



COMMANDER'S GUIDE TO CASUALTY ASSISTANCE



ACRONYM GLOSSARY

ABO	Accelerated Benefit Option	MTF	Medical treatment facility
CAC/FH	Casualty Assistance Calls/Funeral Honors	NGS	Navy Gold Star Program
CACO	Casualty Assistance Calls Officer	NGSC	Navy Gold Star coordinator
CACP	Casualty Assistance Calls Program	NMCM	Non-Medical Care Manager
CRP	Comprehensive recovery plan	NOK	Next of kin
DCIPS	Defense Casualty Information Processing System	NSI	Not seriously ill or injured
DUSTWUN	Duty status — whereabouts unknown	NUS	Navy Unit SITREP
EAWUN	Excused absence — whereabouts unknown	NWW	Navy Wounded Warrior
FHSP	Funeral Honors Support Program	PADD	Person authorized to direct disposition of human remains
FSGLI	Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance	PCR	Personnel Casualty Report
HUMS	Reassignment for humanitarian reasons	PERE	Person eligible to receive effects
INGSC	Installation Navy Gold Star coordinator	PNOK	Primary next of kin
INIT PCR	Initial Personnel Casualty Report	RCC	Recovery Care Coordinator
ISIC	Immediate superior in command	SBP	Survivor Benefit Plan
LOD	Line-of-duty	SGLI	Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance
LTAP	Navy Long Term Assistance Program	SI	Seriously ill or injured
		SITREP	Situation report
		VSI	Very seriously ill or injured

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The *Commander's Guide to Casualty Assistance* introduces the Navy's casualty assistance continuum. The guide is divided into two sections: The first section is a guide for command response during a casualty event, including what you need to know and whom to contact during an emergent situation. The second section provides detailed information about the care and support provided to wounded, ill or injured service members and surviving family members by the Navy Casualty Assistance Calls Program (CACP), Navy Wounded Warrior (NWW), the Navy Gold Star Program (NGS), Fisher House and the Navy Long Term Assistance Program (LTAP).

The *Commander's Guide to Casualty Assistance* includes official definitions of reportable casualties, procedures and contacts for reporting casualties and outlines of the programs through which the Navy responds promptly and compassionately when casualties occur. This guide also includes information and referral resources for commands and families and a place to record key local contacts so they can be accessed quickly in time of need.

While we hope you will never need this resource, we trust you will find the *Commander's Guide to Casualty Assistance* a valuable tool to ensure readiness for any casualty response.

COMMAND RESPONSE TO A CASUALTY

There are three tabbed subsections in this section. The tabs focus on the responsibilities of the command from the moment of the casualty until the handoff to the Navy Casualty Assistance Calls Program.

Casualty Reporting includes official definitions of reportable casualties, offers step-by-step procedures on what to do when a casualty occurs within your command, defines the response pathways for specific casualty events, and discusses next of kin notifications.

Fostering a Command Culture of Remembrance suggests ways for commands to honor deceased service members and include Survivors in future commemorative events.

Casualty Support Contact List provides a reference of important casualty assistance contact information so it will always be available when needed, including space to record information for local resources.



CASUALTY REPORTING

WHO IS A CASUALTY?

COMMAND
RESPONSE TO
A CASUALTY

A casualty is anyone who is ill, injured or deceased. Duty status — whereabouts unknown (DUSTWUN) or excused absence — whereabouts unknown (EAWUN) and missing (when designated) are reported as casualties pending further evidence or action. (See chart on Page 9.)

The following casualties must be reported *within four hours* to Navy Casualty Assistance Branch (PERS-00C) via the Personnel Casualty Report (PCR):

1. Death of an active-duty or Reserve service member, including U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen and Navy personnel.
2. Death of a DoD civilian employee or DoD contractor as a result of hostile or nonhostile action overseas or the result of hostile action within the 48 contiguous United States.
3. Injured or ill persons that meet the following criteria:
 - a. **Very seriously ill or injured (VSI).** Per DoD Instruction 1300.18, *Department of Defense (DoD) Personnel Casualty Matters, Policies, and Procedures*, this status is used when a medical authority declares it more likely than not that death is likely within 72 hours.
 - b. **Seriously ill or injured (SI).** Per DoD Instruction 1300.18, this status is used when a medical authority declares that death is possible but not likely within 72 hours, or the severity is such that it is permanent and life-altering. Illnesses or injuries that are considered long-term and may require extended hospitalization must also be reported.
 - c. **Not seriously ill or injured (NSI)** must be reported for injuries or illnesses that occur in theater.
4. DUSTWUN or missing active-duty personnel or DoD civilians.
5. Death of a 120-day-disability retired member.
6. Death of a dependent of an active-duty or a Reporting Reserve service member. Timely reporting will facilitate follow-on actions; however, reporting within four hours is not required.

DUSTWUN

Duty Status – Whereabouts Unknown)

This temporary status applies to service members whose absence is, or appears to be, involuntary. Commanders have 10 days to conduct rescue and recovery efforts or to investigate the circumstances. After 10 days, commanders must report the service member as deceased, recovered, in an unauthorized absence status or recommend the status of “missing.” See MILPERSMAN 1770-020, Duty Status-Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN) and “Missing” Status Recommendations.

EAWUN

(Excused Absence – Whereabouts Unknown)

Applies only to civilians and contractors. See MILPERSMAN 1770-260, Civilian Employee Casualty Reporting, Notification, and Assistance.

MISSING

This status can only be assigned by the Secretary of the Navy on the recommendation of an official board of inquiry. See MILPERSMAN 1770-020.

NSI

(Not Seriously Ill or Injured)

Permanent disability or death is not expected.

SI

(Seriously Wounded, Ill or Injured)

Permanent disability or death is possible, though death is unlikely within 72 hours.

VSI

(Very Seriously Ill or Injured)

Permanent disability or death is probable and death may occur within 72 hours.

“Status Unknown” categories affect pay, allowances and family members’ eligibility for services and support.

A military medical authority assigns the illness/injury categories NSI, SI and VSI. When service members and Navy civilians receive treatment in civilian facilities, Navy medical providers consult with non-military providers to determine the patient’s status.

REPORTING A CASUALTY

Upon learning of a service member casualty within the command, commanders must make official reports of the incident.

1. A situation report (SITREP) alerts the commander's chain of command to the casualty incident.
2. A voice report is required to the Navy Operations Center (NOC) *within five minutes* of receiving notice of an incident for NAVY BLUE, NAVY PINNACLE and force-protection-related Navy Unit SITREPs (NUS). (Please see Page 8 for more information.)
3. A web-based PCR is submitted through the Defense Casualty Information Processing System (DCIPS) as soon as possible after learning of a casualty, *preferably within four hours* (MILPERSMAN 1770-030, *Personnel Casualty Report Procedures*). The PCR notifies Navy Casualty at Navy Personnel Command as well as Navy Wounded Warrior (NWW) and activates casualty assistance resources. Initial reports may require follow-up entries. (Please see Page 11 for more information.)
4. Commands must work with the Navy Casualty Assistance Calls/Funeral Honors (CAC/FH) regional program manager to identify the notification team. The regional program manager will work with the command and assigned Casualty Assistance Calls Officers (CACOs) to notify, in person, the service member's primary next of kin (PNOK) first and then other next of kin (NOK) or identified interested parties.
5. Commands must complete a line-of-duty (LOD) investigation for all casualties that result in death. Additional requirements for ill or injured service members are outlined in the *Manual of the Judge Advocate General (JAGMAN)*. An LOD investigation determines whether a death occurred in the line of duty and whether the death was due to service member misconduct. Commands should consult MILPERSMAN 1770-060, *Judge Advocate General Manual (JAGMAN) Reporting Requirements for Line of Duty (LOD) Determinations in Death Cases* and the JAGMAN for further guidance.
6. For reporting purposes, commanders should ensure that anyone receiving notifications on behalf of the command document the exact time of notification and as many details as possible, including:

Who	Who is or was involved?
What	What happened? What action is ongoing? What future action is contemplated?
When	When did the incident occur?
Where	Where did the incident occur?
Assess	Is any assistance required? Is the media at the scene or is it expected?
Impact	What is the impact on the command's mission?

