

Buckley AFB, CO - RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) NEWSLETTER - Jan 2020

18401 East A-Basin Ave, Stop 95, Buckley AFB, CO 80011

Building 606, Room 104, phone **720-847-6693**, e-mail address: **460sw.rao.org@us.af.mil**

Normal Hrs of operation: Mon 1000-1600, Tues 0900-1200, Wed 1200-1500, Thurs 0800-1500 & Fri 0900-1200

Director: Steve Young, Lt Col, USAF, Ret

RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) LOCATION: We are in **Rm 104** of **Bldg 606**, very close to the main building entrance. As you come in the main entrance, turn left, enter the first hallway on your right and Rm 104 is the first room on your left. **Remember, we assist military retirees from all Services!**

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED UNSATISFACTORY SERVICE FROM THE RAO? We are staffed completely with volunteers who do their very best to help with your issues. While we always strive to provide you with the best possible support, we realize there may be times you experience what you consider to be unsatisfactory customer service when you contact the RAO. Perhaps you never received a response to a voice mail/e-mail you left, you got inaccurate information regarding a question you had or the person who helped you was unable to provide an adequate answer to your question. **If you are ever dissatisfied with the support you get from the RAO please contact the RAO Director to discuss the situation.** The best way to reach me is via my home e-mail - elkfive@centurylink.net.

RAO VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: We currently have **only 7 permanent RAO volunteers** that support our “Help Desk” (720-847-6693) so the office is not fully manned every day of the week. You can leave a voice mail anytime, and we check Voice Mails frequently to return calls, but **we need more volunteers. A typical volunteer spends just one 3-4 hour shift in the office per week.** You don’t need to be an expert on retiree matters, you just need a desire to help military retirees/surviving spouses and a willingness to learn! We will go over reference materials, explain RAO procedures, etc. and you won’t work a solo “shift” until you are comfortable doing so. The job mainly consists of answering phone calls, responding to Voice Mails and meeting with people who come by the office. You either answer customer questions yourself or refer them to the appropriate subject matter expert (SME) and provide them with the contact information for that SME. **If you think you might be interested, or just have questions, please contact me (Steve Young) at my home e-mail - elkfive@centurylink.net.**

NEW HOURS FOR BUCKLEY AFB 6TH AVE GATE: During October 2019 the hours for the 6th Ave gate changed. The 6th Ave gate hours are currently as follows:

Inbound Traffic: Mon-Sat: 0600-1400

Outbound Traffic: Mon-Sat: 0600-1700

Sunday gate is CLOSED

Those who feel the new gate hours are a major inconvenience (the back gate only adds about 4 miles to your trip) can contact me directly - I’ll track numbers and provide the info to security.

The Visitor Center at the 6th Ave gate is open Mon-Fri from 0600-1400 and closed weekends, holidays and Space Wing Down days.

The Mississippi Gate is still open 24/7 and it can provide Visitor Center services when the visitor center is closed.

For any questions on gate hours please call 720-847-9252. I realize the Buckley AFB web site does not reflect these hours and have brought this to their attention.

460 FSS EVENTS CALENDAR: Attached is a 460 FSS calendar showing events planned for January. Under the Outdoor Rec events look at the “Cost” category for your costs as a retiree. The R4R price is for active duty,

Guard/Reserve. If a military retiree grandparent brings their grandchild to a trip and that grandchild's parent is active duty or reserves, the R4R price would apply to the dependent.

BUCKLEY AFB RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) COFFEE SOCIAL: The next quarterly RAO "coffee social" is **planned for Tuesday, 7 Jan at 0900** at the Buckley AFB Panther Den/Community center (Bldg 630). The facility is right by the 4-way stop on Aspen St at the entrance to the Aerospace Data Facility (ADF) - there is an electronic sign right beside the street at the stop sign. Breakfast items will be available for **purchase** until 0930 and after that you can purchase drinks (coffee, etc). There are ~45 parking spots assigned to the Panther Den on one side of the facility and along the ADF compound fence (designated by brown signs for "Panther Den Customer"). We have scheduled **two speakers from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)**. **One will talk about free tax preparation services available in our area and the other will have presentations on the "Top Scams in Colorado & How to Stay Safe" and "Technology & Scams: Staying Safe on the Internet."** As always, spouses are welcome.

