

Buckley AFB, CO - RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) NEWSLETTER - Mar 2021

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@spaceforce.mil**

Normal Hrs: Mon 1000-1600, Wed 0900-1400, Thurs 0800-1500 & Fri 0900-1600

Director: Steve Young, Lt Col, USAF, Ret

RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) LOCATION: We are in Rm 104 of Bldg 606, 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!

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON BUCKLEY AFB: Since the COVID-19 outbreak in Mar 2020 there have been significant changes to Buckley AFB operations - some directly impact military retirees/surviving spouses. The base is currently only allowing a maximum of 50% of non-mission essential personnel to work on site. **The gym and base legal are still closed to retirees. For the most current info on base facilities and additional details on days/hours, etc. please check the Buckley AFB and 460 FSS FaceBook (FB) pages and Buckley AFB website.**

<https://www.facebook.com/BuckleyAirForceBase/> Col Chellgren still does FB Live broadcasts each Wed at 1800
[https://460th Force Support Squadron | Facebook](https://460thForceSupportSquadron.com/Facebook)
<https://www.buckley.af.mil/> Click on the COVID-19 block in the upper right and review ALL data on that page
<https://www.460fss.com/>

- The 6th Ave gate is still open Mon-Fri from 0600-1800 inbound/outbound (Mississippi Gate still open 24/7/365)
- If you are a Vet with a VHIC card but haven't registered at the Visitor Control Center (VCC) by the 6th Ave gate, you can register now. You can also bring your spouse on base if they get a visitor pass at the VCC.
- The commissary and Exchange are **now limiting purchases of some items due to COVID** (see the Buckley AFB Facebook page for details) and only 100 customers at a time in each facility.
- You must wear a mask anytime you are inside a public building on base
- Reminder - barber shop is open Mon thru Fri 0900-1700, Sat 0900-1600, Sun 1000-1700 (720-859-0933)
- The info below on **ID cards** is from the MPF in Building 606 on base (**this guidance doesn't necessarily apply to the 140th ANG or NOSC ID card facilities on base - call them for details.**)

Bldg 606 ID card service hours are: Mon/Tues/Thurs/Fri 0800 to 1500; Wed 0800-1200

Call Center Implemented: Mon/Tues/Thurs/Fri: 1200-1500; 720-847-4357 (Questions or make appts)

Retiree & Dependent ID Cards (Appts Only) (DO NOT SCHEDULE APPTS FOR THE FOLLOWING RESTRICTIONS, YOU WILL NOT BE SEEN AND WILL NOT BE ISSUED A NEW ID CARD)

- **ID cards that expired after 1 Jan 2020 remain valid until 30 Jun 2021.**

This does not apply to children turning age 21 or 23.

- ID cards will NOT be reissued just to change info such as rank or last name changes due to marital status.

ID CARDS WILL BE ISSUED AND YOU WILL BE SEEN FOR

- Full-time student or secondary dependency will need to be updated if applicable
- Newborn, Newly Married, Newly acquired Dependents
- **Medicare B updates (turning 65)**
- Agent Letter (allows others to shop commissary, BX, etc for retirees not able to - walk-ins OK!)

To find the ID facility nearest you and make an appointment online please go to the RAPIDS Site Locator at the following link: <https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/#/>

Once you get to the RAPIDS site, click on the “ID Card Office Locator & Appointments” Continue box. The page that comes up should default to the “Search for Site by Address” tab. Ensure “All” is selected under the “Search For” area, then enter your zip code in the “Enter Location” area, select an entry from the “Radius” drop-down menu, and click on the “Search” box. A list of sites will pop up and then you can select “More Info” for the site you want to use, and the “Schedule an Appointment” block. A calendar will come up for that site where you can scroll through the months on the calendar to see when appointments are available. During the pandemic some locations may not show any appointments available. When you pick a day with appointments you will see a list of the times available for that day below the calendar and you can pick the one you want and click on “Book This Appointment.” **Just FYI, right now you will typically find more online appointments available on the 140th ANG and NOSC sites - both on Buckley AFB - than at the MPF in Bldg 606.**

OBSERVANCES IN MARCH: Navy Reserve B-Day: 3 Mar; Seabees B-Day: 5 Mar; K9 Veterans Day: 13 Mar; American Legion B-Day: 15 Mar; Rosie the Riveter Day: 21 Mar; Medal of Honor Day: 25 Mar; National Vietnam War Veteran’s Day: 29 Mar.