SITUATION REPORTS

SITREPs are written to ensure that Navy leaders, up to and including senior-level national leaders such as the Secretary of Defense and top Navy officials, are informed of critical events that affect operational or personnel readiness.

SITREP INFORMATION

Upon receipt of information about a casualty incident, commanders should ensure that *voice reports* are made to the:

- Senior watch officer (SWO).
- Command master chief (CMC).
- Executive officer (XO).
- Immediate superior in command (ISIC).
- Public affairs officer (PAO) for (NAVY BLUE/NAVY PINNACLE incidents).

Commanders should also ensure that appropriate program managers (e.g., sexual assault response coordinator, Command Managed Equal Opportunity, Family Advocacy Program) are informed of the incident.

SITREPS for some incidents may require the collection of information at the command level, either to classify an incident or for other purposes. Examples of additional information include:

- Investigative reports.
- Dates of operational individual augmentee (IA) deployments.
- Post-deployment health assessment and reassessment compliance.
- Service member's *Record of Emergency Data* (Page 2), including MILPERSMAN 1070/602, *Dependency Application*.
- Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) election forms.

Types of Situation Reports

NAVY UNIT SITREP (NUS)

Provides time-sensitive notification to an ISIC and to any appropriate operational commanders about incidents not meeting the level of NAVY BLUE or NAVY PINNACLE.

Example: A service member on liberty is severely injured in a single-vehicle crash on a rain-slicked highway.

NAVY BLUE SITREP

Informs the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) about incidents that may attract media attention.

Example: A service member on liberty is involved in a multivehicle crash, sending three people to the hospital. Alcohol and drag racing appear to be contributing factors.

NAVY PINNACLE SITREP

Informs top-level leaders about events that may attract national or international attention.

Example: A service member is killed and another is wounded when a civilian gunman opens fire on gate guards.

VOICE REPORTING STANDARDS FOR SITREPS

NAVY BLUE, NAVY PINNACLE and force-protection-related NUSs require a voice report to the NOC *within five minutes* of receiving notice about an incident.

NOC Contact Numbers	
NOC Battle Watch Captain	703-692-9284
NOC Watch Officer	703-693-2006

NAVY BLUE and NUS personnel incidents require a voice report to the appropriate CNO (N1) point of contact (POC) *within 24 hours*.

CNO (N1) POC Contact Numbers from OPNAVINST 3100.6K	
Domestic violence (CNIC N911)	202-433-4646 DSN 288-4646
Child abuse/neglect (CNIC N911)	901-874-4361 DSN 882-4361
Child sexual abuse (CNIC N911)	901-874-4361 DSN 882-4361
Sexual assault (CNIC N911)	202-433-4637 DSN 288-4637
Suicide Prevention (OPNAV N171) 21st Century service member Office	901-874-6613 DSN 882-6613
Sexual Harassment, Equal Opportunity (EO), Hazing, Bullying and Fraternization (OPNAV N173) 21st Century Sailor Office	800-253-0931 DSN 882-2507 Overseas: 901-874-2507 (collect)

MESSAGE REPORTING STANDARD FOR SITREPS

If a casualty SITREP is sent via Navy message, the message will be categorized as “Immediate” and transmitted *within 30 minutes*.

PERSONNEL CASUALTY REPORTS

An online initial PCR (INIT PCR) must be submitted to the Navy Casualty Office *within four hours* of a casualty incident.

Commands may log in to DCIPS at any of the common access card-enabled websites:

<https://dcsa.hrc.army.mil>

<https://dcsb.hrc.army.mil>

<https://dcsc.hrc.army.mil>

While an INIT PCR will always be the first official notification of an incident to Navy Casualty, subsequent reports may be necessary. PCR updates are categorized as:

SUPP
SUPPLEMENTAL

Providing amplifying information about an existing PCR, including information not available at the time of INIT submission, corrections or document uploads.

STACH
STATUS CHANGE

Specifically addressing a change in casualty status (e.g., the death of a member who was VSI).

PROG
PROGRESS

Reserved for use by military medical facilities who are required to submit periodic reports concerning the medical status of a member.

The current version of the step-by-step *DCIPS PCR User Guide*, including procedures for entering INIT PCRs and updates, is available on the Navy Casualty website at <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/Casualty>.

Submission of the online PCR form should be followed by voice contact with Navy Casualty at the following number(s)

Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Central	800-368-3202 DSN 882-2501
After hours (Casualty Watch)	901-634-9279

CASUALTY
REPORTING

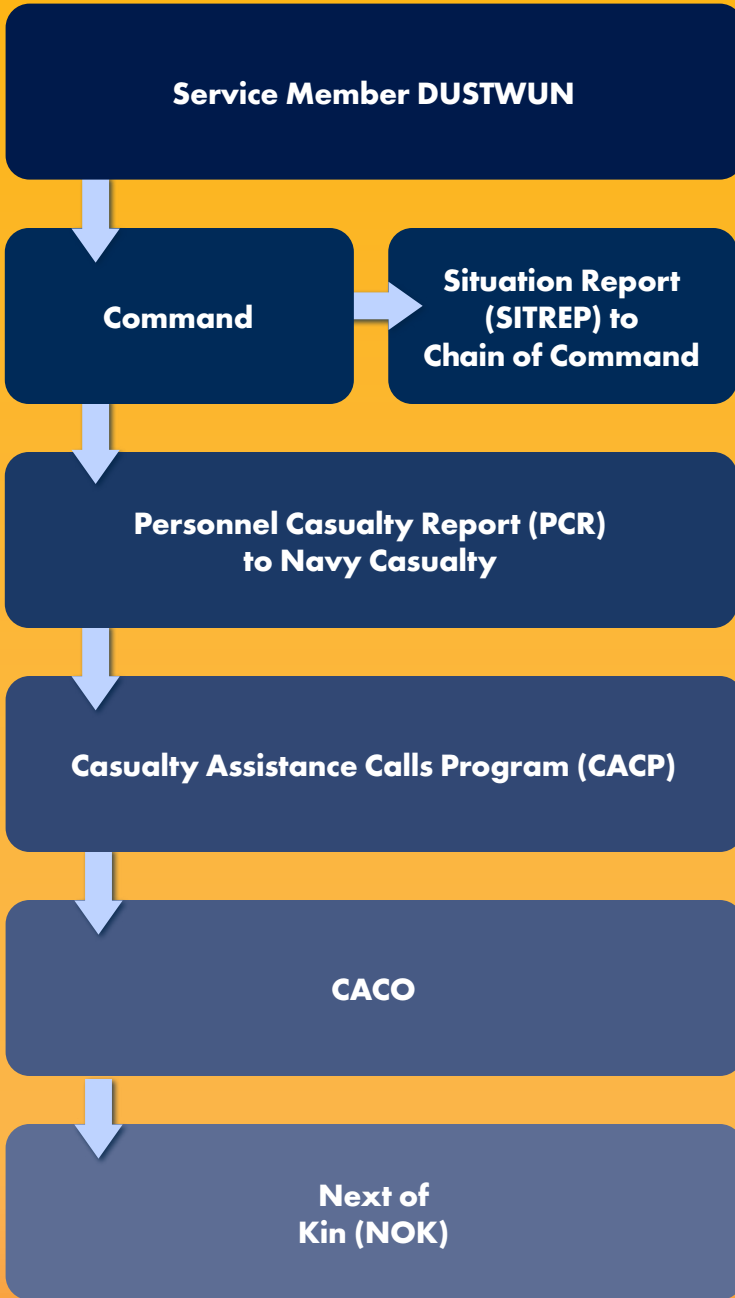
Once the PCR has been submitted, all addressees preprogrammed to receive DCIPS reports will receive email notifications. Navy Casualty (Casualty Watch during non-duty hours) will check DCIPS and take appropriate action to review and validate the report before submitting it to the CACO regions and other functional offices for further action.

