

Buckley AFB, CO - RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) NEWSLETTER - Nov 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 1000-1400, Thurs 0800-1500 & Fri 0900-1400

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!

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON BUCKLEY AFB: Since the COVID-19 outbreak in Mar there have been significant changes to Buckley AFB operations - some directly impact military retirees/surviving spouses. The base is still in Phase 2B with a maximum of 75% of non-mission essential personnel allowed to return to work. There have only been a few changes since last month. **There are *no* changes to the pharmacy operation and the gym, FamCamp, Rocky Mtn Lodge and base legal are all still *closed* to retirees. For the most current info and additional details on *days/hours*, etc please check the Buckley AFB FaceBook (FB) page, website, and Phase 2B guidance.**

<https://www.facebook.com/BuckleyAirForceBase/> Col Pepper still does FB Live broadcasts each Wed at 1800
<https://www.buckley.af.mil/> Click on the COVID-19 block in the upper right and review ALL data on that page

- 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 now* register again. You can also bring your spouse on base if they get a visitor pass at the VCC.**
- The commissary and Exchange are **not** doing 100% ID card checks just to enter the 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.**)

ID card service hours are: Mon/Tues/Thurs/Fri 0800 to 1500; Wed 0800-1200 (closed 27 Nov - Family Day)
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)

- **There is a change regarding ID cards that expired after 1 Jan 2020. For *base access*, those cards remain valid until 1 Mar 2021, but *for benefits* they will still remain valid until **30 Jun 2021**.**

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

- ID cards will NOT be reissued for sole purposes of changing information printed on the card 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 on line please go to the RAPIDS Site Locator at the following link: <https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/#/>

Once you get to the RAPIDS site above, click on the “ID Card Office Locator & Appointments” Continue link, then plug in your zip code in the “Show Locations Near” box, select an entry for the “Radius” block, then click on “Search”. A list of sites will pop up then you can select “More Info” for the site you want to use and the “Schedule an Appointment” block and a calendar will come up for that site. You can scroll through the months on the calendar to see when appointments are available. Many locations are not showing any appointments right now due to the virus. 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.**

MILITARY RELATED OBSERVANCES IN NOVEMBER: We will observe the USMC’s birthday on 10 Nov and Veterans Day on 11 Nov.

VETERAN RESOURCES WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: VetResources is a weekly newsletter for Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors put out by the VA. You can sign up to receive the newsletter via e-mail at the following link if interested: <https://www.va.gov/VetResources/>

NEXTGEN ID CARDS WILL BE COMING: A few folks have called us asking us about “new” ID cards for retirees and dependents. Below are a couple links to articles that will provide general information on this effort. The bottom line is all the current IDs are good until they expire and no one will get a new one just to have a new one. DoD doesn’t expect the transition to the new ID cards to be completed until **Jan 2026**. For those with an “INDEF” ID card DoD asks you wait until **at least** the summer of 2021 to get your ID replaced due to the pandemic. While some bases started to issue these cards at the end of July the MPF at Buckley AFB isn’t able to offer them at this time and they don’t know when they will be. The base will put out more information once they have started to issue new cards.

<https://www.cac.mil/Next-Generation-Uniformed-Services-ID-Card/>

<https://www.militarytimes.com/pay-benefits/2020/08/24/more-than-5-million-military-family-members-retirees-are-getting-new-id-cards/>

CHANGES TO TRICARE SELECT IN 2021: **Starting on Jan. 1, 2021, TRICARE Select Group A retired beneficiaries must pay monthly enrollment fees in order to maintain their TRICARE health coverage. If you or your sponsor’s initial enlistment or appointment occurred before January 1, 2018, you are in Group A.** This is a change, and the first time this beneficiary group will pay enrollment fees. This change was mandated by Congress in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year Oct 1 - Sept 30 2017. Congress granted the Defense Health Agency a delay in implementation to calendar year 2021.