CHANGE TO PHARMACY OPERATIONS ON 1 MARCH: Starting on 1 Mar the pharmacy inside lobby will be open again, with restrictions on the number of customers allowed inside at any one time, and no seating available. **Like any new process, I fully expect glitches and issues as the pharmacy begins implementation of this new process.** I would be prepared for longer wait times with limited folks allowed inside at any one time, so please try to be patient and plan accordingly. Rest assured the pharmacy is doing all they can to ensure you receive the best possible service. Below is the specific info the pharmacy provided:

“Starting 1 March 2021, the Pharmacy lobby will be open for pick-up and drop off with limited capacity following COVID-19 guidelines.

Curbside service will be discontinued; however, the Drive-Thru will remain open for pick-up and drop off. **ACTIVE DUTY IN UNIFORM WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE PRIORITY, THROUGH THE LOBBY ONLY.**

Pharmacy Hours:

Monday: 0900 - 1300

Tuesday - Friday: 0900-1600”

PHARMACY - PATIENT ADVOCATE E-MAIL ADDRESS: As you know, pharmacy patient advocates are available to hear your comments and concerns related to pharmacy operations. There are forms available in the pharmacy for you to submit comments to them, but with the pandemic you don’t have access to those. The pharmacy has established an e-mail inbox for the patient advocates so you can now e-mail them directly at the pharmacy patient advocate org box: usaf.buckley.460sw-mdg.mbx.pharmacy-patient-advocate@mail.mil .

PHARMACY - NEW ONLINE PRESCRIPTION REFILL & “ACTIVATION” CAPABILITY: For well over a year now the RAO has been advocating for a more user-friendly prescription “activation” process at the pharmacy for military retirees. The current phone in process has caused frustration for many retirees - why it was required in the first place, long times spent on hold on the phone waiting to talk with a tech, calls being dropped and having to call in again, etc. Finally, on 19 Jan, the base pharmacy notified me a new online option to complete prescription refills and “activations” was available using the Tricare Online Patient Portal. You will need to have a Tricare Online Patient Portal account, if you don’t already. On 24 Jan the RAO provided retirees on our e-mail distro list with instructions on how to create an account and submit refill and “activation” requests. We have already heard from some retirees who have used the process and they were happy with it. If you have multiple members of your family that get meds from the base pharmacy the sponsor will have the capability to use this for **all** the family members, they won’t need their own account. The RAO is **not** the expert on the new process, so if you have any questions related to it please contact the pharmacy, perhaps one of the patient advocates at: usaf.buckley.460sw-mdg.mbx.pharmacy-patient-advocate@mail.mil

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS: We are getting quite a few calls from folks asking whether military retirees can get a COVID 19 vaccination at Buckley AFB - the answer is “No.” I contacted the Med Group on base and that was their response. They assured me if that policy changes, they will notify me so I can pass the information to you. Currently, some VA facilities in our area are offering the vaccine to certain military retirees. For details on that, and the most current info, see use the following link: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/> For the latest Colorado COVID-19 vaccination info please use the following link: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/vaccine> Below is a link I learned about from 9 News that you may find useful when searching for vaccination appointments: [Colorado COVID-19 Vaccine Finder \(nickm.org\)](https://www.9news.com/story/news/health/2021/03/02/colorado-covid-19-vaccine-finder-nickm-org/) You might also get some useful info from the following FaceBook page: [\(1\) Colorado Vaccine Hunters | Facebook](#)

NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY: This day is observed on Monday, 29 Mar. For information on events and activities associated with this important day of recognition please check out the following link: [National Vietnam War Veterans Day 2021 | Military Benefits](#)

COLORADO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY - 2022 PATRIOT SCHOLARSHIPS: The application window for 2022 Patriot Scholarships is open from 1 Mar - 30 Jun 2021. Scholarship recipients get full tuition to any CTU degree program, a new laptop computer, all course books, etc. For more information on the program check out the following link: [CTU Patriot Scholarship \(coloradotech.edu\)](#)

TRICARE WEST NEWSLETTER: How much do you know about your TRICARE benefit? In the latest issue of the TRICARE Health Matters Newsletter, you can learn how to find a provider, get care, and take command of your health. Here are some of the articles in the latest issue:

- * Get to Know Your TRICARE Benefit
- * How to Find or Change Your Provider
- * Cost Terms You Should Know

You can access the latest copy of the newsletter, as well as other TRICARE publications, at the following link: [Publications | TRICARE](#) For information on the various TRICARE Plans visit the following link: [Health Plans | TRICARE](#)

