



ADJUTANT'S  
NEWSLETTER  
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THE DEPARTMENT OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
THE AMERICAN LEGION

**TO MY LEGION FAMILY:**

***"HAPPY HOLIDAYS"***

**END OF THE YEAR:**

The Department of New Hampshire has been through a lot this year. Through the year it has been evident that many of our Posts are experiencing difficulties in maintaining membership, financial hardships, and maintaining programs. It has been the Departments intention to try to get things back on track and provide as much help as possible.

This Department has a long road ahead and it begins with our members and the veterans we serve. Membership has and always will be our biggest challenge throughout the year and as we go into 2015 I just urge all or you to do your best in encouraging other veterans to become members of this organization.

The staff here at Department headquarters wants to wish all of you a very Happy Holiday Season and I am not afraid to say it but a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you and your families.

To the veterans I extend a very big "Thank you for your Service".

**NORAD Prepares to Track Santa's Flight**

From a North American Aerospace Defense Command News Release:

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo., Dec. 1, 2014 – The North American Aerospace Defense Command's NORAD Tracks Santa website, <http://www.noradsanta.org/>, launched today featuring a mobile version, a holiday countdown, new games and daily

activities and more.

The website is available in eight languages: English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Chinese.

Official NORAD Tracks Santa apps are also available in the Windows, Apple and Google Play stores, so parents and children can countdown the days until Santa's launch on their smart phones and tablets. Tracking opportunities are also offered on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google+. Santa followers just need to type "@noradsanta" into each search engine to get started.

### **North Pole Elves**

Also new this year, the website features Santa's elves in the North Pole Village. NORAD Tracks Santa is introducing the newest elf and asking the public to help choose the perfect name for him. Details can be found via NORAD Tracks Santa social media or in the "Name the Elf" video in Santa's North Pole Movie Theater at [www.noradsanta.org](http://www.noradsanta.org).

Starting at 12:01 a.m. MST on Dec. 24, website visitors can watch Santa make preparations for his flight. NORAD's "Santa Cams" will stream videos on the website as Santa makes his way over various locations.

Then, at 4 a.m. MST (6 a.m. EST), trackers worldwide can speak with a live phone operator to inquire as to Santa's whereabouts by dialing the toll-free number 1-877-Hi-NORAD (1-877-446-6723) or by sending an email to [noradtrackssanta@outlook.com](mailto:noradtrackssanta@outlook.com). Any time on Dec. 24, Windows Phone users can ask Cortana for Santa's location, and OnStar subscribers can press the OnStar button in their vehicles to find Santa.

### **Santa-tracking is Global Experience**

NORAD Tracks Santa is a global experience, delighting generations of families everywhere. This is due, in large part, to the efforts and services of numerous program contributors.

This year's contributors include: the 21st Space Wing, Acuity Scheduling, Alaska NORAD Region, America Forces Network (AFN), Analytical Graphics, Inc., Avaya, BeMerry! Santa/Noerr Program, Bing®, Canadian NORAD Region, The Citadel Mall, Colorado Springs Business Alliance, Continental NORAD Region, CradlePoint, Defense Video & Imagery Distributions Systems, DoD News, Federal Aviation Administration, Globelink Foreign Language Center, Harris, Hewlett Packard (HP), iLink-Systems, Kids.gov, Level 3 Communications, Marine Toys for Tots, Foundation, Meshbox, Microsoft®, Microsoft® Azure, Naden Band of Maritime Forces Pacific,

National Tree Lighting Ceremony, Naturally Santa's Inc., Newseum, OnStar, PCI Broadband, Portable North Pole/ Ugroup Media, Pueblo Riverwalk, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado, Space Foundation, Spil Games, SriousXM®, Strategic Air & Space Museum, Unity, U.S. Allegiance, U.S. Air Force Academy Band, U.S. Air Force Band of Liberty, U.S. Air Force Band of the Golden West, U.S. Air Force Band of the West, U.S. Air Force Band, U.S. Air Force Heartland of America Band, U.S. Army Ground Forces Band, U.S. Coast Guard Band, U.S. Department of State Family Liaison Office, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, U.S. Band of MidAmerica, Verizon, Visionbox, West Point Band, and Xtomic.