You must set up a monthly allotment through your Department of Defense (DoD) pay center, where feasible, for your monthly payments to start on Jan. 1, 2021 - if this isn’t done by 1 Jan you will be disenrolled from Tricare Select! For sponsors who don’t receive funds through a DoD pay center, you can establish payments via electronic funds transfer, credit card, or debit card. The following enrollment fees will be collected via monthly installments from the sponsor’s military pay system where retired pay is disbursed: **Individual plan: \$12.50 per month; Family plan: \$25 per month. Deductibles: \$150 Individual/\$300 Family.** For additional information use the following link to the Tricare Open Season Toolkit:

<https://health.mil/About-MHS/MHS-Toolkits/TRICARE-Open-Season-Education-and-Awareness-Toolkit>

This does NOT apply to Tricare for Life, just Tricare Select, Group A retirees.

TRICARE OPEN SEASON ENROLLEMENT: TRICARE Open Season for enrollment or changes is **from 9 Nov to 14 Dec, 2020**. TRICARE Open Season applies to beneficiaries eligible to enroll in TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Prime Remote, or TRICARE Select. TRICARE Open Season **doesn’t** apply to TRICARE For Life

(TFL). TFL coverage is automatic if you have Medicare Part A and Part B. You can find more info on TRICARE open season at the following link: <https://www.tricare.mil/openseason>

TRICARE & LONG-TERM CARE (CUSTODIAL CARE): Some people believe they don't need Long Term Care insurance because Tricare/Tricare for Life (TFL) cover Long Term Care costs - they do not! You can read the article at the following link for more information:

https://tricare.mil/CoveredServices/BenefitUpdates/Archives/08_27_2020_Find_TRICARE_Options_Fit_Your_Health_Care_Needs

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT SEASON IS HERE!: **Open enrollment runs from 15 Oct - 7 Dec 2020** and changes will be effective Jan 2021. During this time you can: switch from Original Medicare to Medicare Advantage; switch from Medicare Advantage to Original Medicare; switch from one Medicare Advantage plan to another. If you are already in a Medicare Advantage plan you can also change to another Medicare Advantage plan or to Original Medicare plus a Part D plan from 1 Jan - 31 Mar 2021. Remember that some Medicare Advantage plans from commercial providers (Blue Cross, Kaiser, Humana, GEHA, etc) offer "0 Premium" plans that will cost you no more out of pocket than your current Medicare Part B premium. Some of these plans may offer benefits Original Medicare does not (free gym membership, some dental/vision benefits, etc). As always, you have to do your research to see which plans your current doctors take, where the plans are accepted (different states, etc), what the co-pays are, etc in order to determine what plans best meet your needs. Tricare for Life (TFL) functions as your "Medicare Supplement" whether you use Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan.

NEED HELP WITH MEDICARE OPTIONS?: A health insurance broker can provide you with information regarding various Medicare Advantage carriers/plans. Just be aware these brokers generally focus on plans offered by insurers with whom they have a contractual arrangement (think Kaiser, Humana, Blue Cross, United Healthcare, etc). You can do a Google search to locate a health broker in CO. Another alternative is the counselors working in the federally funded State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). These counselors provide free advice with no conflicts of interest whereas brokers typically earn commissions from policies they sell. For example, a broker would get no commission if you select Original Medicare vs a Medicare Advantage plan. You can get additional info on SHIP and counselors in your area at the following link: <https://www.shiptacenter.org/> click on the "SHIP Locator" icon.