WHERE CAN I GET RID OF UNUSED/UNWANTED MEDICATIONS? Do you have unused/unwanted medications you are trying to dispose of safely/properly? The Buckley AFB pharmacy does **not** take your unwanted medications, but you can locate a place that will using the following link: [Colorado Household Medication Take-Back Program | Department of Public Health & Environment](#)

SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN (SBP) - DEPENDENCY & INDEMNITY COMPENSATION (DIC)

OFFSET: As you may know, Congress enacted changes to the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) that will eventually eliminate the offset for surviving spouses who are also receiving Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The changes will take place in three phases. January 1, 2021 begins the first phase. In 2021, surviving spouse SBP annuity payments issued by DFAS will be reduced (offset) by no more than two-thirds of the amount of DIC (issued by the VA) rather than by the entire amount of DIC, even though eligible surviving spouses will continue to receive the full amount of DIC from the VA. Beginning January 1, 2022, the second phase, surviving spouse SBP annuity payments will be reduced (offset) by no more than one-third of the amount of DIC and on January 1, 2023, the SBP-DIC offset will be fully eliminated. That means, beginning in 2023, SBP payments will no longer be offset by DIC and spouses will receive full SBP (issued by DFAS) and full DIC (from the VA). For more details and frequently asked questions, see the DFAS special SBP-DIC News webpage: <http://go.usa.gov/xGfqd>

HOW TO CREATE A MYPAY ACCOUNT WITH DEFENSE FINANCE & ACCOUNTING SERVICE

(DFAS): If you don't have a MyPay account with DFAS I recommend you create one. With your own account you can download your Form1099 for taxes, print a copy of your Retiree Account Statement (RAS), set up beneficiaries for Arrears of Pay, update your mailing and e-mail address, adjust federal and state withholding for taxes, etc. You start by requesting an initial password on the myPay homepage ([myPay Web Site \(dfas.mil\)](https://myPayWebSite.dfas.mil)) 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 return to the myPay homepage and log in with your social security number and the password you received in the mail to create your myPay profile. DFAS has a downloadable step-by-step Get Started Guide to myPay on their website and a how-to video on the DFAS YouTube channel. For additional info on obtaining a MyAccount you can visit: <https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/manage/mypay/>

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 many places will do your taxes for a fee, **there are at least two free alternatives.**

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers *free* tax help to people who generally make \$55,000 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. While some RAOs have volunteers who take the VITA training and assist with taxes, we simply do not have the staff to provide that service.

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 website below says TCE sites are currently closed due to COVID.)**

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."**

Last year I talked to one of the tax preparers at the AARP Tax-Aide site at the Parker Library and those locations 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>. These AARP sites are open annually from late January/early February to April 15. During that time, you can locate a site near you using the link above. **When I checked the site on 23 Feb, I found 9 locations active within 20 miles of my zip code. All of these were offering either "virtual" or "drop off" services, not in-person assistance.**

As you know, if you do your own taxes you have numerous options when it comes to filing - essentially snail mail or electronically. When filing electronically, some tax software you buy (like Turbo Tax) will charge you to file your taxes and to have any refund deposited into your account. You may not know the IRS offers some free tax filing options (with various caveats). For more info on the IRS free options see the following link: <https://www.irs.gov/filing/free-file-do-your-federal-taxes-for-free>

Note: As with everything else, I have no idea how COVID is impacting VITA and AARP tax sites, so you'll have to contact them directly to find out if, and when, their services will be available and any constraints.

HOW TO OBTAIN A COPY OF YOUR FORM 1099 FOR TAXES: **If you don't have a MyPay account,** DFAS provides other options for getting your Form 1099-R. For retirees, if your mailing address on file with DFAS is current, **you can get a copy of your 1099-R through the DFAS telephone self-service option.** To use telephone self-service:

- Call 800-321-1080
- Select option "1" for Self-Serve
- Select option "1"
- Enter your Social Security Number when prompted

Your 1099-R should be in the mail within 7-10 business days to the address DFAS has on record. If the address you have on file with DFAS is out of date and you are not a myPay user, both retirees and annuitants can get your 1099-R sent to a one-time, temporary mailing address, or to your mailing address on record by submitting your request online. Plus, you can request prior year 1099-Rs. Your 1099-R should be in the mail within 7-10 business days. Please note that 2020 1099-R reissues requested through AskDFAS cannot be mailed prior to February 10, 2021. Find instructions at (this link is case-sensitive): <http://go.usa.gov/xPh7H> If you prefer traditional mail, you can send DFAS a written request by fax or mail, but please make sure you leave time for processing. **It can take up to 30 days to process requests received by fax or mail.** Members with unique situations can speak directly to customer care representatives using the number at the beginning of this article.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION (VA) NEW WEB FEATURE & PHONE NUMBER: The VA has launched a new web feature and new phone number designed to ease frustrations faced by veterans trying to connect with services and resources.

