



Summer 2025 Edition

# MOUNTAIN HONORS



## Fort Drum Retirement Services Newsletter

### The United States Army

#### 250 years strong: Honoring the legacy of our Soldiers

On June 14, 2025, the U.S. Army celebrates 250 dedicated years of protecting our nation, its people, and our way of life. **Happy 250<sup>th</sup> birthday!**

Established in 1775, the Army is the oldest and largest branch of the U.S. military, and formed more than a year before the Declaration of Independence was issued. The Second Continental Congress passed a resolution that created a national Army of "six companies of expert riflemen" to join Patriot forces near Boston.



As we celebrate the bravery and determination of our Soldiers as they protect our nation's interests at home and abroad, let us always remember the sacrifices and victories of our Soldiers.

Although this is far from a comprehensive list of all the U.S. Army's significant accomplishments over the last 250 years, it is a small highlight reel, if you will, of some of the most consequential ones.

#### 1775-1825



From its inception in 1775 to 1825, the Continental Army and its successor, the U.S. Army's first 50 years saw Soldiers secure independence from Great Britain during the American Revolution and expand the nation's territory through exploration and military campaigns.

(Continued on page 2)

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## 1775-1825

In 1802, the Army developed its structure and training methods and established the United States Military Academy, also known as West Point. Following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the Lewis and Clark Expedition was led by Army officers, and proved to be instrumental in exploring and establishing U.S. presence in the newly acquired territory. The U.S. Army, comprised of regular Soldiers and militia, later played a key role during the War of 1812, defending the nation against British forces during this conflict.

## 1825-1875

The Army's next 50 years continued with the westward expansion of the United States, and our fearless Soldiers were engaged in several conflicts at home and abroad. These involved the Seminole Wars, which took place in Florida, the Mexican-American War, again expanding the nation's territory, the Civil War, and the Indian Wars, which saw Union and Confederate Soldiers fighting on issues of slavery and statehood.



## 1875-1925



By the time the U.S. Army celebrated its 100-year birthday, the series of campaigns and battles with Native American tribes on the western frontier was ongoing. From the Spring through Summer of 1898, the Army participated in the Spanish-American War, declaring war on Spain after the sinking of the USS Maine in Havana Harbor, Cuba. In 1901, the Army War College was established as the first professional education beyond West Point,

as students worked military issues of the day, studied national defense, military science, and command. The U.S. Army continued fighting against Filipino rebels after the Spanish-American War, called the Philippine Insurrection, and also protected American interests during an attempted revolution in Nicaragua.

## 1925-1975



Between 1939-1945, the Army played a major role in the Allied victory during World War II by deploying forces to fight Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan. Following this victory, U.S. Soldiers were involved in a conflict with North Korea and fought in the Korean War, followed by a long and complex war in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. The end of the draft and the all-volunteer force we know in today's Army was established in 1973. (Continue page 3)





## 1975-2025

Over the past 50 years, the U.S. Army has witnessed the fall of Saigon, marking the end of the Vietnam War, specifically with the U.S. Army withdrawing its forces and witnessing the reunification of North and South Vietnam. Taking on a pivotal role during Operation Desert Storm, the U.S.



Army helped liberate Kuwait from Iraqi forces in 1991 and continued supporting operations in Iraq and Afghanistan in the “War on Terror.” for 20+ years.



## **Thank you for your service and sacrifice.**

For 250 years our Army has defended the nation and it’s interests from enemies both foreign and domestic. The Second Continental Congress founded the Army in 1775. Originally formed to protect the freedom of the first 13 colonies, the Army has evolved and grown from this small militia force into the world's premier fighting force. You were a part of that force. Through your blood, sweat and tears, your personal sacrifice, you stood as a strong bullwork, a fortress, determined to hold fast in it’s defense. You fought through to the objective, endured many hardships and loss, yet stood strong because you did not do it alone. We are one Army, One Nation, One people. You endured it all not only for your nation and your family but for your Army brothers and sisters standing beside you. As William Shakespeare said in his famous King Henry 5th play where a small English force was to engage the overwhelming superior in number French forces. King Henry 5th said, “From this day to the ending of the world, only we in it shall be remembered- We few, we happy few, we band of brothers”. The English won the battle that day.

I take pride that you and I served our country in peacetime and in war. We answered the call. Just as you might have family who answered the call in the past, I have family who have served through the generations back to where one of my great grandfathers signed up for the 10th Pensivania militia to fight the British. He was a second generation immigrant from the German speaking peoples of Europe looking for a new land. A land worth fighting for.