RESPONSE PATHWAYS

The Command Determines That a Service Member Is Duty Status — Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN)

1. The command collects additional information as needed and submits a SITREP to the chain of command and PCR to Navy Casualty.
2. Navy Casualty notifies the regional Casualty Assistance Calls Program (CACP) coordinator.
3. The regional CACP assigns a CACO.
4. The CACO makes an in-person notification visit to the PNOK.
5. The command sends an informational letter to the PNOK *within 48 hours*, with copies to Navy Casualty and the Office of the Judge Advocate General (OJAG).
6. The command provides a daily supplemental PCR of search results, furnishing updates on the extent and progress of the search and other pertinent information.
7. The CACO monitors the service member's status and keeps the PNOK informed.
8. The command has *10 days* to update the service member's status, per MILPERSMAN 1770-020.

DUSTWUN Flow Chart



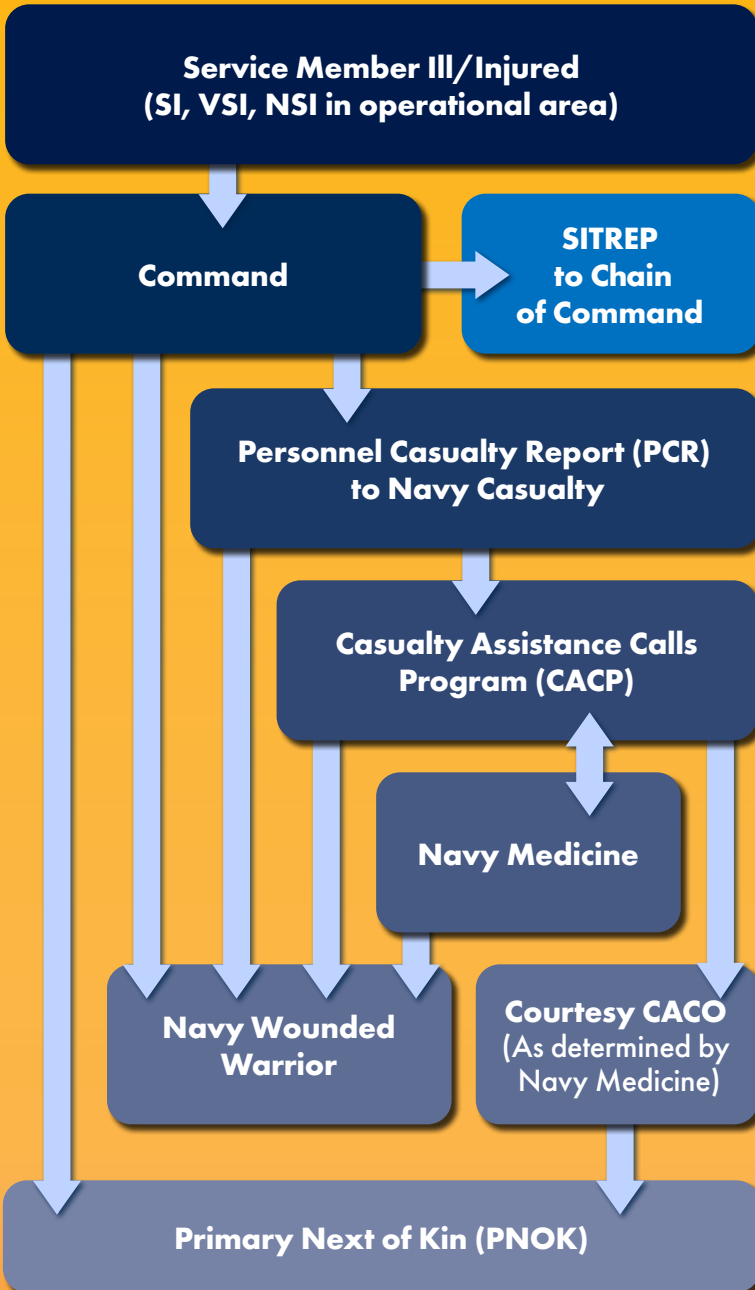
CASUALTY
REPORTING

THE COMMAND RECEIVES NOTIFICATION OF A SAILOR'S ILLNESS OR INJURY

1. The command collects additional information as needed and submits a SITREP to the chain of command and a PCR to Navy Casualty.
2. The command informs the PNOK of the service member's illness or injury, as the service member desires.
3. A military medical officer determines whether the service member's illness or injury status warrants the bedside presence of NOK. When warranted, Navy Casualty is the benefits-issuing authority for bedside travel for family members identified and requested by the service member.
4. If the service member and PNOK are not co-located and funded travel is authorized, the CAC/FH regional program manager assigns a courtesy CACO to help family members with travel arrangements and accommodations.
5. NWW automatically receives PCRs. If no PCR is generated, commands should still refer SI or injured personnel to NWW. Once the referral is received, the respective regional program director will assign a staff member to meet with the service member and identify non-medical needs.
6. The command may assign an inventory board to catalog and store the service member's personal effects if those effects are on government property.

Note: Commanders should ensure prompt submission of a PCR even when a service member is treated in a civilian hospital. Upon receipt of a PCR, the Navy Casualty Office at Navy Personnel Command notifies Navy Medicine. Each civilian hospital falls under the "medical cognizance" of a military medical facility. If that medical facility determines the service member's status is bedside warranted, up to three individuals may travel to the bedside of the ill or injured service member (see MILPERSMAN 1770-230, *Wounded, Ill, and Injured Sailors: Casualty Reporting, Notification, and Bedside Travel*).