EMPLOYMENT EXPOs & JOB FAIRS:

On **Wednesday, 15 Jan, from 1000-1400**, a JobNewsUSA job fair will be held at The Summit Conference & Event Center (411 Sable Blvd, Aurora, CO 80011). You can get more information and register to attend at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/jobnewsusacom-denver-job-fair-january-15th-tickets-85774799735>

On **Thursday, 23 Jan, from 1100-1400**, a Denver Job Fair will be held at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Denver Stapleton (4444 North Havana St, Denver, CO 80239). You can get more information and register to attend at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/denver-job-fair-january-23-embassy-suites-by-hilton-denver-stapleton-tickets-75620299351?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

DFAS DECEMBER 2019 RETIREE NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ONLINE: You can get to the latest DFAS retiree newsletter at <https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary> . It contains information about convenient options for getting your tax documents (1099s are already available), tools to make filling out required forms faster and easier, the SBP-DIC Offset Phased Elimination, what to expect in the year-end mailing, 2020 COLA, Annuitant CEI change, and who to contact for pay and benefit questions, as well as news about TRICARE, Army Emergency Relief and the Armed Forces Retirement Homes.

FRUSTRATED WITH DEFENSE FINANCE & ACCOUNTING SERVICE (DFAS)?: I would like to make you aware of a recent article I got from the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) regarding DFAS. The article was related to the many complaints MOAA has received from members regarding frustrations they have had dealing with DFAS on various issues - long wait times and poor customer service. After discussions with MOAA regarding this feedback, DFAS has put together a customer service mapping team to look into their processes/systems with the goal of reducing backlogs and improving customer service. **If anyone has detailed notes and phone logs of a resolved issue DFAS wants to hear from them - the frustrations & problems they experienced during the resolution to use in their analysis. In particular, they are interested in hearing from Guard/Reserve folks who experienced issues getting their retirement packages processed but are now receiving their retirement payments.**

Anyone from this group who wants to participate in this DFAS study can send an e-mail to dfas.customer.mapping@mail.mil with the following information:

Name, service branch, phone number, e-mail address, mailing address, and retirement date

DFAS will identify a representative sample of service members from those who send e-mails and contact them to arrange interviews.

DFAS is aware that some of the backlogs and frustrations are the result of processing at the service specific processing centers and, when their study is complete, they plan to work these centers to develop solutions for military retirees and others.

*Please **do not** use the above email address to ask questions or notify DFAS of a **current** issue with pay. Customers who have questions about their pay can call the DFAS Customer Care Center at 800-321-1080 (Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern).*

In the RAO we have spoken with many Guard/Reserve personnel who have had problems getting their retirement package processed, some as a result of HQ ARPC issues and some as a result of DFAS issues. In my opinion, this provides a great opportunity for those folks, and others we didn't hear from, to contact DFAS directly, tell their story and, perhaps, provide info that can help DFAS improve and make things better for those who follow.

SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN - DEPENDENT INDEMNITY COMPENSATION OFFSET (“WIDOWS TAX”) PHASED ELIMINATION: The FY20 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), signed by the President on 20 Dec, repealed a decades-old injustice that took money from the pockets of surviving spouses of military members. The Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), created in 1972, allowed a military retiree or retirement-eligible service member to ensure a continuous lifetime annuity for their dependents. However, until now a VA benefit called the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset the money a widow would receive from SBP, dollar-for-dollar. For example, if the surviving spouse was receiving \$10k/yr in DIC, their SBP was reduced by \$10k/yr. This offset was commonly referred to as a “widow’s tax.” SBP and DIC are different programs, paid for by different federal agencies. The FY20 NDAA completely eliminates the Widow’s Tax, but in phases. **No changes will take place in calendar year 2020.** In 2021, one-third of the SBP will be restored and in 2022, two-thirds will be restored. On January 1, 2023, the SBP will be completely restored *and surviving spouses will receive their SBP and DIC payments in full.*

DFAS has set up a website where you can get the latest on this issue: www.dfas.mil/sbpdicnews If this impacts you, **don't** call DFAS to find out what your “new” SBP payments will be once the change is implemented, they won't be able to tell you yet. The most important thing you can do at this point is to ensure your annuity account information is up to date and includes your correct mailing address so DFAS can contact you. If you don't already have a MyPay account, I recommend you set one up so DFAS will also have your e-mail address. There is info on how to set up a MyPay account on page 5 of this newsletter.

COMMISSARY/BASE EXCHANGE/MWR ACCESS FOR VETERANS IN 2020: The Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 authorized veterans authorized access to in-person commissary, military exchange and morale, welfare and recreation privileges on DoD and Coast Guard installations beginning 1 Jan 2020. **Initially, only those with a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) and caregivers registered with the VA's Comprehensive Program for Caregivers will be authorized base access.** Caregivers will be presented a letter by the VA to certify they qualify for access - they will also require a valid form of ID (real ID-compliant driver's license, US passport, etc). Before gaining access for the first time all new users will be required to go through a background check - those with felony convictions, felony arrest warrants and other types of derogatory information related to criminal history or terrorism will be turned away. This process will be handled by the Visitor Control Center (VCC) on base. In addition to the 5% surcharge all commissary users currently pay, new customers with the VHIC will have to pay a 1.9% fee when using a commercial credit card and a .5% fee for debit cards. The

regular veteran ID card (VIC) will not provide base access. Those veterans who are not in the two categories mentioned above will need to wait on “Phase Two” - the timeframe for that has not been announced.