Congress declared independence July 4, 1776. They wrote, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” We in the Army carry on the tradition that Congress set forth so many years ago. You were willing to sacrifice all to maintain this freedom we so enjoy.

“And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor. “

Very Respectfully Fort Drum RSO

*Chronology written By the Army Retirement Services Office and the thank you is from the Fort Drum RSO May 2025*

**ONCE A SOLDIER, ALWAYS A SOLDIER . . . A SOLDIER FOR LIFE!**

# Fort Drum Retiree Council



MSG (R) Wells



LTC (R) Buford-Frost



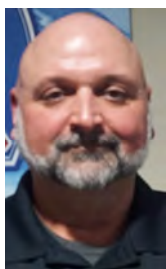
Brenda Pennels,  
Surviving Spouse



LTC (R) Gravely  
PhD



COL (R) Frost



SFC (R) Stenfeldt



CDR (R) Landis,  
U.S. Navy



CSM (R) Mitchell



CPT (R) Saeli



MSG (R) Pearson



COL (R) McFadden

The Fort Drum Retiree Council (FDRC) facilitates interaction between the Army Chief of the Staff, Fort Drum Senior Commander, Garrison Commander, and the retired community. They consider and submit written reports on important issues related to Retired Soldiers, Annuitants, Surviving Spouses, and their families. Learn more about the FDRC and how to become a member on the following pages.

## A Letter from the FDRC Officer Co-Chair

Greetings Valued Retired Soldiers, Surviving Spouses and Families,

This year we celebrate the U.S. Army's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday. The U.S. Army was officially established on June 14, 1775, more than a year before the Declaration of Independence. Since that time the U.S. Army has played a vital role in our nation's defense, growth and development. Our independence was won only after a long and difficult eight-year war with Great Britain. Patriots rallied to the cause of freedom and liberty. Since this time, the U.S. Army has always delivered on its mission to defend freedom for our great nation. As we celebrate this year's 250<sup>th</sup> Army birthday, reflect on the rich history and legacy of service, sacrifice and dedication. As military retirees, I encourage you to use every opportunity to stay connected with our great force and participate in retiree and veteran programs in your local community. While doing so, don't hesitate to tell your military story. We live in a time when the general public is unaware of what military service is all about. We need to ensure that we speak up and let others know our accomplishments while in military service. Particularly, our children and youth need to know what leadership and skill opportunities the military has to offer them, so that they will be motivated to join our great force. Thank you "all" for your service, sacrifice, and excellence. Soldier for Life!

Best regards,

Charles E. Frost  
Colonel, USA Retired  
Fort Drum Retiree Council Co-Chair



# Fort Drum Retirement Services

## Post-Retirement

- Provide information and referrals on all services and programs in retirement (DFAS, TRICARE, VA, DEERS)
- Provide DFAS services as Retired and Annuity Pay agents
- Advise and mentor the 14 member Fort Drum Retiree Council (FDRC)
- Maintain community outreach with a monthly retiree breakfast
- Publish and Mail annual newsletter (26,000)
- Plan and coordinate the Annual Retiree Appreciation day
- Provide Retirement and SBP information briefs to local communities through retirement events and Veteran service programs and organization

### Fort Drum Retiree Council Membership

Are you interested in becoming a member of our Fort drum Retiree council or sub-council? Apply at:



- ♦ <http://www.drum.army.mil/Retirees/Pages/index.aspx?fdni+Retirees>.
- ♦ Download the "Fort drum council Membership Application"
- ♦ Fill out the form
- ♦ Include a copy of your DD214 and resume with pix
- ♦ Email to: [usarmy.drum.rso@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.drum.rso@army.mil)

### **The Army Retirement Services Office (RSO)**

is the Soldier for Life Retirement Services Office. It solidifies the army's mindset that retiring Soldiers, the seventeen percent who stay long enough to earn retired pay, will receive the benefits advice and transition resources they need to become the Army's most experienced advocates in civilian communities.

Since its launch in 2012, the Army has continually expanded its Soldier for Life program. Beginning with the concept that being a Soldier is an identity a person never loses.

