

REBUTTAL ANALYSIS

Claimed Military Retirement Status

Bryan Patrick McNeal — McLendon-Chisholm, Texas

Prepared by: James P. Riffenburg, MSgt USMC (Ret.) | April 2026

CORE FINDING

Bryan Patrick McNeal has publicly claimed the status of Retired Gunnery Sergeant (E-7), United States Marine Corps, for a documented period exceeding ten years. Three independent federal systems — the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS), the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) — collectively produce no record consistent with that claim. The document McNeal produced in response to public requests for verification is a discharge certificate — a document that confirms discharge, not retirement. The following analysis examines each element of his claimed status against the official federal record.

I. MCNEAL'S DOCUMENT — WHAT HE PRODUCED AND WHAT IT MEANS

On April 23, 2026, following more than 24 hours of silence and repeated public requests to produce a DD-214, a retired military ID card, a retirement certificate, or any DFAS documentation confirming retired pay, Bryan Patrick McNeal posted the following to social media:



Figure 1: McNeal's April 23, 2026 social media post depicting what he identifies as "the certificate portion of the DD Form 256." Source: Social media post, Bryan Patrick McNeal, April 23, 2026.

McNeal identifies this document as a DD Form 256. He is correct about the form number. He is incorrect about what it establishes.

WHAT A DD FORM 256 IS — OFFICIAL DEFINITION

The DD Form 256 is a certificate of honorable discharge issued to National Guard and Reserve members who complete their service. An honorable discharge occurs when a service person successfully completes a term of duty. It confirms that the member served and was discharged under honorable conditions. It is not a retirement document. It does not establish retirement status. It does not establish entitlement to retired pay. It does not establish entitlement to use the designation "Retired" in connection with military service. Source: U.S. Department of Defense; MOAA (Military Officers Association of America); DD214Direct.com / National Archives official documentation.

The document McNeal produced is precisely what the NARA NPRC FOIA response confirmed: he was discharged. A DD Form 256 is what the Marine Corps issues when a member separates through discharge. It is the documentary counterpart to a separation status of DISCHARGED — the exact finding of the FOIA response.

Retirement documentation is a separate category entirely. A retiring Marine receives all of the following:

- DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) — with Block 23 indicating retirement as the characterization of service
- Certificate of Retirement signed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps (or by direction)
- Official retirement letter from HQMC MMSR-7 confirming placement on the retired list
- A DD Form 2 (Retired) — the Armed Forces Retired Identification Card
- DFAS confirmation of retired pay entitlement and commencement date

McNeal has produced none of these documents. He produced a DD Form 256 — a discharge certificate — in response to requests for retirement documentation. Also noted is there is no date on this document, and the full signature is not visible.

II. WHAT LEGITIMATE RETIREMENT DOCUMENTATION LOOKS LIKE

For purposes of direct comparison, the following documents are the actual retirement package of James P. Riffenburg, Master Sergeant, United States Marine Corps, retired 1 April 2011. These documents represent the standard package issued to every Marine who legitimately retires from the Corps.

A. Certificate of Retirement — Signed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps

Every Marine who retires — active duty or reserve — receives a Certificate of Retirement from the Armed Forces of the United States, signed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps. This document explicitly states the member's name, rank, and the date of retirement. It is not available for purchase. It cannot be reproduced. It is issued once, by HQMC, upon confirmed retirement.



Figure 2: Certificate of Retirement issued to Master Sergeant James P. Riffenburg, United States Marine Corps, retired 1 April 2011. Signed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps. This document is the standard retirement certificate issued to every retiring Marine. McNeal has not produced an equivalent document.

B. Official Retirement Letter from HQMC MMSR-7

In addition to the retirement certificate, HQMC Manpower Management Separation and Retirement Branch (MMSR-7) issues a formal retirement letter placing the member on the retired list. This letter confirms the retirement date, instructs DFAS on pay administration, directs the member to obtain a retired ID card, and explicitly states that the necessary administrative action to place the member on the retired list has been taken by the Commandant of the Marine Corps (MMSR-2).

