

# United States Naval Academy Retirement Guide (Updated Sep 2025 )





## *Congratulations on your upcoming retirement!*

*The Office of Special Events at the United States Naval Academy coordinates retirement ceremonies for eligible Alumni, as well as any military service member currently stationed at USNA. We will be happy to provide you with assistance in venue selection and reservation, time deconfliction, contact information to plan a post-ceremony reception, as well as many other coordination items. However, a successful ceremony will require a significant amount of legwork by the person(s) you designate to be your retirement planner(s). This guide is a compilation of lessons learned from previous ceremonies and is meant to help you and your retirement planner through the planning process. Please do not hesitate to contact the Special Events Staff with any questions or concerns.*

### **Eligibility:**

Only USNA Alumni (regardless of duty station) and military service members currently stationed at USNA are eligible to retire at the Naval Academy. If eligible, a standard retirement ceremony setup will be provided from the Superintendent's cost center. Additional ceremony setup requests and all costs associated with retirement receptions will be the responsibility of the prospective retiree.

***The Naval Academy does not conduct change of command ceremonies even if the change of command ceremony is in conjunction with a retirement ceremony***

The information provided in this guide covers most of what you will need to plan for and successfully carry out your retirement ceremony here at USNA. Please do not hesitate to contact the Special Events Staff if you have any questions or concerns.

***\*\*\*PLEASE READ THIS GUIDE IN ITS ENTIRETY\*\*\****



### **Scheduling:**

To make inquiries, place a hold on a retirement venue, or receive further information pertaining to retirement, contact the Office of Special Events via ([retirements-group@usna.edu](mailto:retirements-group@usna.edu)).

### **Ceremony Times:**

The Naval Academy offers retirement timeslots **EVERY NORMAL WORK DAY**. Retirements will not be scheduled on weekends or Federal Holidays.

To allow for deconfliction with the Brigade of Midshipmen, we will only schedule ceremonies twice a day from 1000-1130 and 1400-1530 with time allotted for a 1 hour rehearsal prior to the start of the ceremony.

### **Venues:**

Memorial Hall is the primary venue for all retirement ceremonies.