Beneficiaries can now update their contact information via their [VA.gov profile](#), and the change will synchronize across VA networks. Veterans can enter demographic information - including a phone number, email addresses, home addresses, and disability ratings *one time* and have it change across networks addressing health care, disability compensation, pension benefits, claims/appeals, and the Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program. Previously, if a veteran needed to change any demographic information, they were required to call *each individual VA network* where that information is on file. (Veterans still must connect with separate offices to change details regarding education and home loan benefits, CHAMPVA, Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance, and The Foreign Medical Program.) Step-by-step instructions on changing your address are available [at this link](#).

The administration also has officially launched the **My VA hotline**, which will serve as the starting point to all VA contact centers and will help veterans find the right person to address their needs. Veterans can call 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411) with the option to press 0 to be immediately connected with a customer service agent to answer questions or connect to the appropriate VA expert. The hotline operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. **Please remember you always have access to local Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) here in CO. Locate the one closest to you using the following link:** <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/vets/county-veterans-service-offices>

The VA also maintains the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, by chat at veteranscrisisline.net and by text message at 838255. The VA also maintains the White House VA Hotline at 1-855-948-2311 which can be used "for Veterans and their families to share compliments and concerns," per the release.

MILITARY BENEFITS BY STATE: The "MyArmyBenefits" website has a map that allows you to view the benefits available to you by each U.S. state or territory. You just click on a specific state on a map or select it from the drop-down menu. State benefits include tax benefits, education benefits, employment benefits, health insurance benefits, and more. Each fact sheet contains details of the benefits available and eligibility to the military member and family members. You can check out the site at the following link: <https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/State/Territory-Benefits>

BUCKLEY AFB AGENT LETTERS - WHAT ARE THEY? Did you know if you are a family member of an elderly military retiree, or their surviving spouse, that has trouble getting around on their own you may be able to get authorization to shop for them, as their "agent", at the commissary, exchange and base pharmacy? You will require a letter from the care provider of the retiree/surviving spouse, which you will then take to the MPF in Bldg 606, where you (the "agent") and the retiree/surviving spouse will fill out a "Commissary/AAFES/MWR Escort Authorizations" form. You will need two forms of ID, the agent's driver's license the sponsors military ID. Once the form is completed you will be issued an "Agent Letter" which you will take to the Visitor Control Center (VCC) by the 6th Ave gate and Security will issue you a card/letter which will allow you to access the base and use those facilities without your retiree/surviving spouse being with you. For any questions, or more details, on this process please contact the MPF at 720-847-6974 (per the above form).

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE: If you know of a recently deceased military retiree, surviving spouse of a military retiree or a veteran who was receiving a disability payment from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) the RAO can provide guidance making the necessary notifications. For those receiving a military pension, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) payments, VA disability payments or Dependency and Indemnity payments notifications must be made to the Defense Finance & Accounting Service (DFAS), VA, etc. The RAO can put you in touch with the Buckley AFB Casualty Assistance Representative (CAR), provide you with a “checklist” to help guide you through process, provide you with phone numbers and websites for various organizations, etc. Please contact the RAO (720-847-6693) with any questions.

WEBSITE TO SUBMIT SURVEYS & SUGGESTIONS ON BUCKLEY AFB SERVICES: The following link below will take you to the Buckley AFB ICE site: https://ice.disa.mil/index.cfm?fa=site&site_id=385

On this site you can select which base Service you want to comment on (Health, Personnel Services, Recreation, etc) then select the desired area to a specific survey you can fill out. On the survey form will be a place for “Comments and Recommendations for Improvement.” While there is no specific listing for the base pharmacy you can select “Health” then “460th Medical Group (Buckley AFB)” and use that survey form. This website was only recently provided to me when I asked how pharmacy customers could submit comments/suggestions now that the building itself is closed and retirees don’t have access to the suggestion forms inside the building. **This way you should be able to submit comments on the MPF, Outdoor Rec, gym, pharmacy, Exchange, etc.**

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR VETERANS: Arapahoe/Douglas Works! (A/D Works!) Workforce Center is a member of the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and provides a variety of no-cost services to veteran job seekers; resources and workshops for a self-directed job search, one-on-one employment counseling, customizing resumes, referrals to other state and federal agencies and training assistance. For more information you can visit their website at <http://www.adworks.org/> Just FYI, there is an A/D Works! Veterans Employment Specialist that works several days a week in Bldg 606 on base (when non-mission essential personnel are allowed back in their offices on Buckley AFB). For more info you can also contact the AD Works! Call Center at (303) 636-1160 and ask to be contacted to a Veterans Employment Team Member.