INCOME TAX FILING ASSISTANCE: It’s that time of year again so I thought some of you might be interested in a few tax preparation options available in our area, if you don’t do your own using Turbo Tax or whatever. While H&R Block and others obviously charge you to do taxes, **there are at least two free alternatives.**

There is normally an H&R Block Tax Booth located in the food court of the Base Exchange. Their prices generally run from about \$59 (W2 income only) - \$189 (paid mortgage interest, etc) depending on the complexity of your taxes.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers *free* tax help to people who generally make \$56,000 or less, persons with disabilities and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals.

In addition to VITA, the **Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE)** program offers **free tax help for all taxpayers, particularly those who are 60 years of age and older**, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors. The IRS-certified volunteers who provide tax counseling are often retired individuals associated with non-profit organizations that receive grants from the IRS.

The **web site** at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-you-by-volunteers> provides you with two links where you can search (by zip code) for places near you that offer **free** tax return preparation by volunteers. One link is for the “VITA/TCE Locator Tool” and one is for the “AARP Tax-Aide Site Locator Tool.” **The actual listing of sites at the above link will likely not be available until late January.**

The tax preparers at the AARP Tax-Aide sites will do taxes for *anyone* at no charge - you don’t need to be an AARP member. There were 17 different AARP tax-aid locations listed within 20 miles of my zip code - at libraries, retirement homes, senior centers, rec centers, etc. Some of them allow you to make appointments on-line and others you have to call. If you have additional questions for them you can call the AARP tax-aid site located nearest you or visit <https://cotaxaide.org>. **(Again, sites available using this link not available until late Jan)**

FLU SHOTS: Flu season is approaching and there are many places Tricare participants can go to get a free flu shot - costs will be covered by Tricare. When I called Tricare Pharmacy Managed Care Support Contractor (MCSC) at 877-363-1303 they told me the only pharmacy in my area that *doesn’t* take Tricare is CVS. If you have an Express Scripts account you can log in and find pharmacies in your zip code that take Tricare. When I put in my zip code it showed pharmacies (including address & phone numbers) at Walgreens, Safeway, Wal-Mart, King Soopers, Sam’s Club, etc. You just need to call the pharmacy you prefer to ensure they offer the shots. If you don’t have an Express Scripts account you can go to the link below and put in your zip code to locate a network pharmacy: https://www.express-scripts.com/consumer/site/oepharmacysearch?memtype=TRICARE&BV_SessionID=@@@@0906302551.1569016325-mm495694381376@@@@&BV_EngineID=ccghadhjmdddemhcfklcgffdgkhdggm.0&partner=DOD#

BASE PHARMACY - PHONE IN PRESCRIPTION ACTIVATION PROCESS: After hearing from one frustrated retiree, on 16 Dec I met with Maj Boral at the base pharmacy to discuss the requirement for patients to call the pharmacy in order to “activate” prescriptions submitted electronically. We discussed the lengthy wait time this customer experienced on the phone while trying to “activate” a valid prescription from his doctor, the rationale for the phone in requirement, some possible alternatives to the current process, etc. At this time I am working with both the pharmacy and the Med Group “Patient and Family Partnership Council” to look into this issue and see what might be done to improve the customer experience. I will provide updates on this in future newsletters. In the meantime, **if you have any complaints, suggestions, etc related to the base pharmacy you can contact one of the Patient Advocates, SSgt Sable Fry of the 460 SW MDG, at sable.k.fry@mail.mil** In addition, any of you that use the base pharmacy phone in prescription “activation” process **specifically**, and find it unsatisfactory, are

welcome to send an e-mail to me personally at elkfive@centurylink.net. Please provide some specifics on your experience in the e-mail (routine problems, extensive wait times, dropped calls, etc). This will help give me a feel for the number of retirees who consider this a problem and provide info I can relay to Maj Boral.