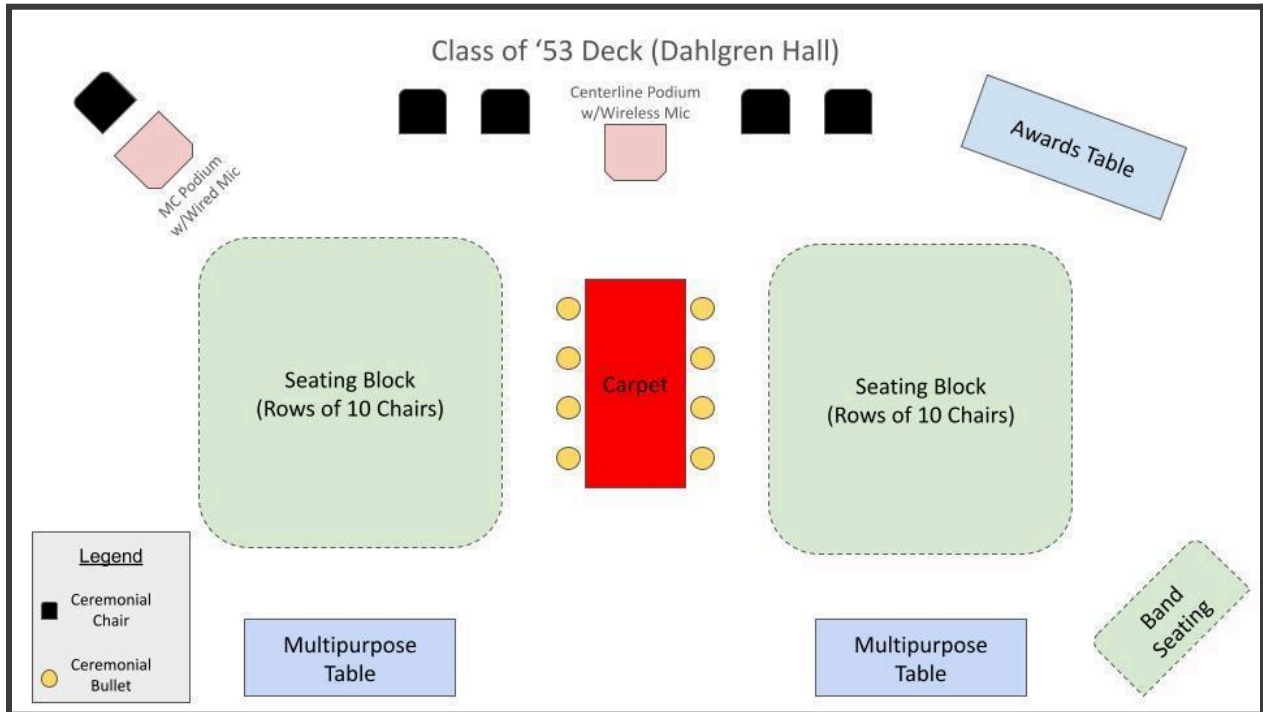
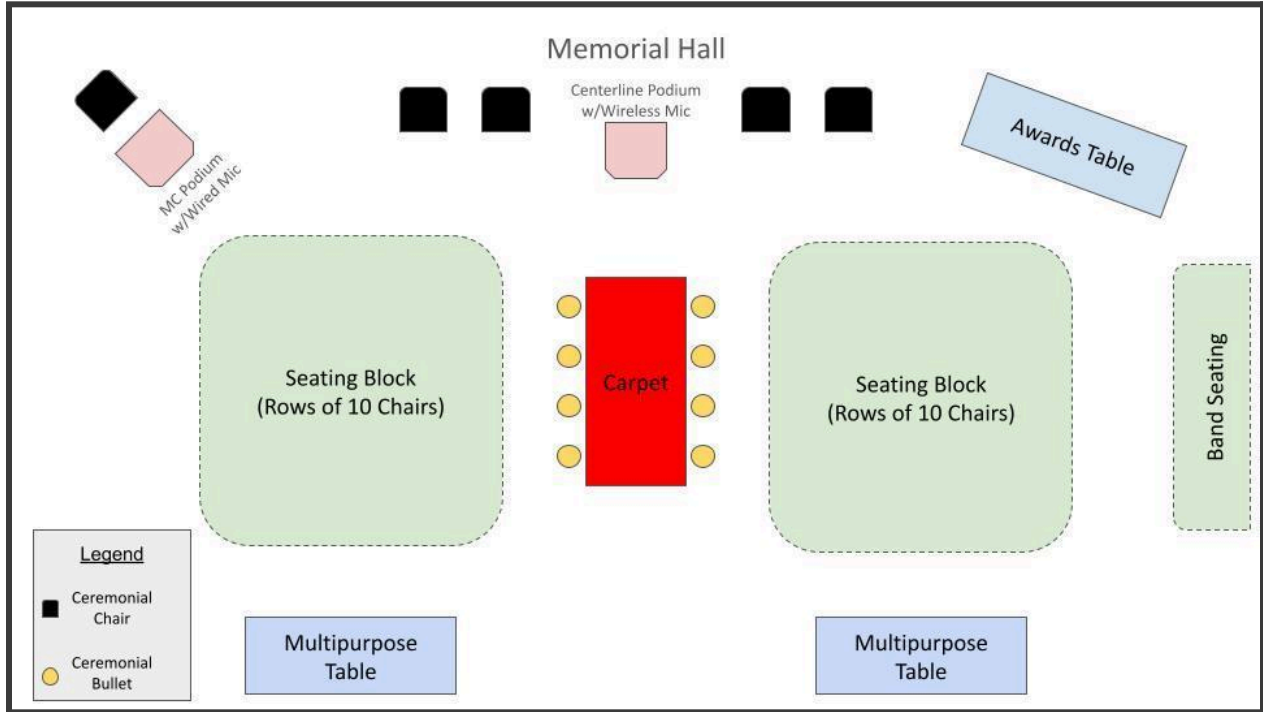
The Class of '53 Deck in Dahlgren Hall and Mahan Auditorium will only be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Setup:**

A standard setup is provided by USNA and is fully funded by the Office of the Superintendent. The details of your setup should be coordinated with the Office of Special Events no later than one month before your ceremony. The internal work order for a retirement setup **MUST** be submitted by USNA two weeks prior to the ceremony, therefore, a setup order requested later than that cannot be guaranteed.