Notification of Illness/Injury Pathway



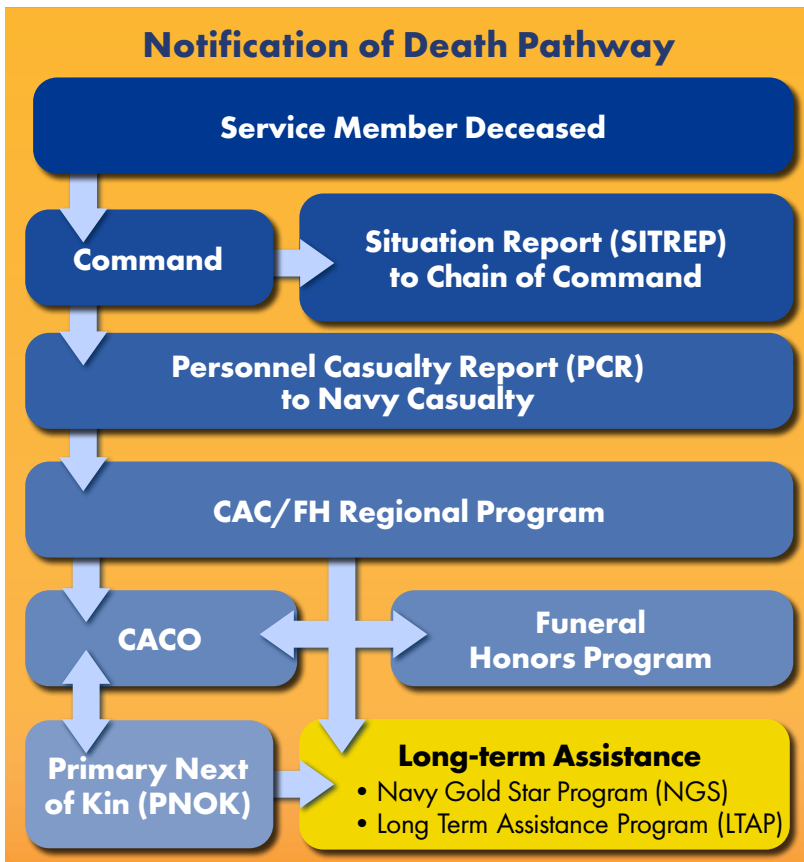
CASUALTY
REPORTING

THE COMMAND RECEIVES NOTIFICATION OF A SERVICE MEMBER'S DEATH

1. The command collects additional information, if possible, but submission of a PCR to Navy Casualty should not be delayed. A SITREP is also submitted to the chain of command.
2. Navy Casualty notifies the CAC/FH regional program manager.
3. The CAC/FH regional program manager activates a CACO to assist the PNOK, additional NOK and any other identified interested persons. Depending upon the locations of the service member and each NOK, the CACOs may or may not be in the service member's own command.
4. The CACO makes an in-person notification visit to the PNOK and others identified in Step 3.
5. Upon confirmation with Navy Casualty, the assigned CACO works with the person authorized to direct disposition of human remains (PADD) to make funeral arrangements. The PADD is designated on the decedent's *Record of Emergency Data* (Page 2) and is not always the PNOK. Discussing options with the Mortuary Affairs Branch of Navy Casualty is highly encouraged. Funeral honors may also be arranged through the Funeral Honors Support Program (FHSP), as appropriate.
6. The CAC/FH regional program manager informs FHSP personnel and, for situational awareness, the regional Navy Gold Star (NGS) program coordinator.
7. The command sends a condolence letter to the PNOK *within 48 hours*.
8. The command assigns an inventory board to inventory and store the service member's personal effects if those effects are on government property. The command should work closely with the assigned CACO and Navy Casualty to establish the person eligible to receive effects (PERE) and next steps regarding the return of personal property.
9. The CACO attends the service member's funeral, if local.
10. The command may schedule a memorial service for the service member. If so, the command ensures all eligible family members are invited to attend and coordinates travel arrangements with the CACO and Navy Casualty.
11. *Within 10 business days of the initial PCR*, Navy Casualty will complete the benefits package. Each CACO will then schedule a visit with their assigned NOK to review the package and assist with the completion of paperwork.

12. The CACO introduces the NGS Program to Survivors *within 21 days of the service member's death* and communicates with the installation NGS coordinator (INGSC) to plan an appropriate introduction of the coordinator to the family. The INGSC will contact the Survivors and offer support as needed.
13. The CACO formally transfers the case to NGS once the CAC/FH regional program manager determines CACO duties are complete.

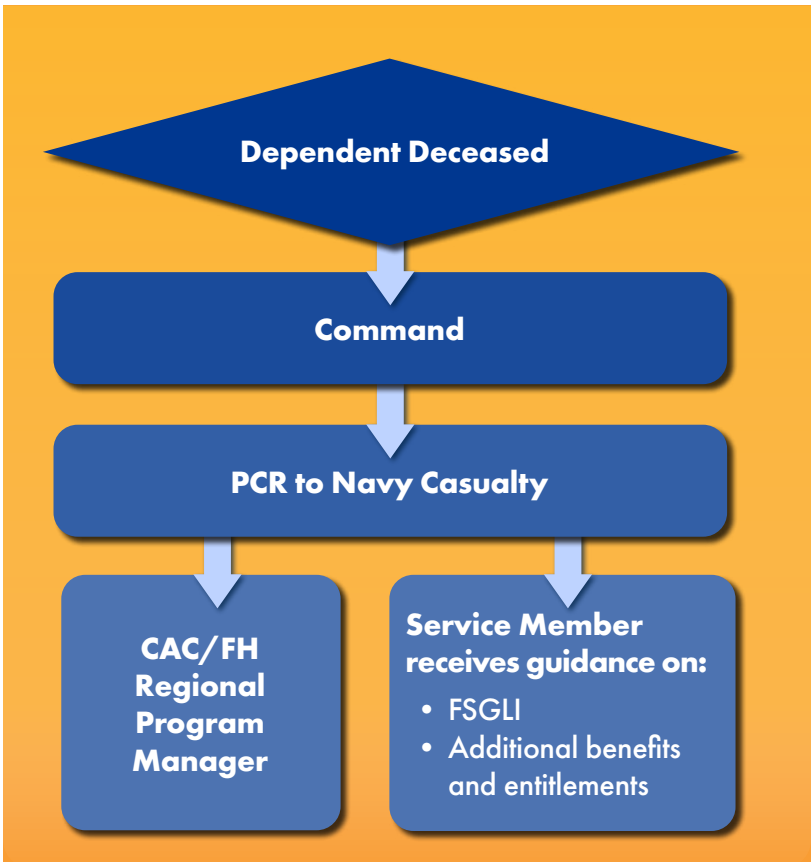
If the surviving spouse is an active-duty service member, they may face additional challenges unique to service. In such cases, consider a reassignment for humanitarian reason (HUMS) request. See MILPERSMAN 1300-500, *Reassignments for Humanitarian Reasons (HUMS)*, for additional information.



THE COMMAND RECEIVES NOTIFICATION OF A DEPENDENT'S DEATH

1. The command collects additional information as needed and submits a PCR to Navy Casualty.
2. Navy Casualty notifies the CAC/FH regional program manager.
3. Upon receipt of the PCR, Navy Casualty will provide guidance to the command and service member on Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI) claims and entitlements for transportation of remains.

Note: Commanders should ensure prompt submission of a PCR for deceased dependents to initiate benefits processes.



THE COMMAND RECEIVES NOTIFICATION OF A NAVY CIVILIAN CASUALTY

EXCUSED ABSENCE — WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN (EAWUN), ILL/INJURED OR DECEASED IN AN OPERATIONAL AREA

1. The command submits a SITREP to the chain of command.
2. The command collects additional information as needed and submits a PCR to Navy Casualty.
3. Navy Casualty notifies the CAC/FH regional program manager.
4. The CAC/FH regional program manager activates a CACO, who makes a one-time notification visit to the PNOK.

Notification of Civilian Casualty Pathway



INFORMING THE NEXT OF KIN OF ILLNESS OR INJURY

Command notification, via telephone, is *only* made for wounded, ill or injured service members. Deceased service members' NOK must be notified in person through established notification protocols.

The purpose of a notification call from an ill or injured service member's command is to inform the service member's PNOK or other designated individual that an incident, illness or accident has occurred. Plan the call before making it in order to convey all available facts about the circumstances of the event and the service member's condition at the time of the call. The caller should have notes, if necessary, to ensure that key points are covered and take notes about information provided by the PNOK that might shed additional light on the incident itself.

The command should place the call to the PNOK as soon as possible after receiving word of the illness or injury. The caller should be prepared for the possibility that the incident is already known to the PNOK through calls from family members, social contacts or media.

The caller should maintain a calm, professional and dignified demeanor and show consideration for the PNOK by listening actively and verifying understanding of the PNOK's concerns.

If investigations (e.g., LOD, law enforcement) are underway, the caller should acknowledge the investigations but make no attempt to estimate how long they will take to complete.

When the PNOK is not co-located with a service member who is designated SI or VSI, the caller should tell the PNOK they will receive further communication from a Navy CACO. The Navy Casualty Office (PERS-00C) will work with Navy Medicine to determine whether travel arrangements for family members can be authorized. If so, the courtesy CACO will help make travel arrangements and secure accommodations.