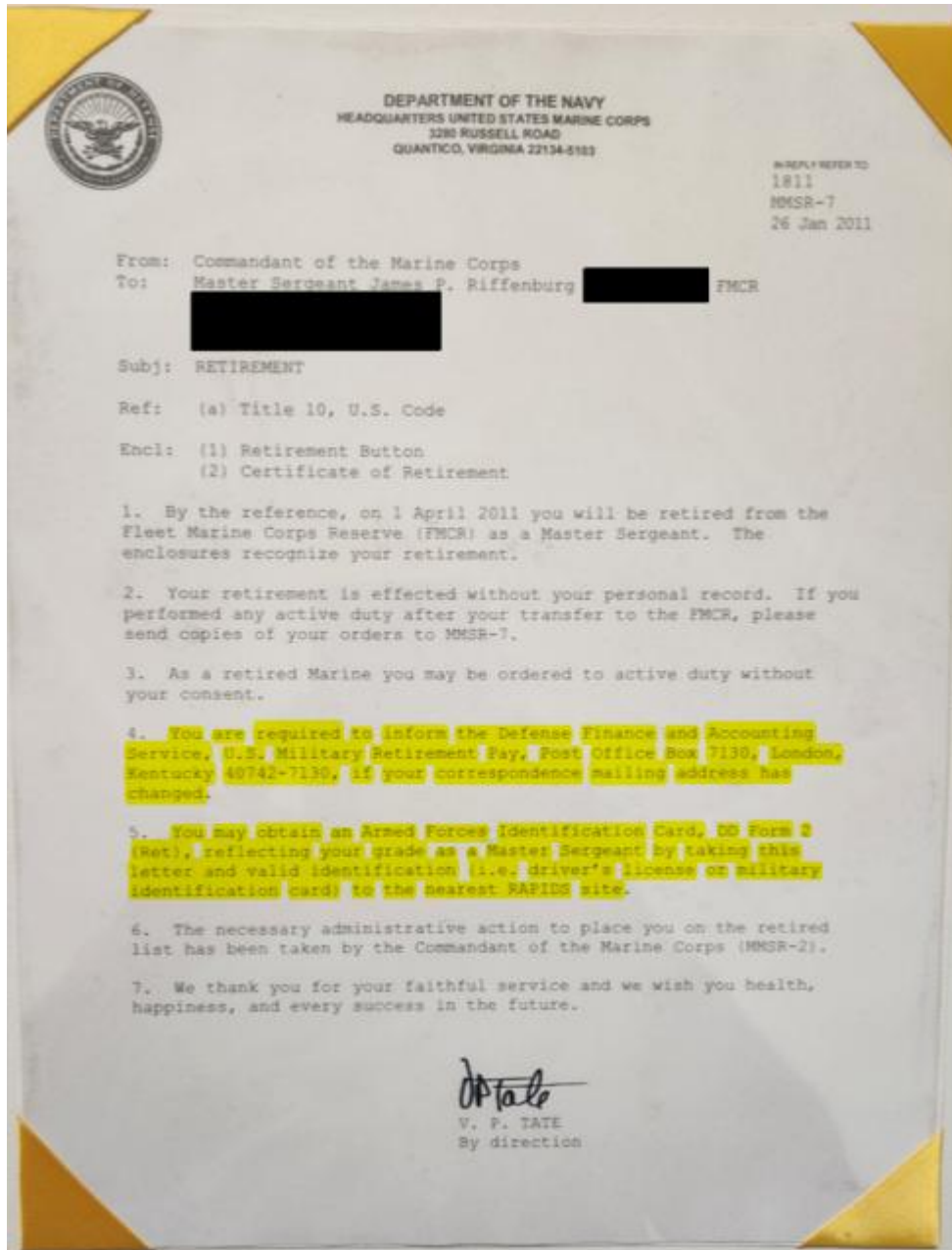


Figure 3: Official retirement letter from the Commandant of the Marine Corps (MMSR-7) to Master Sergeant James P. Riffenburg, dated 26 January 2011, confirming retirement effective 1 April 2011. Key highlighted elements include the DFAS notification requirement and the instruction to obtain a retired Armed Forces ID card (DD Form 2 Ret.). McNeal has not produced an equivalent document.

COMPARISON POINT

A DD Form 256 (discharge certificate) and a Certificate of Retirement are two separate documents issued for two opposite outcomes. The DD Form 256 confirms a member completed their service and was separated under honorable conditions. The Certificate of Retirement confirms a member served the required duration and was placed on the military retired list with entitlement to retirement pay and benefits. Bryan Patrick McNeal produced the former, if authenticated. He has not produced the latter.

III. THE MARINE CORPS TOTAL FORCE SYSTEM — MOL PERSONNEL LOCATOR RESULTS

The Marine Online (MOL) Personnel Locator is the publicly accessible interface of the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS) — the single, unified, integrated database that maintains records of all active duty Marines, all reserve component Marines, all Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) Marines, and all retired Marines. MCTFS is jointly owned and operated by the Marine Corps and DFAS. It is the authoritative system of record for all Marine Corps personnel and pay data.