The standard setup includes (diagrams on following page):

- Two Podiums
- Audio with two microphones (one on each podium)
- Guest chairs (number determined by guest count)
- Official Party chairs
- Three tables with cloth – for awards, gifts, covers, water, etc.
- Ceremonial Bullets
- Centerline carpet





**Capacities:**

Memorial Hall	200
Class of '53 Deck	200
Mahan Auditorium	500 (Ground Level) / 297 (Balcony)

**Accessibility:**

**Memorial Hall.** Memorial Hall is accessible. However, guests requiring elevator access will not be able to enter Memorial Hall via the Bancroft Rotunda. Instead, they must be escorted under the T-Court steps into Smoke Hall and assisted into the elevator. This will take them directly into Memorial Hall. These spaces require USNA CAC enabled access. Please contact the Office of Special Events to request assistance in this regard.

**Class of '53 Deck.** The Class of '53 Deck is technically accessible from T-Court, but Dahlgren Hall is not an accessible venue. The second deck restrooms do not have accessible stalls, and the building does not have an elevator.

**Mahan Auditorium.** Mahan Auditorium is fully accessible.

**VIP/Family Staging Areas:**

**Memorial Hall.** Flag and General Officers may reserve the Commandant's Conference Room for use as a holding area prior to their ceremony. For all others, the use of Smoke Hall is available for reservation as a holding and staging area. Please contact Mrs. Debbie Belletty (410-293-7002 / [belletty@usna.edu](mailto:belletty@usna.edu)) at least one month before your ceremony date to inquire about reservations. Because of high demand, the conference room and Smoke Hall can only be reserved for the hour prior to your ceremony. Unless other arrangements are made, all items shall be removed as you depart the conference room for the ceremony. The Commandant's Staff is not responsible for personal items left in the conference room and the conference room shall be returned to its prior state of cleanliness. The Commandant's conference room does not provide coffee and water service.

**Class of '53 Deck.** You may request the use of the Fremd Conference Room, adjacent to the '53 Deck for use as a staging room. Please make this request no later than 1 month before your ceremony date through the Office of Special Events. The Dahlgren Hall staff is not responsible for personal items left in the conference room and the conference room shall be returned to its prior state of cleanliness. The Fremd Conference Room does not provide coffee and water service.

**Mahan Auditorium.** Mahan Auditorium does not have a designated staging or holding area.





### **Parking and Yard Access:**

*All non-DoD guests over the age of 18 without a CAC will require a REAL ID Compliant Driver's License to drive or walk onto the Naval Academy. .*

**Vehicle Access.** USNA allows for personal vehicle access specifically for retirement ceremonies. In order to satisfy the ceremony access requirements, all non-DOD affiliated guests (those without a CAC) must be identified and names submitted to the Office of Special Events. Please populate the excel spreadsheet template provided on the USNA Retirements Website with all non-DOD personnel and send it to the Office of Special Events. This list must be submitted no later than 5 days prior to your ceremony. Late additions to your guest list will still be able to access the Naval Academy via the Visitor Center Security Checkpoint, located at Gate 1. However, they will not be able to drive onto the Yard.

*No taxi or ride share company is allowed to drive-on to the Naval Academy*

**Reserved Parking.** You are authorized 10 reserved parking spots for immediate family and guests to include Flag Officers, General Officers, and/or other VIPs. Parking will typically be reserved in Fullam Court (in between Dahlgren Hall and Farragut House), on Blake Rd. (in front of the Chapel), or on Calvert Rd. (adjacent to Farragut House) for ceremonies in Memorial Hall or Dahlgren Hall. You may request to designate each parking spot by name or request a general reservation for all spots (i.e. CAPT Smith Retirement). Contact the Office of Special Events no later than 14 days prior with your request to ensure the parking is reserved.

Morning retirement parking spots are reserved from 0700-1200, and afternoon retirement parking spots are reserved from 1200-1700. Please make sure your vehicles are moved before the expiration of your parking reservation.

**General Parking.** All guests without reserved parking are required to find parking on a first come, first serve basis. Guests are strongly encouraged to use the upper deck of the on Yard parking garage. Parking on the Yard is extremely limited. Depending on other events occurring at USNA the day of your retirement, parking may be difficult to find.

### **Ceremony Food & Drink:**

In all venues, food and drink are prohibited, with the exception of water. It is highly recommended, especially during summer months, that the retiring party acquire an adequate amount of bottled water to distribute to guests.



