



April 12, 2020

Mark T. Esper, Ph.D.
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington DC 20301

Re: Yeoman First Class Petty Officer [REDACTED]
Unpaid Funeral Details Totaling \$1,585.22

Dear Secretary Esper:

I represent Yeoman First Class Petty Officer [REDACTED] in the above-referenced matter.

[REDACTED] is not paying me for my service. Instead, I am helping her because her service to our country merits my help. In addition, my grandfather was a Naval Officer in the Pacific Theater during World War Two, and my father was a Judge Advocate for the United States Marine Corps from 1965 through this retirement in 1972. So, I value military service, including your service.

I enclose the service record of [REDACTED], which highlights her many accomplishments from when she enlisted in the Navy at age 17 in August 1997 through her current service in the Inactive Ready Reserves.

In May 2018, [REDACTED] joined the Funeral Honor Detail. At funerals for Navy Sailors, [REDACTED] plays the bugle, folds the flag, or both. She selected this detail to honor her fellow Navy Sailors.

The Navy has failed to pay [REDACTED] for the 13 funerals listed below. Her most recent pay rate is \$121.94. Therefore, the Navy owes [REDACTED] \$1,585.22.

| 8/19/18-8/18/19 | | |
|-----------------|----------|------------|
| 10/6/18 | GONG | SANTA ROSA |
| 11/15/18 | CHILDERS | PETALUMA |
| 11/16/18 | KUSICK | NOVATO |
| 1/19/19 | SCHULTE | PETALUMA |
| 2/11/19 | AULT | FAIRFIELD |
| 2/15/19 | RUALO | VALLEJO |
| 11/2/19 | EDSTROM | SANTA ROSA |
| 11/8/19 | CHIARA | PETALUMA |

| 8/19/19-8/18/20 | | |
|-----------------|---------|------------|
| 11/11/19 | ROYAL | SANTA ROSA |
| 1/18/20 | | SEBASTOPOL |
| 1/31/20 | HAMBLIN | NAPA |
| 2/22/20 | WARNER | SANTA ROSA |
| 3/7/20 | JOHNSON | WINDSOR |

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The Naval Operational Support Center, Alameda cannot access [REDACTED] personnel information because of her status in the Inactive Ready Reserves (IRR).

[REDACTED] then contacted the Defense Finance and Accounting Services. DFAS also was unable to access [REDACTED] personnel information and referred her to the Navy Personnel Command (PERS).

The person at PERS could not also was unable to access [REDACTED] personnel information and referred her to the Navy Reserve Counselor.

[REDACTED] telephone messages to her IRR Counselor have gone unanswered since January 2020.

Thus, [REDACTED] multiple requests for payment of \$1,585.22 for the 13 funeral services that she has performed from October 6, 2018 through March 7, 2020 are stuck in a bureaucratic Catch-22. I will appreciate your assistance in getting the Navy bureaucracy unstuck.

[REDACTED] ongoing service to our country for the past twenty plus years merits your immediate attention to this matter.

May I have the courtesy of your response by Monday, April 27?

Very truly yours,


BRIAN GEARINGER, ESQ.

Enclosure

cc: [REDACTED] (via email)(w/enclosure)
IRR Counselor (via email)(w/enclosure)
The Honorable Diane Feinstein (w/enclosure)
The Honorable Kamala D. Harris (w/enclosure)
The Honorable Mike Thompson – U.S. Congressman for the Fifth District of California (w/enclosure)

Yeoman First Class Petty Officer [REDACTED]

- Sea Service Deployment Ribbons – Two
- Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Navy “E” (2)
- Navy Unit Commendation
- Meritorious Unit Commendation
- Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal – 3
- Good Conduct Medal
- Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist
- Rifle Marksman Medal
- Sailor of the Quarter, Second Quarter, FY 05 – NOSC, Sacramento
- Letter of Commendation from the Commander, Naval Reserve Forces Command
- Sailor of the Year FY 05 – NOSC, Sacramento
- Korean Defense Service Medal
- Global War on Terror Service Medal
- Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, Navy
- Navy Reserve Meritorious Service Medal
- Pistol Marksman Medal
- National Defense Service Medal
- Funeral Honor Detail (FHD) – May 2018 to the present