The official MOL FAQ states explicitly: "Marine OnLine (MOL) is designed for Marines with personnel records in the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS). This includes Marines on Active Duty, Reserve, Active Reserve Marines, the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) and Retired Marines. If you have left the Marine Corps without retiring..." — the sentence is deliberately structured: those who retired remain in the system. Those who left without retiring do not.

A. Search Parameters Entered



Figure 4: MOL Personnel Locator result confirming RIFFENBURG, JAMES P. — Rank: Master Sergeant — Service: Marine Corps — Unit Name: RETIRED SERVICES & PAY SECTION — Component: Retired. This is what a legitimate retired Marine's MCTFS record looks like. McNeal's search produced no equivalent result. Source: mol.tfs.usmc.mil

B. Search Result for McNeal

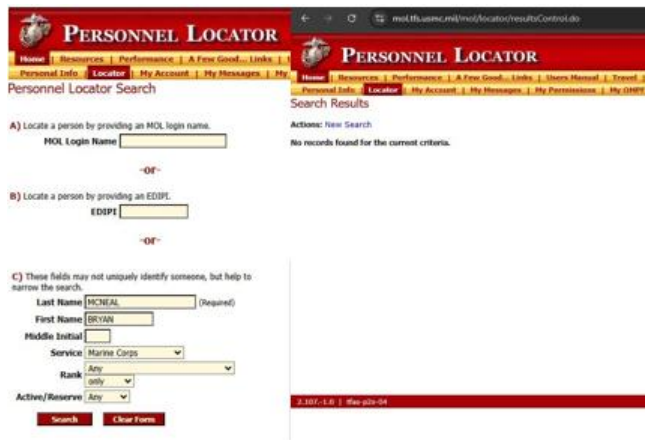


Figure 5: MOL Personnel Locator result for MCNEAL, BRYAN — "No records found for the current criteria." The system returned no record across any rank, any component, and any status. Source: mol.tfs.usmc.mil

SIGNIFICANCE OF NO RESULT

The absence of any MCTFS/MOL record for McNeal is not a technical anomaly. The official system description states that MCTFS "incorporates the records of all active, reserve and retired Marines" in a single database. A legitimate Marine reserve retiree — one who accumulated sufficient retirement points and was transferred to Retired Reserve Awaiting Pay status — is processed through MCTFS by regulation. The official MARFORRES Reserve Retirement FAQ states that MCTFS processes the transfer to Retired Reserve status. A reserve retiree awaiting pay at age 60 would appear in this system. McNeal does not appear in this system under any search parameter.

C. Context: What Legitimate Retired Marines Look Like in MCTFS/MOL

For comparison, the following images show that the system functions correctly and does return records for legitimate retired Marines, including the preparer of this analysis.

Service	Unit Name	Component
Marine Corps	CLB 6 CLR 2 2D MLG	Active
Marine Corps	AIR DEFENSE CO B MACS-2 MACG-28 2D MAW	Active
Marine Corps	VMM-364 MAG-39 3D MAW	Active
Marine Corps	RETIRED SERVICES & PAY SECTION	Retired
Marine Corps	RETIRED SERVICES & PAY SECTION	Retired
Marine Corps	RETIRED SERVICES & PAY SECTION	Retired
Marine Corps	INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVE	Reserve
Marine Corps	MCAS BEAUFORT SC	Active
Marine Corps	9TH ESB 3D MLG	Active
Marine Corps	RETIRED SERVICES & PAY SECTION	Retired
Marine Corps	3/4 1ST MARDIV	Active
Marine Corps	RETIRED SERVICES & PAY SECTION	Retired
Marine Corps	RETIRED SERVICES & PAY SECTION	Retired
Marine Corps	RETIRED SERVICES & PAY SECTION	Retired
Marine Corps	MWSS-472 MAG-49 4TH MAW	Reserve
Marine Corps	HMX-1 EXEC SPT MCAF QUANTICO VA	Active
Marine Corps	HQTRS 4TH MAW	Active
Marine Corps	VMM-365 MAG-26 2D MAW	Active
Marine Corps	HQTRS MACS-24 MACG-48 4TH MAW	Reserve
Marine Corps	RETIRED SERVICES & PAY SECTION	Retired
Marine Corps	RETIRED SERVICES & PAY SECTION	Retired
Marine Corps	ENGR SPT CO 6TH ESB 4TH MLG	Reserve
Marine Corps	HQTRS MIG II MEF	Active
Marine Corps	RETIRED SERVICES & PAY SECTION	Retired
Marine Corps	RETIRED SERVICES & PAY SECTION	Retired

Figure 6: MOL Personnel Locator results page showing multiple Marine Corps personnel entries, including multiple entries listed under "Retired Services & Pay Section" with Component status of "Retired." The system works. It returns retired Marines. McNeal is not among them. Source: mol.tfs.usmc.mil

IV. FOIA CONFIRMATION — WHAT THE FEDERAL RECORD STATES

Two independent formal FOIA requests were submitted to two separate federal agencies. Both produced responses that are mutually consistent and consistent with the MOL/MCTFS result.