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>

SOCIAL SECURITY INCREASE FOR 2021: The Social Security Administration has announced Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits will increase 1.3% in 2021. The 1.3% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), which also affects military pensions, will begin in January 2021. Increased payments to SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 31, 2020. (Note: some people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits). The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price Index as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

CHANGES TO ARLINGTON CEMETERY: The public comment period on the Federal Register to address dramatic reductions for eligibility to Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) opened 15 Sep and will close 16 Nov. As of mid-October, there were roughly 700 comments made. ANC is running out of room for interments, and the proposed eligibility changes for interment and inurnment at ANC are designed to extend the life of the cemetery. The proposed eligibility requirements are below:

For below-ground interment:

- Killed in Action, to include repatriated remains of service members
- Award recipients of the Silver Star and above who also served in combat
- Recipients of the Purple Heart
- Combat-related service deaths while conducting uniquely military activities
- Former Prisoners of War
- Presidents and Vice Presidents of the United States
- Veterans with combat service who also served out of uniform as a government official and made significant contributions to the nation's security at the highest levels of public service.

For above-ground inurnment:

- World War II-era veterans, to include legislated active duty designees
- Retirees from the armed forces who are eligible to receive retired pay but are not otherwise eligible for interment
- Veterans who have served a minimum of two years on active duty and who have served in combat
- Veterans without combat service who also served out of uniform as a government official and made significant contributions to the nation's security at the highest levels of public service

If the eligibility changes are approved, many who had planned for an in-ground burial at ANC may have to change plans. The fiscal 2019 National Defense Authorization Act directed the Army secretary to establish revised eligibility criteria to keep the cemetery functioning as an active burial ground for 150 years. The proposed changes to eligibility do not account for all-important military honors for those who would be forced to use a different cemetery. Full military honors with caisson are not available at most VA cemeteries.

You can visit the following link to submit a comment on the proposed changes, or reach out to your elected officials: <https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Media/News/Post/10970>

MEETING ON BASE PHARMACY OPERATIONS: On 19 Oct I met with Lt Col Townsend and Maj Boral to discuss two main concerns I have heard from retirees on the base pharmacy - long wait times on the phone to “activate” prescriptions and long wait times in drive thru lines to pick up/drop off prescriptions. Please remember the “phone in activation” is required because the pharmacy has data indicating a significant number of prescriptions submitted electronically by providers are **never** collected by the patient. The bottom line is the Medical Group is unable to make changes to the phone system and the Med Grp website that would be *specific* to Buckley AFB as these are AF wide systems, and some will be getting replaced soon enough that spending money to make changes is not practical. There *is* a plan in work to implement a “secure messaging” system (using a Tricare site I believe) that will allow retirees to create an account and “activate” prescriptions online - I asked but the Med Group could give no timeline on when that might be available. I was told in July the pharmacy implemented several changes to try and speed up service - having three lines in drive-thru, utilizing Med Group personnel from other areas to work temporarily at the pharmacy (x-ray techs, etc), a phone bank for taking “activation” calls, etc. I was also told the pharmacy manually tracks wait times in line and that these changes have reduced wait times. **If you have specific feedback on current pharmacy operations in these two areas (phone in “activations” and drive-thru wait times) please feel free to e-mail them to raobuckley@gmail.com. At my request the pharmacy is setting up a specific e-mail address/org box that will go *directly* to the pharmacy patient advocates so you can contact them directly with your feedback. Once available I will provide you with that e-mail address. Please note that 27 November is a “Family Day” and the pharmacy will not be open on that day, same for Veterans Day on 11 Nov.**

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE DENTAL & VISION INSURANCE PLAN (FEDVIP) FOR 2021: The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has selected insurance carriers to provide comprehensive, accessible, and competitively priced dental and vision coverage through the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Program (FEDVIP), effective January 1, 2021. The contract term is seven (7) years. In the 2021 plan year, the number of FEDVIP dental carriers will increase from 10 to 12 (includes Regional carriers). The number of vision carriers will

increase from 4 to 5. OPM anticipates no disruption of enrollee's continuity of services. You can get additional info on the BENEFEDS website (<https://www.benefeds.com/>) or by calling 877-888-3337.

Eligible individuals may enroll, cancel, or change their enrollment during the Federal Benefits Open Season this year, 9 Nov to 14 Dec 2020.