UNDERSTANDING SURVIVORS' EMOTIONS

In contacts with Survivors, commanders and command representatives may find that Survivors express strong and sometimes conflicting emotions. It is important to support Survivors in the emotional moment without rejecting, redirecting or trying to “fix” their feelings.

Emotions frequently associated with grief include anger, irritability, mood swings, appetite changes leading to weight gain or loss, denial, sadness, disbelief, distrust, fear, decreased motivation, sleep disturbances and withdrawal.

ADDRESSING SURVIVORS' LOSS AND GRIEF

Command contacts with family members may not end with notification. Each command is encouraged to foster a “culture of remembrance” that is mindful of its heritage, honors its missing and dead, and is inclusive of Survivors. Immediate command follow-up activities may include the following:

1. Sending a letter of condolence.
2. Holding a command memorial service.
3. Connecting Survivors to the Gold Star and Surviving Family Member Representative”, vice “Survivor Family Member Representative.

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2014, Section 633, requires each secretary of a military department to designate a specific advocate to assist spouses and other dependents of service members who die on active duty. These representatives are available to address issues or concerns by a Survivor regarding casualty assistance or receipt of military survivor benefits authorized by law.

If a Survivor is not satisfied with any aspect of the casualty assistance provided, contact the Navy’s Gold Star and Surviving Family Member Representative at (877) 270-2162.

In contacts following notification, be sure to:

Use the service member's name.

Honestly answer questions.

Do not try to answer the "why."

Do not fear silence or tears.

Accept and acknowledge Survivors' feelings.

Check on Survivors periodically.

Be patient.

Respect Survivors' privacy.

Ensure Survivors do not become isolated.

Encourage Survivors to get help when needed.

What to Say

- My heart goes out to you at this difficult time.
- I know there is nothing I can say that will make your loss easier.
- I cannot imagine how difficult this must be for you or your family.
- I'm (we're) here for you. How can I (we) help?
- I'm at a loss for words.

What Not to Say

- I know how you feel.
- Everything will be alright.
- God knows best.
- It's God's will.
- God doesn't give us anything we can't handle.
- You'll feel better in a month or so.

Language of Suicide

Like many things, the language about suicide has evolved. It is important to use words that are neutral, factual, and free from stigma.

Instead of:	Say:
Committed suicide	Died by suicide
Successful suicide attempt	Suicide death
Unsuccessful suicide attempt	Suicide attempt
Completed suicide	Suicide

CASUALTY
REPORTING

Writing a Condolence Note

- Always write a note by hand, do not type it.
- Keep it short, be sincere.
- Share a memory of the deceased if you have one or personalize the note in another way.
- Close the note with thoughtful, supportive words.

Example

Dear [Family member's name],

I am writing on behalf of the crew of the USS XXXX to express our sympathy. [Deceased's name] was a valued member of our crew and made a lasting impression during their time with the command. [Deceased's name] was known on board for their determination, work ethic, and ability to defuse a stressful situation with humor. They will be missed by everyone who knew them.

Our thoughts are with you during this difficult time.

LINE OF DUTY (LOD) INVESTIGATIONS

All service member deaths and some service member illnesses and injuries require LOD investigations. The outcome of an LOD investigation can have a significant influence on the benefits provided to a service member and their family.

The command must forward the completed LOD investigation to their general court-martial convening authority (GCMCA) for review and endorsement.

LOD investigations should be completed *within 20 days* but sometimes take longer when required supporting documents (e.g., civilian accident findings, laboratory reports) are delayed.



FOSTERING A COMMAND CULTURE OF REMEMBRANCE

Our country and our Navy honor the service of the fallen and care for their Survivors. The first pensions for Survivors of those who died serving the United States were established in 1780, providing half pay to the widows and orphans of the Revolutionary War. Memorial Day, the first federal holiday to honor those who, according to General John A. Logan, “died in defense of their country,” had its roots in Decoration Day, a holiday first observed in 1868 to honor those who fell in the Civil War.

Honoring fallen shipmates is not just a nice thing to do but a vital mission for every command. Like any other mission, achieving it takes dedication, focus and command involvement.

Today, many commands take time each year to honor those who never came home from the wars of our nation; Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) displays are common. Remembrance tables are set at annual banquets and balls while Roll Call of Heroes ceremonies are included in other observances. Warfighting communities team with professional associations and veteran service organizations to honor the fallen at their meetings and conventions.

Surviving family members report that after the loss of their service members, continued involvement in command activities and remaining a part of their Navy family can be instrumental in their grief journey. COs play an important role in keeping the memory of lost service members alive.

Every command action taken sets a precedent and shapes the culture for subordinates. Commanders who have experienced losses within their commands share the following helpful advice:

- Engage with Survivors immediately after a casualty. This demonstrates genuine concern on the part of the commander.
- Adopt a long-term family care plan that includes personal letters of condolences, outreach letters for holidays and invitations to command events. Ensure this is addressed in CO turnover so that Survivor engagement continues even when leadership changes.

FOSTERING
A COMMAND
CULTURE OF
REMEMBRANCE

- While observing operational security and according to Survivor wishes, inform Survivors of command activities through newsletters, social media and other information outlets.
- Include Survivors in official command functions, such as changes of command.
- Remember that holidays can be especially difficult for the families, so include Survivors in holiday festivities. Even if Survivors never attend, it means a lot to simply be invited.
- Establish a permanent command memorial, such as a plaque or scroll commemorating service members who are “gone but not forgotten.” Ideally, this should be located near the quarterdeck. Plan a ceremony whenever a service member is added to the memorial and invite surviving family members.
- Include family members in commemorations after catastrophic losses or accidents.
- Encourage and support the development of commemorative traditions unique to the mission and character of your command.
- Encourage and facilitate unit attendance at and participation in regional Navy Gold Star (NGS) events. The NGS Program hosts numerous events throughout the year. Contact your local NGS coordinator to find out how you and your command can support the program and all NGS families. Visit www.navygoldstar.com/locations to find your closest coordinator.

Most importantly, be sincere and committed. Even if the families never participate, they will appreciate the inclusion and recognize that their service member has not been forgotten.

CASUALTY SUPPORT CONTACT LIST

Navy Casualty Assistance Calls Program (CACP)

(202) 826-5842

[https://www.cnic.navy.mil/Operations-and-Management/
Base-Support/Command-and-Staff/Casualty-Assistance](https://www.cnic.navy.mil/Operations-and-Management/Base-Support/Command-and-Staff/Casualty-Assistance)

Navy Wounded Warrior (NWW)

(855) NAVY-WWP or (855) 628-9997

<https://www.navywoundedwarrior.com>

Email: navywoundedwarrior.fct@navy.mil

Navy Gold Star (NGS) Program

(888) 509-8759

<https://www.navygoldstar.com>

Email: navygoldstar.fct@navy.mil

Navy Casualty Long Term Assistance Program (LTAP)

(877) 270-2162

<https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/Casualty/LTAP>

Email: MILL_LTAP@navy.mil

Fisher House

(888) 294-8560

<https://fisherhouse.org>

Email: info@fisherhouse.org

OTHER CASUALTY SUPPORT CONTACTS

Navy Casualty Office (PERS-00C) and Navy Casualty Operations Branch (CASOP)

Address: 5720 Integrity Drive, Millington, TN 38055-1300

Toll-free, Duty hours: (800) 368-3202 | After hours: (901) 634-9279

Commercial: (901) 874-2501

DSN: 882-2501

Commercial Fax: (901) 874-6654

DSN Fax: 882-6654

<https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/Casualty>

Navy Mortuary Affairs

Address: 5720 Integrity Drive, Millington, TN 38055-0000

Toll-free, Duty hours: (866) 787-0081 | After hours: (901) 634-9279

Commercial: (901) 874-2307 or 6714

DSN: 882-2307

Commercial Fax: (901) 874-2443

Email: mill_NAVMORT.fct@navy.mil

<https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/Casualty/Mortuary-Services>