DISEASES LINKED TO AGENT ORANGE: About 20 veteran and military service organizations are asking the VA to add four diseases to the Agent Orange presumption list, which would make thousands of affected veterans eligible to receive benefits. The four requested additions are hypertension, bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson's-like symptoms. Each of these four diseases has been linked to exposure to Agent Orange by researchers from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. The VA has yet to take any action on these diseases. There are 14 diseases on the VA's current Agent Orange presumptive exposure list: AL amyloidosis, chronic B-cell leukemias, chloracne, diabetes mellitus type 2, Hodgkin's disease, ischemic heart disease, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Parkinson's disease, peripheral neuropathy (early onset), porphyria cutanea tarda, prostate cancer, respiratory cancers (includes lung cancer), and soft tissue sarcomas (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma).

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS UNDER TRICARE: We've gotten several calls lately from people who are not aware of their options for getting prescription medications under Tricare - either regular Tricare or Tricare for Life (TFL). So, even though I'm sure most of you already know this, here is some basic info for those who may not. Under Tricare there are four basic options to obtain medication prescribed by your doctor - using these could save you money. From cheapest to most expensive, the options are: a military pharmacy; the Tricare Express Scripts home delivery program; a Tricare retail network pharmacy (~58k locations) and; a non-network pharmacy. Tricare requires your prescription be filled with a generic product if one is available. At a **military pharmacy** (like the one on Buckley AFB) you can receive up to a 90 day supply of *most medications* at **no cost to you**. Using **Express Scripts** home delivery you can receive up to a 90 day supply of *most generic medications* for a **\$10 copay and brand-name medications for a \$29 copay**. For prescription drugs not on the Tricare's preferred list the copay is \$60. At an **in network retail pharmacy** (like a Walgreens, Rite Aid, Walmart, etc) you can receive up to a **30** day supply of *most generic medications* for a \$13 copay and \$33 for brand name medications. Prices at non-network pharmacies will vary. If you have any questions you can call the Buckley AFB Pharmacy (720-847-7455) or Express Scripts (877-363-1303, 800-282-2881 or visit <https://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE/index.shtml>).

MYPAY & TAX SEASON: (Excerpts from September 2019 Air Force Retiree Newsletter). To get ready for the 2020 tax season you should make sure you have an active myPay account and your mailing address is correct. If you have updated your information with another government agency, such as the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) or the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting Service (DEERS), you also need to update your information with DFAS and vice-versa.

Link to log on to myPay is <https://myPay.dfas.mil>

If you're not currently using myPay you should consider creating an account. With the latest refresh myPay is now simpler, streamlined and more mobile-friendly. That means it's easier to manage your pay account using the web browser on your computer or with a connected device, like your smartphone or tablet. One advantage of using myPay is your 1099-R tax statement will be available much sooner in myPay than through postal mail. In addition, in myPay you can download or print your current year tax statement, as well as prior year 1099Rs (up to four prior years for retirees and up to two prior years for annuitants). While you're in myPay, you can also easily check to make sure they have your correct mailing address or change your tax withholding.

It's easy to get started with myPay. If you've never used myPay, you can request an initial password on the myPay homepage using the "Forgot or Need a Password" link. The password will be mailed to the address you have on file with DFAS and you will receive it in about 10 business days. Once you receive your password in the mail, you can return to the myPay homepage and login with your social security number and the password you received in the mail to create your myPay profile.

Reactivating your myPay account

Some of you may only use myPay once a year to get your 1099-R during tax season so when you do try to access your account again you discover your password is expired, lost or forgotten. If your account is in an inactive status because your password has expired, you can follow the simple steps below to reactivate your account.

1. Go to mypay.dfas.mil in your web browser on a computer or connected device
2. Click on the “Forgot or Need a Password?” link and enter your Login ID or Social Security Number
3. Choose to send a temporary password to your email or mailing address of record
4. When you receive the temporary password, go back to myPay and log in to reactivate your account.

The self-service options available through myPay simplify the management of your military retirement or annuity and give you access to personalized information about your account.

MILITARY HONOR PLATES: One of the newsletter recipients pointed out to me the CO DMV offers “Qualified Exempt Military License Plates” for several categories of veterans - those who have earned the AF Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, etc. This means the applicant may be issued one plate exempt from ownership taxes and registration fees (sales/use tax not exempt). You can find more info, and application forms at https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/DR2002_1.pdf

GENERAL & MRS CURTIS E. LEMAY FOUNDATION: **The LeMay Foundation helps widows and widowers of all Air Force Retirees, both officers and enlisted, through financial grants of assistance** and provide assistance for as long as it is required. They have some spouses who have been receiving monthly checks for over fifteen years. They can also help them with a specific need in a single disbursement (a new pair of eyeglasses, minor home repairs, dental work, etc). They do not offer loans - all funds given are considered grants. You can find more info at <https://www.lemay-foundation.org/>