### **Reception Planning:**

The Office of Special Events does not coordinate retirement receptions. These events must be planned by the retiring party and are not funded by the Office of the Superintendent. If you would like to hold a reception on the Yard, you must contact the Naval Academy Business Services Division (NABSD) which has the first right of refusal for any catered events held at the Naval Academy. For information regarding venue/catering availability, pricing, and fees, please contact NABSD Catering (410-293-2610 / [catering@usna.edu](mailto:catering@usna.edu)).

### **Responsibilities of the Retiree/Retirement Planner:**

It is important to remember that retirement ceremonies (especially Navy ceremonies) are not well defined in any sort of official instruction. Therefore, they can be altered to accommodate the wishes and preferences of the retiree.

*The primary source of supporting services for a retiree is the Command from which they are retiring*

The resources outlined in the following pages are secondary resources that can be requested based on availability, but are not a part of the standard services provided by the Naval Academy. Since retirement ceremonies are not an official ceremony, supporting services and personnel can only be utilized on a voluntary basis. For this reason, Midshipmen cannot be utilized as Sideboys, Color Guard members, etc. unless they volunteer for the ceremony and it does not interfere with their official duties.

Ultimately, the execution of a retirement ceremony is the responsibility of the retiree, their designated assistants, and the retiree's Command.

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## Supporting Services (as available)

### USNA Band:

The USNA Band may be scheduled to perform during your retirement ceremony at no cost. The USNA Band is **NOT** authorized to perform at retirement receptions. If the Naval Academy Band is available, their support will include performance of the National Anthem at your ceremony. Please note that the Band will not be able to support afternoon ceremonies that occur on the day of a Formal Parade. To submit a Band request, please fill out the form posted on the retirement website to USNA Band Operations ([bandops@usna.edu](mailto:bandops@usna.edu)).

### Color Guard:

Color Guard services are a completely optional portion of a retirement ceremony. Within all our retirement venues, there are posted National Ensigns. Honors can be rendered to the posted National Ensign without the services of a color guard. The primary source of color guard services should be the retiree's current Command.

In limited cases, the following Commands may have availability to perform color guard services:

***Naval District Washington Ceremonial Guard.*** The NDW Ceremonial Guard can be requested if so desired. Please note that their schedule is quite extensive and their availability is limited. The listed phone number (202-433-0050) will take you to Ceremonial Guard Quarterdeck.

**Boatswain's Mate/Bell Ringer:** Similar to Color Guard services, the retiree's Command is the primary source for providing a Boatswain's Mate/Bell Ringer for piping services and the rendering of honors. There are bells that are permanently located in Memorial and Dahlgren Halls that can be used for your ceremony. Depending on the time of year and the summer schedule, USNA Waterfront Readiness Operations may have Boatswain's Mates available for piping and a bell ringer. To inquire about availability, please contact Waterfront Readiness Operations ([wfr-ops-group@usna.edu](mailto:wfr-ops-group@usna.edu)).



### **Chaplain:**

The Naval Academy has multiple permanently stationed Chaplains. You may request a USNA Chaplain to deliver the Invocation and Benediction at your ceremony by contacting the USNA Chaplain's Support ([chaplainrequest-group@usna.edu](mailto:chaplainrequest-group@usna.edu)).

### **Flag Flown in T-Court:**

To have a flag flown in T-Court at Bancroft Hall, contact the Brigade Drill Master, GySgt Arguello (410-293-8630 / [carguell@usna.edu](mailto:carguell@usna.edu) ). Prospective retirees may request a specific date to have the flag flown (i.e. Commissioning, Anniversaries, Birthdays, etc.).

**Personnel must supply a flag (NSN 8345-00-656-1435, 3.5' x 6.65') to USNA. IAW MILPERSMAN 1800-010, your parent command shall provide you with a retirement flag. Unless USNA is your current command, we do not provide flags.**

The following information and materials are required to fly a retirement flag at the United States Naval Academy:

- One 3' X 5' (or LARGER) National Ensign
- One prepaid return envelope supplied by the requester (to return the flag and certificate via commercial carrier)
- Rank and full name of the person for whom the flag is to be flown and if he or she is a graduate of the USNA. Please specify how the name is to appear on the certificate
- Indicate if there is a specific date that the flag is to be flown
- Point of contact, phone number, and e-mail address