A. NARA NPRC FOIA Response — Service Record

A formal FOIA request was submitted to the National Archives and Records Administration, National Personnel Records Center (NARA NPRC) on March 16, 2026. NPRC is the statutory repository for the Official Military Personnel Files of all separated, discharged, and retired veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. The response confirmed the following:

Claim / Category	McNeal's Public Claim	Federal Record Confirms
Service Branch	United States Marine Corps (Ret.)	United States Marine Corps
Final Rank	Gunnery Sergeant (E-7)	CORPORAL (E-4)
Service Entry	1991 (per Congressional Record)	September 16, 1992
Active Duty End	Claimed 17+ years of service	August 1, 1996
Total Active Duty	17+ years (publicly claimed)	~3 years, 10 months
Separation Status	Retired	DISCHARGED
Reserve Period	Not addressed in public claims	Aug 2, 1996 – Oct 11, 2002
Final Discharge	Not addressed in public claims	May 28, 2000 (SEPCD: KBK3A)
MOS	Implied law enforcement / command	4421 — Legal Clerk

B. DFAS FOIA Response — Retired Pay Verification (Case 26-HQ-0364)

A parallel FOIA request was submitted to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) on March 16, 2026. DFAS is the federal agency that administers and pays all U.S. military retirement pay. DFAS assigned case 26-HQ-0364. The official response, dated April 15, 2026, signed by Government Information Specialist Shaunna Morris with verified digital signature, states:

DFAS OFFICIAL RESPONSE — CASE 26-HQ-0364 (April 15, 2026)

"The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) has not received any documentation awarding Bryan Patrick McNeal military retired pay. Consequently, Mr. McNeal is not listed in a DFAS system of records as a current or former military retiree. He has not received military retired pay from DFAS." — Shaunna Morris, Government Information Specialist, DFAS Indianapolis

This response is unambiguous. DFAS — the only federal agency authorized to administer and pay military retirement pay — has no record of McNeal as a retiree in any form, has never paid him military retirement pay, and has never received documentation awarding him such pay.

V. ADDRESSING THE RESERVE RETIREMENT ARGUMENT

Following public exposure of the FOIA findings, a secondary argument has been advanced on McNeal's behalf: that reserve Marines operate under a different records system and that NPRC and MCTFS findings may not capture his reserve retirement status. This argument is factually incorrect as a matter of published federal policy and system architecture.

A. MCTFS Is a Single Unified System — Not Component-Specific

The official MCTFS system description states: "The mission of the MCTFS is to provide integrated personnel and pay functionality for all active and reserve Marines within a single system and personnel management for retirees, by using a single, logical database which incorporates the records of all active, reserve and retired Marines." (Source: Wikipedia / HQMC official documentation; Military History Fandom wiki citing official sources.)

There is no separate reserve database. MCTFS is one system. All components are in it.

B. Reserve Retirement Is Processed Through MCTFS

The official MARFORRES Reserve Retirement FAQ states that MCTFS is used to "accurately process your transfer to the Retired Reserve Awaiting Pay At Age 60." The official HQMC retirement page confirms: "All requests for retirement or transfer to the FMCR will be processed via the MCTFS after having determined the Marine's eligibility." Reserve retirement goes through MCTFS. Full stop.

C. Reserve Retirees Receive a "20-Year Letter" and DFAS Records

A Marine reservist who accumulates sufficient retirement points receives a formal Notice of Eligibility for Retired Pay at Age 60 — commonly called the "20-Year Letter." Per MOAA: "The Marine Corps says that the Reserve Retirement and Separation Section (MMSR-5) will send out retirement paperwork four to six months before retired pay eligibility." When that Marine reaches age 60 and begins drawing retired pay, DFAS administers that pay — the same DFAS that confirmed it has no record of McNeal.

McNeal was born May 10, 1972. He is 53 years old. He has not yet reached age 60. If he were a legitimate reserve retiree, he would be in "gray area" status — transferred to Retired Reserve Awaiting Pay, with a MCTFS record and a 20-Year Letter in hand, awaiting his 60th birthday to begin drawing pay. He would still appear in MCTFS. He does not.