### **Who Is Your Retirement Services Officer?**

Mr. James R. Shinholt, RSO  
Mr. Andrew Hickman, Assistant RSO  
Mr. Roland Roderick, Assistant RSO

## Area of Responsibility

- Maine
- New Hampshire
- Vermont
- 48 Counties of New York
- Watervliet Arsenal (MOU)
- 7 Canadian Provinces-Manitoba east to Nova Scotia

### **How to contact RSO office:**

**Retirement Services Office,**  
**10720 Mount Belvedere Boulevard**  
**Clark Hall Rm A1-3**  
**Fort Drum, NY 13602**

**Phone: 315-772-6434, 315-772-6339, 315-772-3189**  
**1-800-556-9790**

**Hours of Operation: 8:00 am to 3:30 pm | Mon-Fri**

**Email: [usarmy.drum.rso@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.drum.rso@mail.mil)**

**This Newsletter is Published every Quarter:**

<u>EDITION</u>	<u>PUBLISHING</u>
WINTER	1 DEC
SPRING	1 MAR
SUMMER	1 JUN
FALL	1 SEP



**We can assist all Military Branches !**



## Retiree Benefits Information & Events

### HAPPENINGS for VETS & Families at CLEAR-PATH.....

<https://www.clearpath4vets.com/> | Information: 315-687-3300

Whether it's canine support, career services, or anything in between, our programs bring veterans and their families together, helping them heal and build the emotional strength they need to thrive.

**Find success on the civilian side.** Get matched with a career advisor who can help you apply your wide range of skills, work experience, and qualifications toward a fulfilling career.

**Friday Night Fires.** Complimentary include dinner and snacks supplied by our Culinary Department every Friday evening with fun family activities planned for every other Friday. Dinner begins at 4:30 pm with a family activity starting at 6:00 pm.

Friday Night Fires are open to the public and take place on the Clear Path for Veterans campus at 1223 Salt Springs Rd in Chittenango, NY. They are also rain or shine. If there is inclement weather, you will move into the Great Room.

We hope you'll join us! Please note, all children must have a parent or guardian in attendance with them for the entirety of the evening. **Canteen—Wednesdays 11:00 am—1:00 pm , Complimentary, Chittenango, NY**



## Fort Drum Retiree Council

### The Fort Drum Retiree Council (FDRC)

The Fort Drum Retiree Council (FDRC) is the local installation council representing retirees from the state of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont to western New York. It is established under the authority of Army Regulation (AR) 600-8-7, Retirement Services Program.

The councils' members are retired officers and retired enlisted military personnel. Retirees are those Servicemembers from the active, National Guard, or Reserve components of any service that have retired for length of service or disability and are entitled to retired pay or are the unmarried surviving spouse of an active duty or retired Soldier who has passed.

The council provides the Garrison Commander, Senior Commander, Chief of Staff, Army, and other Senior leaders with an insight into the issues and concerns of military retirees in the Fort Drum area of responsibility. The FDRC participates in the planning and execution of an annual Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) held at Fort Drum. The Garrison Commander enlists the aid of the Retiree Council, with the assistance of the Retirement Service Officer (RSO), in organizing, coordinating, and conducting the RAD to keep retired Soldiers and Family members up to date with regard to retirement benefits and to foster good will between retired and active-duty communities. The council submits recommendations for consideration to the Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council at its annual meeting on issues regarding retired community benefits, welfare, and morale.

The council meets via Zoom monthly and in person twice a year at Fort Drum. FDRC has vacancies in the Western NY region (Buffalo/Niagara Falls), the Genesee Valley region (Rochester) and Vermont. Interested individuals may call 315-772-6434/6339 or email: [usarmy.drum.rso@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.drum.rso@army.mil) for more information.

<https://www.facebook.com/FortDrumNYRetireeCouncil/>



## Stay up to date on retiree benefits, entitlements and events

### ARMY ECHOES

The first Retired Army Personnel Bulletin was published in March 1956. Previously, Retired Soldiers received information through inserts in their paychecks. After conducting a survey of Retired Soldiers, the Army changed the publication's name to *ARMY ECHOES* in January 1979. Today, *ARMY ECHOES* is a 16-page printed newsletter, a 24-page electronic newsletter, and the *ARMY ECHOES BLOG*, which is published four times each year. The Army now mails or emails *ARMY ECHOES* to over one million Retired Soldiers and surviving spouses. As publication and mailing costs have increased, the Army is shifting to more electronic publication. Soldiers who retired after January 1, 2012 may only receive *ARMY ECHOES* by email. This publication informs Retired Soldiers, surviving spouses, and their Families on changes to their benefits and entitlements, developments within the Army, and how they can continue to support the Army. <https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Retirement/army-echoes>



Scan the QR code to download the U.S. Army Echoes app



### Soldier for Life Website

Assists to engage and connect Army, government and non-government organizations in order to influence policies, programs, and services that support Soldiers, Veterans, and Families, build sustainable relationships and outcomes, and reinforce the Soldier For Life (SFL) mindset throughout the entirety of the Soldier Life Cycle (SLC).