Navy Survivor Support and Entitlements

(Includes Navy Traumatic Injury SGLI (TSGLI), Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), FSGLI and LTAP support)

Address: 5720 Integrity Drive, Millington, TN 38055-0000

Toll-free, Duty hours: (877) 270-2162

Commercial: (901) 874-2699

DSN: 882-2699

Commercial Fax: (901) 874-2265

TSGLI: mill_tsgli.fct@navy.mil

FSGLI: mill_fsgli.fct@navy.mil

SBP: mill_sbp-lod@navy.mil

LTAP: mill_ltap@navy.mil

Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC)

Find a center: <https://ffr.cnic.navy.mil/Family-Readiness/Fleet-And-Family-Support-Program/FFSC-Directory>

Chaplaincare (via Navy 311)

Telephone: (855) NAVY 311
(855) 628-9311

DSN: (510) NAVY 311
(510) 628-9311

Email: NAVY311@navy.mil

NAVY311@navy.smil.mil

<http://www.NAVY311.navy.mil> or <https://www.NAVY311.navy.smil.mil>

Navy Family Ombudsman Program

Contact your ombudsman: <https://ombudsmanregistry.cnic.navy.mil>

COMMAND CASUALTY REPORT CONTACT LIST

CASUALTY
SUPPORT
CONTACT LIST

Use this section to record local installation and command POCs and update the list regularly.

CACO:	
CMEO:	
DAPA:	
FAP:	
PAO:	
SAPR:	
SUICIDE:	
SWO:	

NAVY CASUALTY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

There are four tabbed subsections in this section. These tabs focus on the continuing services offered by the Navy to support Navy casualties.

Casualty Assistance Calls Program provides information, resources and assistance to Navy families following casualty incidents and helps families navigate what can be a long and difficult transition.

Recovery Support Programs offer care for wounded, ill and injured service members and their families.

Long-Term Survivor Support Programs support the families of service members and dependents who have died.

Veteran Services are available to service members who are no longer serving on active duty.

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE CALLS PROGRAM

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Navy Casualty Assistance Calls Program (CACP) is directed by the Chief of Naval Operations (N13) through Navy Personnel Command (Navy Casualty) and Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC). CACP provides information, resources and assistance to Navy families after casualty incidents and helps families navigate what can be a long and difficult transition.

The CACP is the responsibility of the Casualty Assistance Calls/Funeral Honors (CAC/FH) program manager. At the local level, Navy casualty assistance and funeral honors are provided through regional offices around the world. Contact the Navy CACP at (202) 826-5842.

In each Navy region, preparation for, and response to, casualty incidents are managed by a regional program manager. Duties of the regional program manager include training, coaching and providing resources for Casualty Assistance Calls Officers (CACOs) in each active-duty and Reserve Component Command within the region. Reservists are an important supporting element of the CACP, allowing the Navy to provide timely casualty notifications when next of kin (NOK) are not living with the service member casualty and assisting with funeral honors away from fleet concentration areas.

CACO DUTIES

CACO duties depend upon the nature of the casualty (e.g., missing, illness, injury or death) and whether the casualty occurs while the service member is within the contiguous 48 states, overseas, underway or deployed. Upon receipt of an assigned case, the CACO's full-time responsibility and mission is to help families through the process and ensure they receive the benefits and entitlements due to them from the Department of Defense, the Department of the Navy and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Other specific CACO duties include:

1. Personally notifying the primary next of kin (PNOK) of service member deaths, illnesses or injuries that occur in operational areas and Navy civilian or contractor casualties that occur while the civilian or contractor is deployed. Casualty notification includes describing facts about the circumstances of the incident.
2. Determining the wishes of the person authorized to direct disposition of human remains (PADD), which is not always the PNOK, regarding what should be done with the remains (e.g., embalming and casketing, burial, cremation) and informing and coordinating with the local decedent affairs officer, Mortuary Affairs Office and regional coordinator.
3. Determining the needs of the casualty's immediate family and connecting them with appropriate resources, such as the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society or American Red Cross.
4. Ascertaining the schedule for shipping the service member's remains and informing the PADD.
5. Assisting with travel arrangements to and from the ceremonial dignified transfer of remains at Dover Air Force Base and the command memorial service, as appropriate.
6. Assisting designated beneficiaries with the completion of forms to arrange payment of the death gratuity.
7. Assisting with funeral arrangements, including funeral honors, chaplain services and NOK transportation.
8. Assisting with Survivor benefits applications.

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9. Monitoring and keeping the person eligible to receive effects (PERE), usually the PNOK, informed of personal effects and household goods shipments.
 10. Referring interested news media to the local public affairs officer (PAO).
 11. CACOs make at least three in-person contacts with Survivors, usually at the Survivor's home. These contacts are commonly called the notification visit, the funeral arrangement visit and the benefits visit.
 12. CACOs make a one-time notification visit to the family of a Navy civilian casualty.
 13. CACOs make a one-time notification visit to the family of a deserter who has died.

COMMAND SUPPORT FOR CACOS

Commanders should ensure that personnel appointed as command CACOs receive quotas and funding to attend the two-day CACO training course at the first opportunity.

Commanders should ensure that CACOs have the time and resources to work assigned cases full time for at least 10 days and are not assigned watches or other additional duties until after the benefits visit with Survivors.

COURTESY CACO DUTIES

CACOs may also be assigned courtesy duties to assist family members traveling under invitational orders to the bedside of seriously ill (SI), very seriously ill (VSI) or injured service members or to view a dignified transfer ceremony. The courtesy CACO ensures the family is met at their point of arrival and escorts them or provides directions to the hospital or medical treatment facility where their service member is receiving care or to the Center for Families of the Fallen at Dover Air Force Base. They also help secure lodging. A courtesy CACO may also attend the service member's funeral if the assigned CACO cannot attend.

RECOVERY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

NAVY WOUNDED WARRIOR

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Navy Wounded Warrior (NWW) coordinates the non-medical care of seriously wounded, ill and injured Sailors and Coast Guardsmen and provides resources and support to their families and caregivers.

NWW enables service members to focus on their recovery goals and well-being, encourages retention and supports a return to duty or a smooth transition to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) when a medical condition prohibits continued service.

NWW Headquarters is located at the Washington Navy Yard. NWW region staff are co-located at select Fleet and Family Service Centers (FFSC) and certain medical treatment facilities to allow close collaboration with service members, commands and medical staff.

Navy Wounded Warrior

Telephone: 855-NAVY-WMP
855-628-9967

navywoundedwarrior.fct@navy.mil

<https://www.navywoundedwarrior.com>

ENROLLMENT AND ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for NWW is not limited to Sailors and Coast Guardsmen with combat-related wounds or injuries. It also encompasses those with serious, non-combat related injuries, and physical or psychological illnesses such as cancer or mental health issues.

Referrals are received from various sources, including the service member, their command, peers, medical staff, FFSC personnel or a family member.

Once a service member is referred, the NWW Headquarters Enrollment Committee completes a case-by-case assessment and assigns an appropriate category of non-medical case management.

NON-MEDICAL CASE MANAGEMENT

NWW provides proactive and tailored assistance with, and management of, non-medical care needs throughout the continuum of care. This includes:

Comprehensive Recovery Plan

NWW works with each enrollee to develop and execute an ongoing Comprehensive Recovery Plan (CRP) that incorporates the needs and goals identified during the service member's initial assessment and subsequent re-evaluations. The CRP includes actions that, when taken in the short term, contribute to the service member's ability to meet longer-range goals related to their medical recovery, career and family.