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERAN (DAV) MOBILE SERVICE OFFICES (MSOs): Housed in a fleet of well equipped “offices on wheels” DAV’s Mobile Service Offices (MSOs) travel to smaller towns and rural communities across the country to counsel and assist veterans to educate veterans and their families on the benefits and services available to them in thanks for their service. Aided by Department and Chapter Service Officers, the MSO program provides support to veterans developing, filing and winning claims for benefits administered under federal, state and local laws. National Service Officers (NSOs) counsel and assist with the development of evidence, completion of required applications and prosecution of claims, bringing benefit and services education to veterans and their families where they live - all services provided by DAV NSOs are free of charge. For more info on free DAV services call Carmen McGinnis in the Denver VA Regional Office (155 Van Gordon St) at (303) 914-5570. **Right now the web site below shows no locations in our area for Jan but you can check for updates.**

To see an MSO calendar for any date or location, you can use the following link:

http://donate.dav.org/site/PageServer?pagename=MSO_Events_All

FREE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE LIFE-TIME ACCESS PASS FOR DISABLED VETERANS:

Veterans with a service connected disability rating are eligible to enter Federal parks for free with the Lifetime National Parks Access Pass from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. The Access Pass also admits disabled any passengers in their vehicle, and provides discounts on other things such as camping, swimming, board launching, and guided tours.

DISABLED VETERANS FLY SPACE AVAILABLE FOR FREE: When congress signed the *John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act* last year, 100% service connected disabled Veterans became eligible for Space Available Travel. Better known as ‘Space-A’, or military hops, Air Mobility Command (AMC) maintains an extensive network of flights throughout the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam and American Samoa. Supplementing this network, several Air National Guard and Naval Aviation Units have flights available. You can get more info on Space-A at <https://www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Travel-Site/AMC-Space-Available-Travel-Page/>

BUCKLEY AFB LEGAL OFFICE - WHAT CAN THEY DO FOR YOU? The majority of the retirees go to base legal for estate planning to include wills, power-of-attorneys, advance medical directives, and living wills. All of these are done *by appointment only* on Tuesday afternoons. They also visit legal for assistance with matters such as probate, divorce, elder abuse/scams, and other legal matters. These appointments are scheduled on Thursday afternoons. Legal *does not* provide assistance for any of the following: criminal matters; real estate/closing documents; official matters in which the US Government has an interest; matters on behalf of third parties (their children); commercial enterprise to include private organizations, rental properties, home businesses; trusts; any representation of a client in a court or administrative proceeding. Legal will do wills and witness/notarize documents but they will not do trusts. **Customers can make an appointment with legal by calling 720-847-6444 (Bldg 1030, the 460th SW HQ building).**

CORRECTING & REQUESTING MILITARY RECORDS: Air Force veterans who need to have an error corrected or an injustice removed from their military records should complete a DD Form 149, Application for Correction of Military Record. The form instructions advise mailing the package to the address on the back of the form, but the DD Form 149 is currently being revised for an address change. The intake office on the back of the form has relocated from Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas, to Joint Base Andrews, MD. To ensure an application is received and processed in a timely manner, mail the DD Form 149, along with any supporting documents, to: SAF/MRBC (AFBCMR), 3351 Celmers Lane, Joint Base Andrews NAF, Washington, MD 20762-6435 or send the package by email to usaf.pentagon.saf-mr.mbx.saf-mrbc@mail.mil.

You can get additional information at the following link: <https://www.afpc.af.mil/Career-Management/Military-Personnel-Records/> Scroll down to the “RECORDS CORRECTION” section for more information. On this same site, in the “REQUEST COPY OF MILITARY RECORDS” section, you will find the following info on how to get a copy of your military records. “Air Force veterans who separated or retired on or after Oct. 1, 2004, may request their records in two ways: register for a free Premium account on the Department of Veterans Affairs’ [eBenefits site](#), or email, mail or fax a signed SF-180 to AFPC’s military personnel records section. The form can be emailed to AFPC/DPIOR Military Records Incoming at dpsomp.incoming@us.af.mil, faxed to 210-565-3124 (DSN 665-3124) or mailed to the AFPC address on the back of the form. *Requests for records or documents cannot be made by phone.*”

You can find additional information on getting copies of your records from the National Archives web site at <https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center/military-personnel> or calling 314-801-0800.