Please send all of the above information and materials no later than two weeks prior to the date of request to the address below:

BRIGADE DRILL MASTER  
U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY  
01 BUCHANAN RD BANCROFT HALL (STOP 3A)  
ANNAPOLIS, MD 21402

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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Can I use Midshipmen for ushers or sideboys at my retirement ceremony?**

No, USNA does not provide/allow Midshipmen to be assigned duty for retirement ceremonies. As detailed earlier, the only exception to this rule is if you personally know a Midshipmen (i.e. son/daughter, nephew/niece, you are an Officer Representative for a club or sport). In this case, the Midshipmen can participate on a volunteer basis only and as long as it does not interfere with their day to day USNA obligations.

### **Does the USNA Band/Boatswain's Mates accept tips?**

No, tips are not expected nor authorized. They do, however, accept challenge coins.

### **I understand that the USNA Band will not perform with the outside musicians or vocalists, but I would like someone in my ceremony to sing the National Anthem. Is the USNA Band still authorized to perform for the rest of the ceremony?**

Yes, the USNA Band will still perform at a ceremony that an outside vocalist is performing at, but the vocalist will sing the National Anthem acapella or without musical accompaniment by the USNA Band.

### **Does USNA have a photography service that I can utilize for my ceremony?**

No, the USNA photo lab and the Public Affairs Office will not provide photography services for retirements, unless the Superintendent is the guest speaker.

### **Can I bring a professional photographer onto the Naval Academy for my retirement?**

Yes, please use the link below, listing NABSD Approved Business Partners, to select and directly engage a photographer for this very special event. Only these partners, in the photography and other categories, are authorized to provide services on the USNA.

(<https://www.usnabsd.com/administration/approved-business-partners>)

### **I have several elderly guests coming to my ceremony. Does USNA have wheelchairs that I can borrow?**

Unfortunately, no. Guests must provide their own wheelchair if it is required.



**Is official travel authorized for the attendance of a retirement ceremony?**

No. As retirement ceremonies are considered a personal event, official or funded travel is not justified.

**Since covers are not to be worn in Memorial Hall, does that mean that salutes can't be rendered during honors such as piping aboard or ashore?**

No. During appropriate times during your ceremony, the appropriate personnel should wear covers to render and accept appropriate honors. This would include piping aboard/ashore, the arrival of the official party, the playing of the National Anthem, and the reading of orders (i.e. requesting to go ashore). However, all guests should remain uncovered during the entire ceremony.

**Does the Naval Academy have service or Flag/General Officer flags that can be posted?**

No. You are welcome to post these flags if you would like, however, you or your Command must provide them, along with their necessary stands.

**Can I livestream my event?**

Yes. Please feel free to livestream or record your event at your leisure. While Wi-Fi is not available in our venues, there is decent cellular coverage that is adequate for livestreaming.

**Can I play music or via Bluetooth on the provided sound system?**

Yes. If you plan on using a Bluetooth device, please let the Office of Special Events know and we will ensure the proper equipment is provided.

**Is there air conditioning in Memorial Hall?**

No.

**How many Ushers do I need?**

In general, between 2 and 4 Ushers are more than sufficient.

**Does the Naval Academy have the capability of printing/generating ceremony programs?**

No. This is a responsibility of the retiring party.



**Is there a specific uniform requirement for holding a retirement ceremony at the Naval Academy?**

No. It is your day and your ceremony. You get to choose what uniform to retire in. If that happens to be a working uniform or if it's summertime and you'd rather wear a winter uniform, that is completely up to you!

**I am a USNA graduate but currently serve in a different branch, can I hold my ceremony here?**

Absolutely! You completely meet the eligibility requirements and we'd be happy to host your ceremony.

**Will USNA provide seating labels for assigned seating?**

No. If the retiree desires to label chairs for specific people, that is the retiree's responsibility. We do, however, request that these labels not be attached to chairs with any sort of sticky adhesive.

**In terms of seating placement, what is the correct protocol for guest seating assignments?**

When standing at the centerline podium and facing the crowd, designated family members should be seated in the block to your left. Any invited VIPs or FO/GO should be seated in the block to your right.