NORAD Tracks Santa started in 1955 when a local media advertisement directed children to call Santa direct -- only the number was misprinted. Instead of reaching Santa, the phone rang through to the crew commander on duty at the Continental Air Defense Command Operations Center. Thus, began the tradition, which NORAD has carried on since it was created in 1958.

**DD Form 214:**

There still have been a lot of questions coming into my office about the DD Form 214. The following is some additional information on who gets and who does not get the DD Form 214.

The **DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty**, generally referred to as a "DD 214", is a document of the [United States Department of Defense](#), issued upon a military service member's retirement, separation, or [discharge](#) from active-duty military.

The first DD Form 214s were issued in 1950, after replacing the older "WD AGO" (War Department Adjutant General's Office) Forms and the NAVPERS (Naval Personnel) discharge documents. These documents, in turn, had existed since 1941. In earlier versions of the form (1 November 1972) it was called a "Report of Separation from Active Duty"; the current title dates from 1 July 1979.

DD Form 214 is the capstone military service document, as it represents the complete, verified record of a service member's time in the military, [awards and medals](#), and other pertinent service information, such as promotions, combat service or overseas service, [Military Occupational Specialty](#) identifiers and record of training and schools completed. For Individuals who served in [Air National Guard](#) or [Army National Guard](#) exclusively, don't receive DD Form 214, but will receive a form called NGB-22 from the [National Guard Bureau](#).

DD Form 214 is commonly used by various government agencies, chief among them the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#), to secure veteran benefits, and may be requested by employers should a person indicate he or she has served in the military.

This document also contains codes used by the Armed Forces to describe a former service-member's reason for discharge and their reenlistment eligibility. These codes are known as Separation Designator/Separation Justification (abbreviated as SPD/SJC) Codes and Reenlistment Eligibility (RE) Codes, respectively.

DD Form 214 is also generally required by funeral directors in order to immediately prove eligibility for interment in VA cemetery and/or obtaining a grave marker and/or provide military honors to a deceased veteran. On September 1, 2000, the [National Defense Authorization Act](#) enabled, upon the family's request, every eligible veteran to receive a military funeral honors ceremony to include the folding and presentation of the United States burial flag and the sounding of [Taps](#), at no cost to the family.

Copies of DD Form 214s are typically maintained by the government as part of a service member's [201 file](#) or OMPF (Official Military Personnel File). The 201 file generally contains additional personnel related forms.

It is possible to request a copy of your DD-214 on-line. Info on that procedure and the forms required are available on the HOTH Yahoo Groups Page. If you are not already a member of HOTH, simply go to Yahoo.com and join, then hit the groups button, and look up NHHOTH - then ask to join

**VETERAN CHOICE CARD:**

**Lawmakers want answers from VA on 'choice card' rollout**

New Hampshire Sens. Kelly Ayotte (R) and Jeanne Shaheen (D) are voicing displeasure with the Veterans Affairs Department over the rollout of legislation meant to give veterans greater access to medical care.

The pair is concerned that the agency, emerging from one of the worst scandals in its history, is not following congressional intent regarding the new “choice card” effort. The program allows veterans to seek medical care at non-VA providers, if they live more than 40 miles from an agency facility or if they do not get a doctor’s appointment within 30 days.

The program was the cornerstone of reform legislation Congress approved this summer to revamp the VA after a months-long scandal over patient wait times that was linked to a series of deaths.

“We have been hearing from veterans in our state who are confused by the roll-out of this important program, and we remain concerned that it is not being implemented as Congress intended,” Ayotte and Shaheen wrote in a Nov. 24 letter to VA Secretary Robert McDonald.

The pair also noted that eligibility cards sent to Granite State veterans contained inaccurate information, creating more confusion about the program.

The missive is a follow-up to a Nov. 7 letter Ayotte and Shaheen sent to McDonald, raising concerns about [new agency rules](#) that seemed to place restrictions on which outside medical provider’s veterans could visit or would be included in the program.