REPORTING THE DEATH OF A RETIREE TO DFAS ONLINE: Reporting the death of a retiree can be a difficult task for family or friends. We know that waiting on the phone and talking to one of our customer service representatives is not high on the priority list right after someone passes away. **DFAS has re-introduced the option to report the death of a retiree online.** To use the online Notice of Death option, click on the link at the top of the Retired Military & Annuitants main page, which is located at <https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary.html>. This will take you to a form where you will enter all of the pertinent information. When reporting a retiree’s death, be sure to have the following information available:

- Retiree’s full name
- Retiree’s SSN
- Retiree’s date of death
- Cause of death
- Marital status (if married, the wedding date)

The form also asks for your name, address, phone number and email address. If you are completing this form on behalf of someone else, such as the spouse or child of the deceased retiree, please use the contact information of the person you are helping to make the report. Updates on the status of the claim will be sent to the email address

provided, including an email verifying that the notification was received. If you need any assistance you can always contact the Buckley AFB Casualty Assistance Representative, Loretta Lopez, at 720-847-6946.

ELDERCARE LOCATOR: The Eldercare Locator is a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging connecting people to services for older adults and their families. This locator allows you to search for a variety of topics using ZIP codes, or city/state, to find services nearest you. You can get more info at the following link: <https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx> or call 800-677-1116.

STATE VA BENEFITS: Everyone knows about the federal benefits available to veterans, but did you know many *states* also offer great benefits to their veterans? State benefits range from free college and employment resources to free hunting and fishing licenses. Most states also offer tax breaks for their veterans and specialized license plates, some states even provide their veterans with cash bonuses just for serving in the military. A handy summary of the benefits each state and territory offers can be found here: <https://militarybenefits.info/state-veterans-benefits/> There may be a benefit available to you or your family that you didn't know about! Other **Federal VA benefit numbers:** life insurance 800-669-8477; status of headstones and markers, 800-697-6947; special issues such as Gulf War/radiation/Agent Orange/Project Shad call 800-749-8387; and GI Bill and education matters call 888-442-4551. Visit the Federal website at www.va.gov/ for more info.

DENVER VA REGIONAL BENEFITS OFFICE HOURS & LOCATIONS: *Do you have a question about your VA Benefits? Compensation Claim, Pension Claim, Aid and Attendance, Appeals, survivor and burial benefits, Home Loans, Employment, or Education*

The VBA Office in the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center is holding office hours:

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. (last appt. at 3:30 p.m.)

Phone: (800) 827-1000

Location:

Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center

Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)

1700 North Wheeling Street

Aurora, CO 80045

Sign up to meet with a counselor in the Pharmacy waiting room.

We also have a Veterans Affairs Office on Buckley AFB in Bldg 606. There are two Benefits Advisors there (Mr Groce & Mr White) who can be reached at 720-847-4838 from Mon-Fri 0800 - 1600.

ID CARD RENEWALS FOR MILITARY RETIREES, SPOUSES & DEPENDENTS

For ID card renewal there are several places you can use in our area, both on and off Buckley AFB. If your computer is compatible, you can use the following two web sites to locate ID card facilities near you and to make an appointment. The RAPIDS locator web site is at <https://rsl.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/> and the appointment site is at <https://rapids-appointments.dmdc.osd.mil> . If the links above won't work for you, info on the nearby ID card facilities is below. **A word of caution - on the day of your appointment I'd encourage you to call the location you're using to ensure DEERS is up - if DEERS is down they won't be able to process your ID card.**

Note: when you or spouse are approaching age 65 the FRONT of your ID card probably has INDEF listed, but on the back there is probably an actual expiration date, which should be the **month before your 65th birthday** - use this date to determine when you need to get a new card. You may schedule an ID card replacement appointment (up to 1 month before your ID card expires) using the process outlined above.

MPF at Buckley AFB (Bldg 606 on 18401 E A-Basin Ave) - they are really by appointment only. You can call them at 720-847-6990 to schedule an appointment.

ANG at Buckley AFB (18860 E Breckenridge Ave, Hangar 801, Rm N224) - You can call 720-847-9295, closed Monday.

NAVOPS Space Ctr at Buckley AFB (7 N Snowmass St, Bldg 1301) - you can call 720-847-7808, Closed Monday

CO HQ Army NG in Centennial (6848 South Revere Pkwy) - you can call 720-250-1315, Closed on Monday.

NOAA Facility in Boulder (Skaggs Bldg, Rm GB515 - 325 Broadway) - you can call 303-497-6119, open Mon-Wed-Fri by appointment only.

GRAY AREA RESERVISTS: We get quite a few calls in the RAO from Gray Area Reservists approaching 60 who have questions regarding the processing of their retirement orders, when they can anticipate their first pension check, what they need to do regarding Tricare, etc. Based on that, below is some POC information for Guard/Reserve members from the various services. In addition, we send a personal letter to Gray Area Reservists we know of in our AOR several months before their 60th birthday with additional information. We can also provide you with a copy of DoD Fm 2656 if you are having trouble downloading it.