2021 Dental Carriers

- Nationwide/International (there are 5 Regional only carriers)
 - Aetna Dental PPO
 - Delta Dental PPO
 - BCBS FEP Blue Dental
 - GEHA Dental PPO
 - MetLife Dental PPO
 - United Concordia PPO
 - UnitedHealthcare Dental PPO (New)

2021 Vision Carriers

- Nationwide/International
 - Aetna Vision
 - BCBS FEP Vision
 - MetLife Vision (New)
 - UnitedHealthcare Vision
 - VSP

TRICARE WEST NEWSLETTER: You can find the latest Tricare West newsletter with information on open enrollment, enrollment fees, Qualifying Life Events, telemedicine, etc at the following link:
<https://www.tricare.mil/publications>

END OF LIFE PLANNING - GETTING YOUR AFFAIRS IN ORDER: This is something the RAO has talked about at several Coffee Socials but I will bring it up again because **so** many people, military retirees included, have **not** done this. You really need to organize your important documents so your spouse and kids know where they are, what they are for, what notifications they need to make when you pass away, etc. Just some examples are: your DD 214/retirement orders, information on (if applicable) military pension, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), VA Disability/compensation, Thrift Savings Plan, social security, life insurance policies, civil service pension, bank accounts, trust/will, financial advisor, loans/credit cards, funeral plan, advanced health directives, etc. On the RAO website you will see a link to an "AF Retiree Mortuary Plan" that you can use to get started or we can give you another checklist we provide to casualty assistance customers. While this will very likely be a time consuming and tedious process, your loved ones will be very grateful for your efforts, which will make this one area of their life much less stressful when they are already dealing with the trauma of losing you.

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.

ARREARS OF PAY - DFAS: After you die, a one-time payment of your final paycheck, Arrears of Pay (AOP), is made to a beneficiary. In most cases, the AOP will be the pro-rated amount of your final month’s retirement pay because your entitlement to retirement pay ends on the date of your death. When your death is reported, DFAS will reclaim your final month's pay, audit your account, compute the payment due (based on the number of days in the month you were alive) and pay that amount to your AOP beneficiary, along with any other money owed you at the time of your death. To receive this payment, your AOP beneficiary must send DFAS a claim form (SF 1174). You can find further information on AOP, designating beneficiaries, “Order of Precedence” for payment of AOP and the SF 1174 at the following DFAS link: <https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/provide/aop/> You can also call the DFAS Customer Service number for help: 800-321-1080.

SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN (SBP) - DEPENDENCY INDEMNITY COMPENSATION (DIC) OFFSET (WIDOWS TAX): The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 changed the law that requires an offset of Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) payments for surviving spouses who are also entitled to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Under the previous law, a surviving spouse who receives DIC is subject to a dollar-for-dollar reduction of SBP payments, which can result in SBP being either partially or fully offset. **The repeal will phase-in the reduction of this off-set beginning January 1, 2021, and entirely eliminate the offset on January 1, 2023.** For the remainder of calendar year 2020, surviving spouses remain subject to the existing dollar-for-dollar offset of SBP payments by the amount of DIC paid by VA. After January 1, 2021, survivors subject to the “SBP-DIC Offset” (<https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/survivors/Understanding-SBP-DIC-SSIA/>) will potentially see a change in their SBP payments. This reduction in SBP payments was also known as the “Widows’ Tax”. For additional info go to: <https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/survivors/SBP-DIC-News/>

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 retiree's 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 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.**

BUCKLEY AFB 2020 RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY (RAD) CANCELED: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting base restrictions and concerns for the health of our military retirees, the 2020 RAD which was scheduled for Saturday, 3 Oct, at the Leadership Development Center (LDC) has been canceled. Just FYI, **we have currently scheduled the 2021 RAD for Saturday, 28 Aug 2021.**

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. 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 (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 Reserve. 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 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 (**currently closed to retirees**), 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 **Tuesdays and Thursdays 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.