High-Level Collaboration

NWW has productive working relationships with a diverse group of government agencies and regularly collaborates with Navy Personnel Command, Navy Medicine, the VA and the Disability Evaluation System on behalf of enrollees. NWW also works with the service member's command, including helping with invitational and bedside travel orders.

Pay and Personnel Assistance

NWW Pay and Entitlements Division assists with military pay, benefits and entitlements for program enrollees. NWW is also the Navy's benefits-approving authority for Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living as well as Pay and Allowance Continuation.

Family and Caregiver Support

Family members and designated caregivers are an important part of a service member's recovery process, and NWW works to support them in order to ensure as full a shared recovery as possible. This includes organizing and directing family members and caregivers to resources for parental and spousal support groups, child care, employment and including them in the CRP.

Non-governmental Organizations

NWW facilitates vetted non-governmental organization (NGO) assistance for support the federal government cannot fund, including travel expenses, lodging, financial assistance, specialized equipment, housing modifications, special events, programs and training.

Adaptive Sports and Reconditioning

Fitness and teamwork are a way of life in the military, and NWW's adaptive athletics and reconditioning events provide year-round opportunities for enrollees to discover new capabilities, gain self-confidence, build strength and endurance, and draw inspiration from teammates. Adaptive sports and reconditioning activities are modified to meet the abilities of wounded, ill or injured individuals, some of whom have altered physical capabilities, and are an important part of the service members' recovery and rehabilitation.

Key Takeaways

Know

NWW services are not limited to combat-related injuries or illnesses.

NWW services are available to assist families and caregivers.

Command support can be critical to their recovery!

Act

Refer wounded, ill and injured service members to NWW.

Call outpatient service members and visit those who are inpatient.

Encourage enrollee participation in adaptive athletics and reconditioning, internships and other beneficial opportunities.

FISHER HOUSE

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Fisher House provides temporary housing for families of service members while their loved ones recover from serious medical conditions. Families stay free; the nightly service fee is underwritten by the Fisher House Foundation. There are 70 Fisher Houses on 24 military installations worldwide.

Any family member of an active-duty or retired service member who is being treated at a military hospital is eligible to stay in a Fisher House. In some locations, outpatients may also stay.

Fisher House lodging is available by referral only. Families are eligible for one room and one parking space per referral.

REFERRAL PROCEDURE

1. Referral forms must be sent directly to the Fisher House manager via fax.
2. A referral form must be prepared and signed by physicians, nurses, case managers, social workers or RCCs.
3. Referral forms may not be filled out as a self-referral but must be completed by medical professionals.
4. Advance referral forms may be completed and submitted before the family's arrival.
5. A referral does not guarantee that Fisher House space will be available.
6. Families may not always be admitted on the first request.

For contact information on the closest facility and to obtain more information, visit www.fisherhouse.org.

LONG-TERM SURVIVOR SUPPORT PROGRAMS

NAVY GOLD STAR

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Navy Gold Star (NGS) Program ensures that surviving families of deceased service members are not forgotten and remain a part of the Navy family for as long as they desire. NGS works in tandem with the Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO) to support these families following the loss of their loved one. NGS assumes the primary role of long-term support provider once the CACO completes their duties. Program participants include eligible Survivors who are contacted by NGS coordinators for engagement and those who self-refer or are directed to the program by others.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Persons eligible to participate in NGS include the widow or widower, children, parents and other next of kin (NOK). Anyone interested in more information and others who need information about NGS may call (888) 509-8759 or visit www.navygoldstar.com.

NGS is typically introduced to Survivors by the CACO *within the first 21 days* following the death of an active-duty Sailor. While the CACO completes their duties, they will provide contact information for the nearest NGS coordinator (NGSC), who will provide support for and be a resource to the CACO and Survivors as needed, before assuming the long-term support role. Commanders may also provide program contact information and recommend engagement with NGS.

NAVY GOLD STAR SERVICES

NGSCs can connect Survivors to support groups as well as grief and bereavement counselors, provide benefits milestone management, request copies of documents and offer information and referral services while providing Survivors a safe and compassionate environment to experience their own unique grief.

NGS sponsors and promotes memorial and honorary events and activities for Survivors.

Survivors report that one of the greatest challenges they face in their grief journey is rebuilding resiliency as they transition to their new normal. Reassuring Survivors that their loved one will not be forgotten and that they will be able to maintain their link to the Navy culture contributes significantly to the resiliency-building process for Survivors. NGS's mission is to deliver Survivor assistance programs and services through a holistic approach that addresses personal, family, social, financial, legal, educational and vocational needs and concerns. To connect with the closest NGSC, visit www.navygoldstar.com/locations.

NGSCs work closely with Navy Personnel Command's Long Term Assistance Program (LTAP), installation Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSC) and other government and nongovernment agencies to provide long-term support to surviving family members. NGSCs assist with referrals and connections to appropriate resources for any need that may arise.

NAVY SURVIVOR LONG TERM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LTAP)

LTAP works in conjunction with NGS to provide immediate assistance in many areas. LTAP provides awareness and offers assistance through direct correspondence, social media and Survivor events.

As part of the Navy Casualty organization, LTAP stands ready to assist with:

- Benefits questions, including death gratuity, unpaid compensation, Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI), Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).
- Reimbursements for travel to burial or command memorial ceremonies.
- Gold Star Lapel Pin and Next of Kin Lapel Pin requests.
- Official casualty documents, such as DD Form 1300, *Report of Casualty*, which may be used for proof of death, proof of service and line-of-duty (LOD) investigations.
- Connection to appropriate support organizations to fulfill specific needs.

LTAP also serves as the Navy's Gold Star and surviving family member representative, for any survivors who are not satisfied with the casualty assistance or military benefits support provided by the Navy.

For additional assistance, please contact Navy LTAP at (877) 270-2162 or visit <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/Casualty/LTAP>.

NAVY MORTUARY SERVICES

The Navy Mortuary Affairs Branch within the Navy Casualty Assistance Division ensures that prompt and uniform death benefits are provided to all Navy beneficiaries worldwide.

ACTIVE-DUTY AND ACTIVATED RESERVE DEATHS

Navy morticians coordinate funeral preparations via Navy contracting officers and funeral directors worldwide. Together, they work with the person authorized to direct disposition of human remains (PADD) or NOK to make funeral arrangements and negotiate contract charges in order to expedite the shipment of remains. Funeral contracts provide primary care benefits for deceased active-duty Navy and Marine Corps personnel, regardless of duty assignment location. Active-duty personnel are also entitled to secondary funeral expense and transportation reimbursements when remains are moved from place of death to place of burial.

DEPENDENTS

When the death of a dependent living with an active-duty service member stationed outside the continental United States (OCONUS) occurs, entitlements for preparation and transportation of remains are provided. For dependents of active-duty service members serving within the continental United States (CONUS), only transportation of remains is provided.

CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES

Civilian employees who die while on official orders away from their normal duty station are provided transportation of remains only.

MORTUARY SERVICE DEATH BENEFITS

Any questions regarding monetary reimbursements for funeral and cemetery expenses should be referred to Navy Mortuary at (866) 787-0081. Mortuary Service death benefits are defined as follows:

Primary Care

Removal from the place of death, preparation including dressing and cosmetics, selection of a metal or wooden casket, uniform preparation, cremation and a metal or wooden urn, shipment of the remains to the place of services and shipment of remains to the place of burial under military escort.