Air Force Guard/Reserve:

Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC): <https://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/retirement/> or 1-800-525-0102. If you experience trouble reaching ARPC with this number please get in touch with us and we will use our back-channel contacts at ARPC to try and assist. ARPC encourages retirees to file retirement packages using a MyPers account. **In Nov 19 ARPC implemented a retirement application status bar in MyPers so applicants can now track the status of their submitted package. Instructions on how to use the application status bar can be found at:** <https://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/Portals/4/Documents/Retirement%20application%20status%20bar%20instructions.pdf?ver=2019-11-20-120624-723×tamp=1574269784796>

Army Guard/Reserve Personnel in CO

88th Readiness Division Retirement Services Office (RSO) - 60 South O Street, Ft. McCoy, Wisconsin 54656
608-388-7448/9321 or DSN 280-0596
<http://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement/reserve-component-retirement-services>

Navy Guard/Reserve Personnel

PERS-912: 1-866-827-5672 or 1-833-330-6622
https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/retired_activities/Pages/default.aspx

USMC Reserve Personnel

MMSR-5 Reserve Retirement & Separation Section: 703-784-9306/9307

Coast Guard Reserve Personnel

National Retiree Help Desk Hotline (unless it is a pay related issue): 1-833-224-6743 -
For pay related issues call 1-800-772-8724 or 785-339-3415
<https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Retiree-Services-Program/>

Colorado Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA)

This office assists Service members in accessing Dept of VA health care services & benefits. The TAA initiative was started in May 2005 when the National Guard Bureau (NGB) signed a MoA with the VA.
Amy Eagen - 720-250-1173 (works Tues-Fri)

MyPay ADDRESS CHANGE: The simplest and quickest solution for changing your mailing address is through myPay, using the online account management system. For any questions or concerns regarding myPay, call 888-332-7411 (option 5) for a customer service representative. Both retirees and annuitants may call DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay at 800-321-1080. If you call MyPay have your banking information available - you may need **routing and account information** before they will talk with you.

MAIL OPTION: Please include both your old and new mailing address, along with the effective date for the new address. In addition, please include your name, social security number and signature with date on your request. For retirees, use the address below:

DFAS U.S. Military Retired Pay
8899 E 56th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46249-1200
Or FAX DFAS Retired Pay at 800-469-6559

If you are an annuitant please mail your request to:

DFAS U.S. Military Annuitant Pay
8899 E 56th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46249-1300
Or FAX DFAS Annuitant Pay at 800-982-8459

LIFE CHANGING EVENT? KEEP DFAS INFORMED: Ensuring your retired pay comes to you accurately and on time is our primary goal at DFAS. To do this, we need your help to keep your account up to date. As a retiree, the sooner you alert us to any change that might affect your pay, the more timely and accurate your pay will be. Keeping your account up to date includes making sure your mailing address, banking information, allotments, tax withholding status, and your beneficiary choices are current. Be sure to report any change of life events as soon as they happen. These life-changing events include:

- Marriage
- Divorce
- Death of a spouse or child
- Birth or adoption of a child

Some changes, especially those regarding SBP, have a one-year time limit, so it is very important that DFAS is notified of life-changing events when they happen. When you notify us, be sure to include supporting documents, such as birth or marriage certificates. Keeping your contact information updated is also key to staying informed. We occasionally send out correspondence regarding changes in the law that affect your pay, and a new Retired Account Statement (RAS) is sent when your net pay changes (unless you are on **myPay** where the new RAS is available online). **If your mailing address is not correct and you are not on myPay, they have no way of notifying you about changes. The easiest way to stay up to date is to use myPay. You can use myPay to change your mailing address, your direct deposit information, certain allotments and your tax withholding status. You can also use myPay to verify payment information, including allotment amounts, or tax withholding, or check your Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage on your RAS. You can create a myPay account at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/>**

SURVIVOR BENEFITS:

Reporting the Death of a Retiree

Please report the death of a retired service member as soon as possible to avoid delay and possible financial hardship to surviving beneficiaries. You can contact the Buckley AFB Casualty Office at (720) 847-6946 for assistance with this claim as well as other applicable claims, for example Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Claim, Civil Service Claim, VA Claim, other insurance claims, etc. Our goal is to provide our survivors with “one stop” assistance with the necessary paperwork that comes with the death of your retired loved one. **If you are not sure**

who your Casualty Assistance Representative (CAR) is, you can call 877-353-6807, enter your zip code, and you will be automatically transferred to the base CAR responsible for your area.

