www.tricare.mil>

Tricare North Region – Health Net Federal Services: 1-877-874-2273

TRICARE For Life: 1-866-773-0404

**Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Retiree Assistance:** 1-877-968-3778

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs:** <http://www.vets.gov/>