D. NPRC Covers Reserve Records

The National Archives states officially: "The National Archives' National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) stores records of individual military service pertaining to former service members who no longer have a service obligation. Included are records of veterans who are completely discharged (with no remaining reserve commitment), or who are retired or have died." NPRC received McNeal's request and produced his complete record — including his reserve period — because his reserve obligation had already ended. The record they produced is the complete record. It shows Corporal (E-4) throughout both active and reserve periods, with a final discharge in May 2000.

THE RESERVE ARGUMENT FAILS ON FOUR INDEPENDENT GROUNDS

1. MCTFS is a single unified system covering all components including reserve retirees — official system documentation. 2. Reserve retirement is processed through MCTFS — official MARFORRES and HQMC policy. 3. DFAS confirmed no retired pay record for McNeal — and DFAS administers reserve retired pay when it begins at age 60. 4. NPRC produced McNeal's complete record including his reserve period, confirming Corporal (E-4) and discharged status throughout.

VI. THE BCNR APPLICATION — WHAT IT CONFIRMS

On the same day McNeal posted the DD Form 256, he also posted an application to the Board for Correction of Naval Records (BCNR). The BCNR is a legitimate administrative body that reviews requests to correct military records. His posting of this form warrants specific analysis.

The BCNR application listed the following in field 7 (Date of Separation): April 1, 2009. No confirmed service record data supports a separation date of April 1, 2009. NPRC confirmed active duty service ending August 1, 1996, and a final reserve discharge of May 28, 2000. The date listed on the BCNR form does not correspond to any verified period of McNeal's service.

More significantly, by posting this application, McNeal has made a public admission in his own words:

McNEAL'S OWN WORDS — FROM HIS SOCIAL MEDIA POST

"...I have submitted a request to the Board for Correction of Naval Records to correct the record to reflect my years of service through two re-enlistments (Reserves) and my ending rank." — Bryan Patrick McNeal, social media post, April 23, 2026

If the official federal record accurately reflected a retirement at the rank of Gunnery Sergeant after the service duration he has publicly claimed for over a decade, there would be nothing to correct. The BCNR process exists to address errors or injustices in the official record. By seeking BCNR correction, McNeal has confirmed in his own words that the official record — the same record produced by the FOIA responses — does not currently reflect his claimed identity.

A BCNR application is not evidence of military service. It is a request that will be reviewed by a board at some future date, with no guaranteed outcome. Filing a form does not establish that the claims made in the form are true. The only documents that establish retirement status are those identified in Section II of this analysis — none of which McNeal has produced.

VII. THREE-SYSTEM SUMMARY — WHAT THE FEDERAL RECORD SAYS

The following table summarizes what each of the three independent federal systems confirms about Bryan Patrick McNeal’s claimed status as a retired Gunnery Sergeant (E-7), USMC.

Federal System	What It Covers	Finding re: McNeal
MCTFS / MOL Personnel Locator	All active, reserve, IRR, and retired Marines — single unified database	NO RECORD FOUND — across all ranks, all components, all statuses
NARA NPRC FOIA Response	Complete official military personnel file — active and reserve periods	Final rank: Corporal (E-4). Service: ~3 yrs 10 mos active. Status: DISCHARGED. Reserve period ended in discharge, May 2000.
DFAS Case 26-HQ-0364	All military retired pay records — active and reserve components	No retired pay documentation. Not listed as retiree. No retired pay received — ever.

VIII. STATEMENT OF LIMITATIONS

This analysis is based exclusively on: (1) official federal FOIA responses from NARA NPRC and DFAS; (2) direct search results from the MOL Personnel Locator; (3) official government publications including HQMC official pages, MARFORRES official documentation, the MOL FAQ, and the National Archives; (4) documents produced by McNeal himself in his public social media posts; and (5) official definitions from the VA, MOAA, and DoD documentation.

No determination of criminal liability is asserted or implied. The analysis presents factual observations from official sources. All investigative and legal determinations rest with law enforcement and regulatory agencies. We are merely pointing out discrepancies and inconsistencies of McNeal’s public statements and assertions, and federal government records.

The one document that would resolve this matter is a DD-214 showing retirement as a Gunnery Sergeant of Marines, or equivalent official documentation. As of the date of this analysis, no such document has been produced.

Respectfully submitted,

James P. Riffenburg

Master Sergeant, United States Marine Corps (Retired)

Rockwall, Texas | April 2026