<https://soldierforlife.army.mil/>

Click to Download



### THE U.S. ARMY RETIRED SOLDIER HANDBOOK

Outlines military status after retirement, discusses benefits and privileges, and provides other information, which may be helpful in administering personal affairs. This handbook should be shared with your family members because it contains information concerning rights, benefits, and privileges to which they may be entitled, especially after your death. Many of the benefits listed are administered by government agencies other than the Department of the Army. Eligibility for these benefits is determined by law, regulation or the responsible government agency. This Handbook is for informational purposes only. It does not make or change policy or regulation.

[https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Documents/static/Post/Retired\\_Soldier\\_Handbook.pdf](https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Documents/static/Post/Retired_Soldier_Handbook.pdf)



The **MyArmyBenefits(MAB)** provides information to support your retirement planning needs, even if you have already retired. The MAB website will allow you to put your finger on accurate and up-to-date information, located all in one place. <https://MyArmyBenefits.us.army.mil>



### CHANGE OF MISSION

The Army's official newsletter for Soldiers in all three components with 17+ or more years of service.

<https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Retirement/change-of-mission>

### Potential Changes to Veterans' Benefits Under the Major Richard Star Act.

by: Capt Dean Mottard, USMC (RET)

In 2022, Congress expanded compensation for service members who had been exposed to burn pits with the passage of the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACAT) Act, but debate on "concurrent receipt" of retired pay and disability benefits stalled. However, the Major Richard Star Act, introduced in both the House and Senate, proposes amending Title 10 to expand the number of veterans who would be exempt from the offset (H.R. 1282, 2023; S. 344, 2023).

To learn more about these proposed changes regarding "concurrent receipt" of retired pay and disability benefits click on the link below. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10732236/#:~:text=The Major Richard Star Act proposes eliminating the offset between, than 20 years of service or> [Potential Changes to Veterans' Benefits Under the Major Richard Star Act: Veterans' Issues in Focus - PMC](#)

### **MAKE THE MOST OF GI BILL BENEFITS.**

The GI bill offers such an array of benefits that it can be easy to overlook some of the most valuable ones. Now, a recently enacted rule has expanded benefits for more than 1 million veterans.

Initial benefits were introduced in 1944 to help pay education costs for veterans returning from WWII, and they have since evolved. There are currently a few versions, but the most popular is the Post 9/11 GI Bill, which launched in 2009 and offers significant new benefits to those who served on active duty after Sep 10, 2001—including the ability for longtime servicemembers to transfer their benefits to their spouse and dependent children.

The GI bill can cover tuition for undergraduate and graduate programs—covering up to the full cost of four years at an in-state public college and can help pay for continuing education and training. It pays a stipend for books, can cover the costs of tests and certifications, and provides a generous housing allowance.

"One of the great things about the GI bill program is that it's extremely versatile and offers a range of benefits beyond degree programs," said Kaprice Dyson, a public affairs specialist with the VA's education service team.

### **BENEFITS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.**

You're eligible for Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits if you served at least 90 days on active duty since Sept 11, 2001. You can receive the maximum 36 months of benefits, which usually covers four academic years, if you served less time, the amount of benefits you receive varies from 50% to 90%. You can also qualify for full benefits if you received a Purple Heart since Sep 11, 2001, or you served for at least 30 consecutive days and were discharged because of a service-connected disability.

The spouse and children of a servicemember who after Sept 10, 2001, died in the line of qualifying duty or from a service-connected disability while a member of the Selected Reserve may be eligible for benefits under the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship program.

The Post 9/11 GI Bill can cover the full cost of in-state tuition at a public college, some of which allow out-of-state students who are using GI bill benefits to pay in-state rates. Alternatively it can cover up to a set amount each year for a private or foreign college (\$28,937.09 for the 2024-25 academic year; the amount changes each August).

That annual limit also applies for noncollege degree programs, such as training programs for HVAC repair or EMTs, or you can use up to \$16,535.46 for nondegree flight training program in the 2024-25 academic year.

You can also use the benefits for professional education. For example, Cornell University allows eligible students to use the GI bill for undergraduate and graduate programs, according to Amber Lonski, a school certifying official at Cornell University.

Capt. Joseph Brown, USCG (Ret), a certified financial planner with financial management firm C. L. Sheldon and Co., recommends servicemembers wait until after leaving active duty to use the GI bill so they can qualify for the housing allowance. It can give you a nice off-ramp to retool and pursue a career," he said. "If you're doing informational interviews and you're talking to someone in an industry you want to pursue, ask what you need and see if the GI bill pays for it." You might also qualify for a monthly housing allowance (MHA). Spouses and children who use transferred benefits can also receive the MHA.

