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## **Graceland Commemorates 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Elvis' Military Service on Saturday, March 24 with Free Access to Elvis Presley's Memphis Entertainment Complex for Veterans and Active Duty Military**

### **Graceland to Open Expanded "Private Presley" Exhibit Chronicling Elvis' Military Career**

**Memphis, Tenn. – February 7, 2018** – Elvis Presley™ began his service in the United States military on March 24, 1958 when he was inducted into the U.S. Army. To salute our troops and to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Elvis' military service, [Graceland](#)® has announced that complimentary tickets to the new [Elvis Presley's Memphis](#)™ entertainment and exhibit complex will be made available on Saturday, March 24, 2018 to all military veterans and those serving on active duty. This anniversary day will also mark the opening of an expanded "Private Presley" Army exhibit at Elvis Presley's Memphis. Additionally, the AAA four-diamond [Guest House at Graceland](#)™ resort hotel will offer its "Salute to Heroes" discounted rate of 30% off standard room rates to both active and retired military.

The newly-expanded "Private Presley" exhibit will take an in-depth look at Elvis' military service, including letters from Elvis's manager Col. Parker to the Army asking for a deferment to allow Elvis to complete filming of "*King Creole*," letters from the Army regarding press access to Elvis, his original Army footlocker, the dress that his mother Gladys wore at his induction ceremony, and more. Fans can also learn about how Col. Parker kept Elvis' career alive while he was serving in Germany and see items from Frank Sinatra's legendary "*Welcome Home, Elvis*" 1960 ABC television special.

Complimentary tickets for Elvis Presley's Memphis must be requested on-site at Graceland on March 24, 2018 by active or retired members of the U.S. military with valid ID. Full details and restrictions at [Graceland.com/Military](#). Guest House at Graceland accommodations at the "Salute to Heroes" discounted rate have limited availability. Reserve Guest House accommodations in advance by calling 800-238-2000 or visiting [GuestHouseGraceland.com](#).

**Elvis In the Military**

On March 24, 1958, Elvis was inducted into the United States Army at the Memphis Draft Board and assigned serial number 53310761. On March 25, at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, he received his indoctrination exam and traditional, military, G.I. haircut in front of 55 media photographers. Elvis commented to the crowd, "Hair today, gone tomorrow."

Elvis received basic training at Fort Hood, Texas. Private Presley was assigned to the 2nd Armored Division at Fort Hood and received advanced tank instruction. Elvis completed his basic training by the end of May. He earned a marksman's medal and was classified as a sharpshooter with a pistol. Elvis also was named acting assistant leader of his squad. Elvis was stationed there for six months and his parents joined him at a temporary home near the base.

In August 1958, Gladys Presley became ill and returned to Memphis where she was hospitalized with acute hepatitis. As her condition became more serious, Elvis requested emergency leave. He arrived in Memphis on the afternoon of August 12<sup>th</sup>. Gladys Presley died in the early hours of August 14<sup>th</sup> at the age of 46. She lay in state at Graceland and services were held at the Memphis Funeral Home on August 15<sup>th</sup>. Elvis was devastated by his mother's passing. They had always been very close and giving his mother and father a better life had been one of the most heartfelt ambitions in his professional pursuits. He returned to his Army duties on August 25<sup>th</sup>.

Elvis left the U.S. for his eighteen-month assignment to West Germany in September 1958. Elvis was assigned to Company C, a scout platoon frequently on maneuvers. It was hoped that in this capacity, Private Presley would be largely out of the public eye and able to do his duty as an active member of the U.S. Army. His father Vernon Presley and grandmother Minnie Mae Presley lived with him in his off-base residence in Bad Nauheim. Company C left for maneuvers in Grafenwohr, Bavaria, located on the Czech border on November 2, 1958. Here, Elvis endured the same field conditions as every other soldier. Elvis achieved the rank of private first class in November 1958, specialist fourth class in June 1959, and sergeant in January 1960. He was honorably discharged on March 5, 1960.

Part of Elvis' personal commitment was that he did not perform during his two years in the service though he was often asked to do so. Save for a quick recording session on his first leave from Fort Hood in June 1958 after completing basic training, he took a two-year hiatus from his career. But his manager, Colonel Tom Parker, kept the promotional machinery running, orchestrating continuing record releases, merchandising and special fan communications and taking full advantage of the intense press interest in the most famous soldier of the time, all the while making plans with Elvis for the resumption of his career once he returned to civilian life in March 1960. Elvis served his country just like any other G.I., with none of the special privileges his celebrity status might have afforded him. He was, by all accounts, a model soldier, earning the lasting respect of his fellow soldiers and the public at large. Elvis worried what the long time away from performing, recording and acting might mean for his career. His fans, however, remained steadfast, new audiences would embrace him and many of his greatest achievements still lay ahead.

Elvis returned home to Graceland in March 1960 with great press and public fanfare. He quickly went back to the recording studio producing his album "*Elvis Is Back!*", which would hit number two on the charts with three singles going to number one. He starred in Frank Sinatra's "*Welcome Home, Elvis*"

ABC TV special. For this appearance he was paid \$125,000, a record sum at the time. Then, it was back to the movie studio to resume his film career with the musical romantic comedy “*G.I. Blues*”, which took advantage of the attention on Elvis’ real-life army service and became a smash hit.

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### **About Graceland and Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc.**

Elvis Presley’s Graceland, in Memphis, is music’s most important and beloved landmark, with hundreds of thousands of fans from around the world visiting the historic home each year. Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc. (EPE) manages the operations of Graceland and its related properties, including [Elvis Presley’s Memphis](#), Graceland’s new entertainment and exhibition complex over 200,000 square feet in size; the AAA Four-Diamond [Guest House at Graceland](#) 450-room hotel; and the Graceland Archives, featuring thousands of artifacts from Elvis’ home and career. EPE also produces and licenses Elvis-themed live events, tours and attractions worldwide. Graceland Holdings LLC, led by managing partner Joel Weinshanker, is the majority owner of EPE. Graceland was recently named “Best Tennessee Attraction” by USA Today’s 10Best Readers’ Choice Awards. This marks an impressive fourth USA Today 10Best Readers’ Choice Award win for Elvis Presley’s legendary home – the most for any attraction worldwide – with previous wins as the world’s “Best Musical Attraction” and “Best Historic Southern Attraction” in 2015, and the #1 “Iconic American Attraction” in 2013 by USA Today 10Best readers. For more information on EPE and Graceland, visit [www.graceland.com](http://www.graceland.com)

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