**How about official party seating, where should the retiree sit? Presiding Officer? Etc.?**

When standing in the center aisle and facing the centerline podium (crowd's perspective), the retiree should sit in the inboard-most chair to the right of the podium. The Presiding Officer should sit next to the retiree, directly outboard. On the opposite side, any other members of the official party should sit in precedence of seniority, with the most senior member closest to the podium.

**Am I responsible for setting up or tearing down any of the provided equipment?**

No. Our team will ensure that the venue is set-up in accordance with the standard funded setup and in-line with your guest numbers. We will also perform all tear-down of the equipment. All we ask is that you take away and clean up any items that you brought into the venue. As we normally have follow-on ceremonies, it is imperative that items such as programs, name cards, plastic bottles, and any other waste items are removed.



## Best Practices/Items to Note

- Most people desire a retirement ceremony on a Friday. While this is ideal, if you are open to another day during the week, there is almost always availability.
- There are “Retirement Seasons” at the Naval Academy, where we see influxes of reservations. These are the Spring into Summer months (April-June) and Summer into Fall months (August-Early November). Availability is limited during these times.
- We will not make **FIRM** reservations until 3-6 months prior to your desired ceremony date. This is due to the publication of the Naval Academy Master Schedule and fluctuating events that must be taken into account. However, we can “pencil you in” for a reservation up to 1 year prior to your anticipated date.
- As reiterated many times before in this guide, the supporting services at USNA (in particular the Color Guards and Boatswain’s Mates) should not be your primary source for such services. These are collateral duties (with the exception of the USNA Band) for these Sailors and their official duties are the priority. If they can support, they will.
- Bottled water is an absolute necessity, especially in the Summer months. Memorial Hall can reach temperatures of up to 80 degrees at times and there is no air conditioning. If this is a point of concern for you or your guests, I would recommend considering a different season for your ceremony.
- Ensure that any paper awards or certificates have some sort of folder or encasement to be presented in. It looks awkward to hand someone a plain sheet of paper.
- Our team will do our best to be present in the hour directly before your ceremony. If there are accessibility requirements or other issues that arise, we will assist and/or find a way to get to a solution.
- It is imperative that you have some sort of rehearsal before your ceremony. We have seen the result of ceremonies where a rehearsal was not made a priority and the results spoke for themselves. In most cases, we have the venues set up in the afternoon the day prior to a ceremony (this is not always the case, but if you request it, we can most likely make it happen). This gives you another window of opportunity to rehearse if you are able to make use of it.
- The Naval Academy is host to numerous ceremonies and events that can occasionally be scheduled at very short notice. If a high profile event suddenly conflicts with your ceremony, we will inform you immediately and do our best to either reschedule you for the same day in another location, or on a day that is satisfactory to you.



## General Planning Timeline

### **3 - 6 Months in Advance:**

- Coordinate time and venue for your ceremony with the Office of Special Events

### **3 Months in Advance:**

- Identify a Retirement Planner/Action Officer, to help you with your retirement ceremony planning, preferably someone at your current command
- Reserve a VIP/Family Staging Area for your venue (if desired)
- Coordinate your retirement reception
- Draft End of Tour Award
- Identify a Master of Ceremonies
- Identify a Guest Speaker
- Request Band (if desired)
- Secure a Color Guard (if desired)
- Identify a Boatswain's Mate to Pipe and Bell Ringer
- Identify a Chaplain
- Identify Sideboys
- Draft script for Retirement
- Determine Uniform/Dress for Official Party
- Determine Uniform/Dress for Guests
- Design, Draft, and Order Ceremony Program

### **2 Months in Advance:**

- Obtain Certificates of Appreciation (Contact Parent Command Officer Personnel)
- Obtain Retirement and Family Certificates (Contact Parent Command Officer Personnel)
- Identify Ushers and/or Escorts to direct guests from the parking location to the ceremony, to their seats, and then to the reception.
- Mail Invitations
- Request a flag flown in T-Court (if desired)



### **1 Month in Advance:**

- Contact the Office of Special Events to coordinate guest numbers for setup request, parking and access, and any other special requests
- Order Flowers or appropriate gifts for spouse, children and other family members.
- Order/Make a Shadow box (if desired).

### **14 (No Later than 5) Days in Advance**

- Email VIP List to the Office of Special Events. VIPs are defined as O-7 and above and civilian equivalent (SES)
- Email Non-DOD Credentialed Guest List to the Office of Special Events
- Email Reserved Parking Information to the Office of Special Events