### **TRANSFERRING BENEFITS.**

The Post 9/11 Bill lets longtime servicemembers transfer benefits to a spouse and dependent children, who can then receive the same benefits for tuition and fees, books and the housing allowance. Remember that even if you're on active duty and aren't eligible for it yourself, dependent children can still receive the housing allowance. You can transfer benefits after you've served six years and agree to serve at least four more. The clock on the four years starts after you make the transfer. But you can only transfer benefits to dependents who are enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System. To start that process, request a transfer of education benefits through milConnect. You can allocate the 36 months however you want among yourself, your spouse, and your children. You can change the allocation at any time, but you can't add new beneficiaries after you leave service. "Once you get out, you can't designate another dependent. You can go from one month to 36 months at any time, but you can never go from zero to one."

The VA's website has more information and can help you find a participating school, but verify the details with the school certifying official. "If you're going to visit the college, try to make an appointment with the veterans' office, too,"



## Retiree Benefits Information & Events

### GI Bill education benefits retroactively increased for a million veterans

Source: <https://www.military.com/benefits/va-retroactively-increasing-gi-bill-benefits-million-veterans-heres-how-claim-them.html>

The Department of Veterans affairs kicked off 2025 by extending the I Bill education benefits of a million veterans. Veterans who earned both Montgomery GI Bill and Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits while completing two separate periods of military service may now receive 12 additional months of educational assistance.

The expansion follows a 2024 U.S. Supreme Court decision ruling that the vA had previously administered an aspect of the Post-9/11 GI Bill in violation of preexisting law.

The VA's website implies that it has already contacted beneficiaries who might benefit from the 12 additional months. If you haven't received an email about it but think your service might qualify, here's what is known:

Why Are So Many Veterans getting additional GI Bill Benefits?

When the Post-9/11 GI Bill became law in 2008, many service members had already paid their \$1,200 contribution to the existing, but less generous, Montgomery GI Bill. Both laws provide 36 total months of education benefits. For more information: MILITARY.COM Source

## Save the Date

### **FORT DRUM Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD)**

Sept 20, 2025 | 9:00-2:00 PM

### **Association of the US Army Convention (AUSA) July 16-17, 2025**

More info. [www.ause.org](http://www.ause.org) / LANDEURO | Exhibits@ause.org

**The National Veterans Wheelchair Games**  
**Wheelchair Games** - co-presented annually by VA and Paralyzed Veterans of America, will be held in Minneapolis July 17-22, 2025

**250th U.S. ARMY Birthday Celebration.** DATE: 13-15 JUNE 2025  
LOC: Philadelphia, PA | Independence Mall.  
Learn more at: [AUSA.ORG/armky250](http://AUSA.ORG/armky250)  
[AUSA.ORG/armky250](http://AUSA.ORG/armky250)

**Northern New England (M, NH, VT) 27th Annual Military RAD.** AUG 23, (SAT). TIME: 08900-0900 Registration | 0900—0945 Opening Ceremony | 0945—1300 Exhibitor Displays Open. LOC: NH National Guard Army Aviation Spt Facility, 26 Regional Dr., Concord, NH. POC: COL(R) Musmanno 606-495-3042 or CSM ® 493-4918.



### **Click The Links Below For Additional Resources**

[Combat Related Special Compensation CRSC Eligibility](#)

[VA.gov Home | Veterans Affairs](#)

[Defense Finance Accounting Service \(DFAS\)](#)

[Gray Area Retirements Branch](#)

[Home | TRICARE](#)

ARMY MATTERS. An AUSA PODCAST. AUSA's Army Matters podcast amplifies the voices of the Total Army—one story at a time. Listen online at: [AUSA's Army Matters Podcast | AUSA](#)

# Surviving Spouse Info...



## Surviving Spouse Update

- ID cards need to be updated by January 2026. Need to stress the importance of PACT ACT and remind members to go to VA to sign up.
- If you have a new military ID card with an "Indefinite" expiration date, it will not be accepted by TSA for getting through security. All ID cards need a definite date of expiration. Old military ID's may be confiscated at military base gates even though the transition date is next January. It was recommended that you relay this information to your Congressional delegations as these new ID cards were billed as "TSA/REAL ID Compliant",



## G.I. Bill Benefits



### SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

**AUSA Scholarships:** Extended Deadline—31 MAY 2025.

Apply NOW: [AUSA Scholarships](#) | [AUSA](#)

**Eligibility Criteria:** Premium Member or dependent | Association Member or depended | No waiting period for new members

### Veterans may be eligible for one more year of G.I. Bill Benefits

Are you a Veteran who served at least two periods of service? In other words did you reenlist? IF so, there's a chance that you're eligible for additional G.I. Bill Benefits.