ASKDFAS WEBSITE AVAILABLE: DFAS has the askDFAS website available with a specific category for “Retirees and Annuitants.” When you click on that category you will find general categories related to MyPay, mailing address, tax statements, reporting a retirees death, arrears of pay, etc. This site allows you to submit questions to DFAS via e-mail instead of using the customer service number so some may find it more convenient. You can check it out at <https://www.dfas.mil/dfas/AskDFAS/>

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 8 permanent RAO volunteers that support our “Help Desk” (720-847-6693) which, when all volunteers are available, means the office has someone present during some hours of the morning and afternoon Mon-Fri. You can leave a voice mail anytime, and we check Voice Mails frequently to return calls. We can still find time slots during the week to use one or two volunteers. **If you think you might be interested, or just have questions, please contact me (Steve Young) at my home e-mail - elkfive@centurylink.net.**

COAST GUARD NATIONAL RETIREE HELP DESK (NRHD) HOTLINE: For any questions a retiree or retiree spouse has regarding benefits (other than those related to pay) such as health care issues, assistance obtaining important forms and/or papers, etc. call 1-888-224-6743 or e-mail nrhdesk@gmail.com. For questions concerning pay call 1-866-772-8724 or e-mail ppc-dg-customer-care@uscg.mil.

BUCKLEY AFB LEGAL OFFICE: Due to COVID, **the base legal office is still closed to military retirees and surviving spouses.**

CORRECTING & REQUESTING MILITARY RECORDS: Veterans who need to have an error corrected or an injustice removed from their military records should complete a DD Form 149 (Dec 2019), Application for Correction of Military Record. The form instructions advise mailing the package to the address listed on the form, which has addresses for each Service Branch, as well as website addresses for additional info.

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: **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.

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 normally be reached at 720-847-4838 from Mon-Fri 0800 - 1600. During the pandemic you can reach them at 737-240-9917/9918 respectively.

LOCAL ID CARD RENEWAL LOCATIONS: While you need to verify who is still operating and their hours of operation during the pandemic, below are **locations** where you can get an ID card.

MPF at Buckley AFB (Bldg 606 on 18401 E A-Basin Ave) - by appointment only. You can call them at 720-847-4357 to schedule an appointment.

ANG at Buckley AFB (18860 E Breckenridge Ave, Hangar 801, Rm N224) - 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 package, when they can anticipate their first pension check, what they need to do regarding Tricare, etc. Below is some POC information for Guard/Reserve members from the various services. We can also provide you with a copy of DoD Fm 2656 (current version is Oct 2018) 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. There is a retirement application status bar in MyPers so applicants can track the status of their submitted package. Instructions on the 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. Locally, **Mr. Randy Stroud (1SG, Ret) is the Retirement Services Officer (RSO) for the Army National Guard, but he can assist with Reserves. He can be reached at 720-250-1341.**
<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
The Navy also has a MyNavy Career Center website at <https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/organization/npc/MNCC/Pages/default.aspx> or you can call 1-833-330-6622 for assistance.

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 updating 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, effective date for the new address, 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 the primary goal at DFAS. To do this, they need your help to keep your account up to date. *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 them, be sure to include supporting documents, such as birth or marriage certificates. Keeping your contact information updated is also key to staying informed. DFAS occasionally sends 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, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage, certain allotments and your tax withholding status. You can create a myPay account at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/>**

Reporting the Death of a Retiree

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. **If you are not sure who your AF 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.**

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

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!

AFTERBURNER: Air Force Retiree Services (AFRS) at Randolph AFB, TX publishes the Afterburner twice a year. You can find copies of the Afterburner at the following link: <https://www.retirees.af.mil/library/afterburner/>

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 Elitch 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/>

Currently, Outdoor Rec's pandemic hours are **Mon/Tues/Thurs/Fri from 0900 to 1500** for all your rental needs. They will also begin "Meet Up" adventure trips. Patrons will travel to the site in their own vehicles and adhere to the social distancing and mask wear/face covering guidelines.

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.