The lawmakers requested a response from the VA by Nov. 14 but have not received any “substantive” answers from the agency, they said.

“Choice cards” started going out earlier this month to around 300,000 veterans who live outside the 40-mile radius stipulated by the reform bill lawmakers approved last summer.

An estimated 370,000 more cards started going out this week to veterans who have waited longer than 30 days to see a doctor.

“VA continues to focus on implementation of this new temporary benefit so that Veterans receive the timely quality care they need in a way that reduces confusion and inefficiencies,” McDonald said in a statement on Monday.

*Los Angeles Times*

#### FACTS about the Veterans choice card:

VISIT [WWW.VA.GOV/OPA/CHOICEACT/](http://WWW.VA.GOV/OPA/CHOICEACT/) FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Before your Veterans *Choice Card* can be used, you must first meet the following test of eligibility for *Choice Card* benefits. If, after following Step 1 of the test you are not eligible for benefits, just hold on to your Card - you do not need to call us.

#### TO FIND OUT IF YOU'RE ELIGIBLE:

##### PERSONALLY ASSESS YOUR ELIGIBILITY FOR *CHOICE CARD* BENEFITS.

Before you call us, ask yourself these four simple questions:

1) Have you been told by your local VA medical facility that you will need to wait more than 30 days from your preferred date or the date medically determined by your physician? *OR*

2) Is your current residence in New Hampshire, and greater than a 20 mile radius from White River Junction VA Medical Center? *OR*

3) Is your current residence more than 40 miles from the closest VA health care facility? *OR*

4) Do you need to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to your home? *OR*.

5) Does a geographic challenge such as extensive distances around water or other geologic formations, such as mountains, present a significant travel hardship?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be eligible to use your *Choice Card*. **VERIFY YOUR ELIGIBILITY** by calling 866-606-8198.

When you call us, please be prepared to provide us with any other health insurance coverage you have.- such as employer or union-provided health plans, so we can assess coverage responsibilities.

**IMPORTANT:** If you do not receive approval, you may be responsible for some or all of the costs of the non-VA treatment you receive.

**NOT ELIGIBLE RIGHT NOW? NO NEED TO DO ANYTHING! JUST KEEP YOUR CARD!**

If you are not eligible to use the *Choice Card* right now, keep your card in a safe and convenient location.

There is no need to call us.

**VA** U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

December 13, Department Executive Board Meeting, Department Headquarters  
December 25 & 26, Department Offices Closed  
January 1 & 2, Department Offices Closed

**DID YOU KNOW:**

In accordance with RSA 261:157, if you are veteran and qualify for the American Legion under current eligibility dates and are 70% to 100% permanent or totally disabled you may qualify for a free motor vehicle registration.

Not only do you have to be permanent or totally disabled, you must already have a handicap plate indicating such disability. If you have a handicap plate that is veteran or Purple Heart you may have to pay for the type of plate at the time of your registration being done.

You must have a copy of your disability rating available at the time you register your vehicle with the town or city. If you need a copy of your rating, this can be found by

going to the veterans Affairs Office on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Norris Cotton building, 275 Chestnut St. Manchester N.H.

**FOR VETERANS TURNING 65:**

If you are turning 65 and are submitting for your Social security benefits, it is important to consider checking off the box that says “YES, I want Medicare”. It is possible that if you decide not to receive Medicare because of other health insurance policies you may have, i.e. Tricare, ect. You may forfeit your Social security benefits completely.

Medicare is taking out of SSCI each month based on income, the average allotment being \$104.90 for most people. This pays for about 80% medical coverage for hospitalization for those covered under Parts A & B of the Medicare program.

For those covered under Part “C” you will be covered for the additional 20% coverage to include doctor’s visits.

For those covered under Part “D” this will provide additional coverage for prescription drugs.

If you have questions about what you should and should not do in filing for your Social Security benefits make sure you seek information from your local Social Security Office.

**PLEASE POST ON YOUR POSTS BULLETIN BOARD**