Today, VA announced that it has updated its process for awarding G.I. Bill benefits. This means that many Veterans who served multiple periods of military service may be eligible for additional benefits for themselves or their beneficiaries.

Specifically, under the previous policy, eligible Veterans who served at least two periods of service were forced to choose between the Montgomery GI Bill and the Post-9/11 GI Bill for a maximum of 36 months of G.I. Bill benefits. Under the updated policy, Veterans will no longer have to make that choice when they apply for benefits, meaning that they can qualify for up to 48 months of G.I. Bill benefits.

Many Veterans are also now eligible for additional, retroactive benefits. Specifically, Veterans who served at least two periods of service—one that qualified them for the Montgomery G.I. Bill and a second that qualified them for the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill—may be eligible to receive up to 12 months of additional G.I. Bill benefits (bringing them to a total of 48 months). These Veterans may be eligible to receive 12 months of additional, retroactive G.I. Bill benefits (bringing them to a total of 48 mths).

#### Who qualifies for this expansion?

Veterans who served at least two periods of service—one that qualifies for the Montgomery G.I. Bill and a second that qualifies for the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill—may be able to receive additional G.I. bill Benefits.

#### Will I be notified if I'm eligible?

Yes, VA will be distributing communications to potentially impacted beneficiaries.

#### Do I need to do anything?

Of the 1.04 million Veterans who may potentially be eligible for additional benefits, VA will be able to automatically adjudicate the claims for approximately 660,000 without any further action required on their part. For all remaining Veterans, VA will be reaching out to them directly to encourage them to file a claim.

#### When is the deadline to apply for those who need to take action? Oct. 1, 2030

To learn more about this change, including how to apply visit the Rudisill info on VBA's education service webpage.



## Defense Finance and Accounting Service

### What is myPay?



1. **What is myPay?** myPay is an online system that allows you to view your pay information. This user-focused system allows you to view certain pay related documents as well as make a number of changes without using a paper form. Pay statements, tax forms and travel advice of payments are available for a limited time to print for download (one-year). If you do not see the option for a change you wish to make, please contact your local pay office or your designated customer Care center.
2. **Who can use myPay?** A myPay account is available to the following populations:
  - ◆ Military Active and Reserve Members—AR, AF, SF, NA and MC
  - ◆ JROTC Instructors
  - ◆ Civilian Employees—DoD, Health and Human Services, DoVA, DoEnergy and US Agency for Global Media
  - ◆ Arm Non-Appropriated Fund Employees
  - ◆ Military Retirees
  - ◆ Future Retirees
  - ◆ Annuitants
  - ◆ Former Spouses
3. **Why should I use myPay?** It saves time ~ myPay eliminates the need to call, write letters or fill out forms by letting you make your own changes immediately with user-friendly technology. myPay is convenient—You can access myPay nearly 24/7 days a week to change or review your current information, or to check your most recent pay statement. myPay is reliable—The information you input transfers directly to the your pay system.
4. **When is myPay available?** myPay is available nearly 24 hrs/7 days a week. myPay has periods of unavailability due to scheduled DFAS pay system maintenance windows. Please refer to the System Availability section located on the myPay homepage for updates on impacted systems and customers.
5. **Which personnel and pay changes can I make using myPay.** With myPay, you can:
  - ◆ View, print, and save leave and earnings statements
  - ◆ View and print tax statements
  - ◆ Manage the delivery method for all your statements
  - ◆ Change federal and state tax withholdings
  - ◆ Update bank account and electronic fund transfer information
  - ◆ Make address changes
  - ◆ View and print travel vouchers
  - ◆ Control Thrift Savings Plan enrollment



**DFAS:** When your life changes, it's important to share the news with DFAS.

As a retiree, the sooner you alert Defense Finance and Accounting service (DFAS) to any life change that might affect your pay, the more timely and accurate your pay will be. Keeping your account updated includes making sure your mailing address, email address, banking information allotments, tax withholding status, and beneficiary choices are current.