Secondary Care

Funeral home charges, grave space and opening, vault, memorial items, obituaries, flowers, etc., arranged by the PADD and NOK. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides cemetery markers (VA Form 40-1330, *Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker*). Families requesting VA markers and headstones must ensure before ordering that their chosen cemetery will accept VA headstones and markers. Any questions regarding monetary reimbursements for funeral and cemetery expenses should be referred to Navy Mortuary at (866) 787-0081.

Transportation Of Remains

Removal from the place of death and delivery to the final resting place. All costs are paid for the remains of active duty, activated Reservists, dependents and civilian employees on official orders away from their normal duty station. Expenses include commercial air transportation, shipping container and embassy fees if shipping to or from another country. For retirees and their dependents, the service member's death must have occurred as an inpatient in a medical treatment facility (MTF), specifically a Navy, Army or Air Force hospital. Payment is limited to removal from the hospital and transportation to the final place of burial. Airfare charges, shipping container and hearse fees for transportation are examples of such reimbursements.

Cemetery Expenses

All cemeteries operate under separate state regulations. Almost all cemeteries expect payment upfront. This applies to all active-duty Navy and Marine Corps deceased personnel, who are entitled to cemetery reimbursements under U.S. Code Title 10. If secondary funeral expenses do not exceed designated allowances, the remaining balance can be applied toward applicable cemetery charges.

FUNERAL AND CEMETERY CLAIMS PROCESSING

To process funeral-related claims, the following items are required:

1. Itemized bills and receipts relating to funeral expenses, such as *signed* funeral contracts by the PADD or family representative. (Expenses for food and drink will not be reimbursed.)
2. DD Form 1375, *Request for Payment of Funeral and/or Interment Expenses*, which requires the sponsor's Social Security number (SSN), the claimant's SSN and the signature of the PADD or NOK.
3. A copy of the death certificate or a command-generated Personnel Casualty Report (PCR).
4. Civilian employee claims must also contain a copy of the official temporary additional duty (TAD) orders.

For any additional questions concerning benefits and claims, please contact Navy Mortuary Affairs.

Navy Casualty

Telephone: (866) 787-0081

Monday thru Friday 7:30 a.m.-4:00
p.m. Central Time

By Mail:

Navy Casualty (PERS-00C)
Attn: Navy Mortuary
5720 Integrity Drive
Millington, TN 38054

Note: All claims are based on reimbursement of expenses. Therefore, funeral claim benefits cannot be accessed as cash advances.

DEPENDENT DEATHS

Upon receipt of a PCR reporting the death of a dependent, the Navy Casualty Assistance Office (PERS-00C) will provide guidance on Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI) claims and entitlements for transportation of remains.

Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI)

FSGLI provides life insurance coverage for the following family members of active-duty and Reserve members who have full-time SGLI coverage:

- Civilian spouses.
- Dependent children, including:
 - Unmarried natural-born children and legally adopted children under age 18.
 - Unmarried stepchildren under age 18 who are members of the service member's household.
 - Any unmarried dependent child who, after attaining the age of 18 and until completion of education or training (but not after attaining the age of 23), is pursuing a course of instruction at an approved educational institution.
 - Any unmarried dependent child who has been declared permanently incapable of self-support before the age of 18.
- Stillborn children whose fetal weight is 350+ grams or whose gestational age is 20+ weeks.

FSGLI: Military to Military

A service member married to another service member on or after January 2, 2013, is not automatically covered by FSGLI spousal coverage, as non-military spouses are. These service members must request FSGLI spousal coverage. Effective March 1, 2023, if approved for coverage, a service member married to another service member can be insured under the FSGLI and SGLI programs at the same time for a combined maximum coverage amount of \$600,000 (\$500,000 SGLI plus \$100,000 FSGLI).

Accelerated Benefit Option

The Accelerated Benefit Option (ABO) gives the service member access to the death benefits of the FSGLI policy before the death of a terminally ill spouse. The service member may receive up to 50% of the face value of the spouse coverage through the ABO. The ABO is available in \$5,000 increments. To qualify for the ABO, the spouse must have a medical prognosis with a life expectancy of nine months or less. Only the service member can apply for and receive the ABO.

For additional information on FSGLI and ABO for spouses, contact Navy Casualty's FSGLI team at (877) 270-2162 or mill_fsgli.fct@navy.mil.

Mortuary Affairs Allowance

When the death of a dependent living with an active-duty service member stationed OCONUS occurs, entitlements for preparation and transportation of remains are provided. For dependents of active-duty service members serving CONUS, only transportation of remains is provided.

Reassignment For Humanitarian Reasons (HUMS)

The unexpected death of a spouse or child often presents hardship beyond grief and finances and warrants special consideration for humanitarian reassignment. When emergency leave is insufficient to alleviate such hardships, consider a HUMS request. See MILPERSMAN 1300-500, *Reassignments for Humanitarian Reasons (HUMS)*, for additional information.

THE FUNERAL HONORS SUPPORT PROGRAM (FHSP)

The FHSP provides families a free funeral honors detail for the burial or memorial ceremony of any eligible veteran.

Navy funeral honors are coordinated at regional funeral honors offices. Funeral honors details are provided by Navy Reserve Centers and local commands. A list of the regional funeral honors offices can be found at https://www.cnic.navy.mil/funeral_honors.

FUNERAL HONORS DETAIL

The funeral honors detail consists of at least two trained uniformed members (retirees are not considered uniformed members) of the armed forces. Larger details are provided for deceased active-duty members or Medal of Honor recipients. At least one member of the detail will be from the parent service of the deceased veteran. The funeral honors detail will conduct a ceremony that includes, at a minimum, the playing of taps, the folding of the U.S. flag and presentation of the flag to the next of kin (NOK).

Families of eligible veterans should request funeral honors at least 48 hours in advance through their funeral director or contact the appropriate regional office at the web address listed above. A legible copy of the deceased service member's DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*, or other official proof of honorable service is required for funeral honors. Military service records can be requested by visiting the National Archives at www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records or by calling (314) 801-0800.

NAVY MORTUARY SERVICES

Deceased retirees and their dependents are entitled to transportation only when they die in a medical treatment facility (MTF), such as National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, Maryland, or Naval Medical Center San Diego. Any questions should be referred to Navy Mortuary at (866) 787-0081.

BURIAL FLAGS

When a service member dies on active duty, the Department of Defense provides a U.S. flag to drape the casket at the service member's memorial service. After the service, the flag is presented to the NOK, regardless of their presence at the service.

Burial flags for veterans' funerals are provided free by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information is available at www.va.gov/burials-memorials/memorial-items/burial-flags. In most cases, the funeral director will help families obtain a flag.

The VA authorizes only one flag per veteran. The order of precedence for receiving the ceremonial flag is:

1. Surviving spouse.
2. Children, according to age (eldest to youngest).
3. Parents, including adoptive, stepparents and foster parents.
4. Siblings, including half-siblings.
5. Other relatives, such as uncles or aunts, nephews or nieces, and cousins or grandparents.
6. Friends.

MEMORIAL CERTIFICATES

The Presidential Memorial Certificate is a parchment with a calligraphic inscription expressing the nation's grateful recognition of an honorably discharged deceased veteran's service in the armed forces. The veteran's name is inscribed, and the certificate bears the signature of the president. The Presidential Memorial Certificate, when requested, usually arrives after the funeral service.

NOK, other relatives and friends may request the certificate in person at any VA regional office or by mail.

For information about requesting a Presidential Memorial Certificate, please visit www.va.gov/burials-memorials/memorial-items/presidential-memorial-certificates.

HEADSTONES OR MARKERS

Funeral directors may be able to answer questions about VA grave markers. Family members can also visit www.cem.va.gov/hmm for information on requesting a VA headstone, marker or medallion.

Family members may also contact the Applicant Assistance Unit at (800) 697-6947 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, or email mps.headstones@va.gov.

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