Reporting the Death of Annuitant

When you pass, your eligibility for Survivor Benefit Plan ends. Prompt reporting of a deceased military annuitant's death can help avoid delay and possible financial hardship to surviving family members or executors, who will be required to return any unearned payments of the decedent's annuity pay. Be sure to let your survivors know that your (SBP Annuitant) death will need to be reported to DFAS or you can contact our Casualty Assistance Representative Loretta Lopez at 720-847-6946.

Retirees

Do your loved ones know who to contact in the event of your death? Casualty Assistance Representatives (CARs) stand ready to lend a hand with your casualty assistance needs. Call them for an appointment to talk about what you should have ready for your loved ones in the event of your passing.

Buckley AFB Casualty Assistance Office (Loretta Lopez) - CAR/SBP Rep 720-847-6946

Retired Air Force.....	1-877-353-6807
Retired Army.....	1-800-626-3317
Retired Coast Guard.....	1-800-772-8724
Retired Marines.....	1-800-847-1597
Retired Navy.....	1-800-368-3202
Retired Civil Service.....	1-888-767-6738
Receiving VA Compensation.....	1-800-827-1000
Social Security Administration.....	1-800-772-1213

FREE MOVIES: Buckley AFB shows a family movie at the Leadership Development Center (LDC - Bldg 1032) on the 3rd Friday of every month. Doors open at 1800 and the movie starts at 1830. MWR determines movies shown based on the most popular and rating appropriate movie sent to them through their movie program. You can check the schedule at the following link: <https://www.460fss.com/> The movie for 17 Jan is Aladdin. You can find other info on the 460FSS FaceBook page at <https://www.facebook.com/460FSS/>.

Groups can schedule a movie showing at the Panther Den on base by contacting Justin Lentz (720-847-7197). Justin can provide the most current list of available movies when you contact him.

BUCKLEY AFB PUBLIC AFFAIRS: A good way to find out what is happening on Buckley AFB - the Public Affairs staff has information available on the Buckley AFB web site (<http://www.buckley.af.mil/>) as well as the Buckley AFB Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/BuckleyAirForceBase/?f=106189116104357>)

BUCKLEY AFB COMMISSARY HOURS & HOLIDAYS FOR 2019: Commissary hours are shown below.

Sundays	0800-1900
Tuesday - Saturday	0800-1900
Early Bird Hours	0800-0900 This time is <i>supposed</i> to be for customers with 20 items or less
CLOSED	All Mondays (starting February 4 th)
CLOSED	November 28 Thanksgiving
CLOSED	December 25 Christmas Day
CLOSED	January 1 New Year's Day

AIR FORCE RETIREE AFTERBURNER: Here is the link to the Afterburner for latest retiree news: <http://www.retirees.af.mil/Library/Afterburner/>

VETERAN OWNED BUSINESS DIRECTORY: One of your fellow retirees sent me the link below so I am passing it on to you. The web site allows you to search for veteran owned businesses by type of business, by state, etc. <https://www.veteranownedbusiness.com>

BUCKLEY AFB WEB SITE - RETIREE PAGE: Check our Retiree page on the Buckley AFB website at <http://www.buckley.af.mil/Units/Retiree-Activities-Office/> There are links to informative websites related to ID cards, military/retiree support organizations and online news, reporting the death of a service member/spouse, retiree information/resources, veteran's records, survivor assistance, travel & lodging, etc. The last three issues of our newsletter are posted here. **We welcome your feedback on the site!**

BUCKLEY AFB OUTDOOR REC & ITT: Buckley AFB Outdoor Rec and Information Tickets & Travel (ITT) (Bldg 1022) provides many programs and services to the Buckley community, as well as the worldwide US Department of Defense community. Stop by and check out ITT where they sell many in-state and out-of-state tickets to theme parks including Elych Gardens, Disney and Universal Studios, plus local professional sports games such as the Nuggets and Rockies. For skiers and snowboarders, they sell lift tickets and season passes to most Colorado ski areas. For their ticket list, stop by ITT or give them a call at 720-847-6100.

Other services provided by Outdoor Rec include an RV storage lot, Williams FamCamp RV Park, guided trips, outdoor adventures, ski and snowboard tuning services and retail sales of outdoor apparel and equipment. They also offer a wide variety of equipment for rent at very reasonable prices (camping gear, home & garden equipment, picnic needs, sports equipment & games, campers & trailers, party equipment, etc). See their website for additional information: <https://www.460fss.com/outdoor-rec-itt/>

This newsletter is a RAO publication for retirees, annuitants and surviving spouses. Content is not to be construed as the official view of, or endorsement by, the RAO, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Air Force.