Be sure to report any change of life events as soon as they happen. These life-changing events might include:

- ◆ Moving
- ◆ Marriage or remarriage
- ◆ Divorce
- ◆ Birth or adoption of a child
- ◆ Death of Some changes, especially those regarding Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage, have a one-year time limit, so it is very important that you modify DFAS of life-changing events when they happen. And when you notify us, be sure to include photocopies of supporting documents, such as birth or marriage certificates. spouse or child
- ◆ Director deposit account changes

Some changes, especially those regarding Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage, have a one year time limit, so it is very important that you notify DFAS of life-changing events when they happen. And when you notify them, be sure to include photocopies of supporting documents, such as birth or marriage certificates.



## MEDICAL INFORMATION



Starting July 16, 2022, you can call 988 and Press 1 to reach the Military Crisis Line.

Call, Text, Chat  
988lifeline.org/chat

[Explore Military Benefits | TRICARE Prime & Military Health Plans](#)

## Fort Drum Medical Care Requirements



Humana

### Before making an appointment, you must:

- 1 Enroll with TRICARE East/Humana by calling **1-800-444-5445**.
- 2 Register with the Fort Drum MEDDAC by calling Medical Records at **(315) 772-4032**. (Monday - Friday, 8am to 4pm)

**Be advised:** Both enrollment and registration are required for active-duty service members, families, and retirees prior to receiving care at all Fort Drum Medical Activity clinics.

*Questions or concerns? Call the Patient Service Center at (315) 772-4435 or email [usarmy.drum.medcom-gahc.mbx.pao@health.mil](mailto:usarmy.drum.medcom-gahc.mbx.pao@health.mil)*



U.S. Army Medical Department Activity  
Fort Drum, New York

Guthrie.Tricare.mil  
*Care Enough to Make a Difference!*

## **TRICARE PHARMACY COST 2025**

### **TRICARE PHARMACY COSTS FOR 2025**

The following costs apply to military retirees that have TRICARE Prime (Including the US Family Health Plan) TRICARE Select or TRICARE For Life.

**Note:** Copayments won't change in 2025 for medically retired service members and their eligible family members.

Pharmacy Type Generic Formulary Drug Costs Brand-Name Formulary Drug Costs  
Non-Formulary Drug Costs Non-Covered Drug Costs

#### **Military Pharmacy**

Up to a 90-day supply \$0 \$0 Generally not available without medical necessity Not available

#### **Mail Order**

Up to a 90-day supply **\$13 \$38 \$76** Not available

#### **Retail**

Up to a 30-day supply **\$16 \$43 \$76** Not available

For more information call Express Scripts at (877) 363-1303

Martin's Point US Family Health Plan Members Call (800) 707-9853

Information provided by Brenda Pennes

## TRICARE Online Patient Portal (TOL PP) decommissioning:

*Download your health records now*

By TRICARE Communications

On April 1, the TRICARE Online Patient Portal, (TOL PP) will no longer be available. The Department of Defense's new electronic health record—Military Health System (MHS) GENESIS—has replaced the TOL PP, which will be decommissioned on April 1, 2025.

If you want to keep a copy of your legacy health records for personal use, you must download them from the TOL PP before April 1.

"All military hospitals and clinics have transitioned to MHS GENESIS. We encourage you to take these important steps to save your personal health records before the TOL Patient Portal decommissions," said Rear Adm. Tracy Farrill, Principal Deputy, Assistant Director for Health Care Administration, and Military Health System Electronic Health Record (EHR) Functional Champion at the Defense Health Agency. "Your medical history is a valuable resource for managing your health, and saving your records now ensures you have access if you need it."

### What should I do now?

To keep copies of your legacy health records, follow these instructions:

1. **Visit** [www.TRICAREOnline.com](http://www.TRICAREOnline.com).
2. **Log in:** Sign in using your DS Logon, CAC, or DFAS myPay credentials. If you don't have a DS Logon, you'll need to create one by clicking "Need An Account."
3. **Access:** On the TOL homepage, click the blue "Health Record" button to view your personal health data.
4. **Find data:** Select "Download My Data." You'll see several data categories.
5. **Customize:** Choose the person, data types, date range, and format for the records you want to download.
6. **Download:** You can choose to download your records in portable document format (.pdf) or as a (.xml) continuity of care document (CCD). The CCD format allows you to share your data with family, caregivers, providers, and healthcare systems, or to document data in your preferred personal health record.
7. **Save:** After downloading, you can either open the file or save it securely for future use. You can also print your records and store them in a safe place. **Important details**  
Your records won't transfer to MHS GENESIS once TOL decommissions.

Your TOL health records only reflect periods of time when your military hospital or clinic was using TOL.

**Note:** If you moved from one duty station to another, and one military hospital or clinic used TOL and the other used MHS GENESIS, your records in MHS GENESIS may have gaps. You'll find these "gap" records in the TOL Patient Portal. Be sure to download them.

You can only download your records for the past 30 years, from the date you log in to TOL.

Protect your health information. When you download or print your personal health information, it becomes your responsibility to keep it safe. Use secure options. Avoid saving personal data on unsecure devices or platforms.

It's also important to know that if you're planning to file a claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs at:

<https://www.va.gov/>. This decommissioning won't affect your ability to do so. Providers will still have access to your complete health records.



# Prepare for VA's sign-in changes

We're moving to a more modern online sign-in experience — to simplify your options and continue to protect your identity and benefits.



## Here's what's changing for VA websites and mobile apps:

- After January 31, 2025, we'll remove the option to sign in with a My HealtheVet user ID and password.
- After September 30, 2025, we'll remove the option to sign in with a DS Logon username and password.
- You'll then have two sign-in account options: **Login.gov** or **ID.me**.

**Note:** Your health portal isn't going away. We're just changing the way you sign in.

## Create your account now

Learn why we're making these changes — and how to create your Login.gov or ID.me account.



[www.va.gov/sign-in-changes](https://www.va.gov/sign-in-changes)

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# *NE (ME|NH|VT) RAD Info....*

**Military Retirees, Gray Area Retirees, Family Members and Survivors**

and All Branches of the US Armed Forces -

**You are Invited to The 27th ANNUAL NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND MILITARY RETIREE ACTIVITY DAY.**

SPONSORED BY The National Guards of New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont; The New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont Retiree Councils, and The Retired Activities Office of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

HERE'S WHAT'S AVAILABLE:

Legal Assistance, Health Care Information, Survivor Benefits, Recreational Facilities, Veterans Administration,

Veterans Cemeteries, Veterans Homes, DEERS /ID Card Renewals, and much more.

**SATURDAY AUGUST 23 2025**

**Location:** New Hampshire National Guard Army Aviation Support Facility

26 Regional Drive, Concord, New Hampshire

(All activities will be indoors)

## **DIRECTIONS:**

From the East & South: Route I-93 to Exit 13 (Manchester St) Right on Manchester St then left at first light onto Old Turnpike Rd. At second light, it turns into Regional Dr. Look for military helicopter on a pole on the right.

From the West & North: Routes 4 & 202 (to Concord) joins I-393. Take exit 3 off I-393 onto Route 106 South. At second light after Target, take right onto Regional Drive. Look for military helicopter on a pole to the left.

0800-0900 Registration

0900-0945 Opening Ceremony

0945-1300 Exhibitor Displays Open

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

COL (Ret) Frank Musmanno 603-495-3042 or CSM (Ret) Mike Rice 603-493-4918

*Mark  
Your  
Calendar!*

## APPRECIATION DAY (RAD)

**September 20, 2025**

Clark Hall, Bldg 10720

0800.....Registration Opens  
0900..... Opening Ceremony  
1000..... Program Updates,  
Tours, Vendor Tables & More

### Available Services:

- ♦ TRICARE
- ♦ Martin's Point
- ♦ VA
- ♦ DFAS
- ♦ ID Cards (315)772-5149
- ♦ Legal (315)772-5261
- ♦ SBP Updates
- ♦ Info & Wellness Fair
- ♦ Retirement Services

Please join us at the RAD in welcoming our guest speaker Mr. Craig McNamara. He served in the United State Army for 24 years. His first 8 years he was an enlisted Soldier later commissioning as an officer before retiring as a Major. He has two decades of Army aviation operational flying experience which enabled him to be deployed to Afghanistan, Kosovo, Kuwait and command an Attack Reconnaissance Troop of Kiowa Warrior helicopters in the northern cities of Iraq. He is a member of the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame, inducted by Senator Patty Ritchie in 2018. Mr. McNamara has displayed a lifelong passion for serving his country, Veterans, Soldiers and their families. He currently serves as the Transition Services Manager overseeing the Fort Drum Transition Assistance and Employment Readiness Programs.



## Once a Soldier. Always a Soldier... A Soldier for Life!

*Articles for this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the position of the Department of the Army or Fort Drum, NY. We do our best to ensure accuracy. The material in this newsletter was provided by a number of sources. The Retirement Services Office (RSO) publishes the Retirement Services Newsletter in accordance with AR 600-8-7. The RSO is located in Clark Hall, Room A1-3, Fort Drum, NY. You can contact us at: 1-800-556-9790 or e-mail: [usarmy.drum.rso@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.drum.rso@army.mil)*