

Buckley SFB, CO - RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) NEWSLETTER - February 2025

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

Building 606, Room 104, phone **720-847-6693**, e-mail address: **raobuckley@gmail.com**

Normal Hrs: Mon 0900-1500, Tues 0900-1400, Wed 1000-1500, Thurs 0900-1200 & Fri 1000-1500

These hours are totally dependent on volunteer availability!

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 into 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!

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

For folks not comfortable making ID card appointments with the Buckley SFB AF Military Personnel Flight (MPF) using the RAPIDS website, you can call the MPF at 720-847-4357, Option 2. If no one answers you will be able to leave a message, after the beep, and (we're told) someone will call you back. The MPF requests your message just leave your name, contact information and basic need, i.e. you need to make an appointment, you have a policy question etc. You can also e-mail 460fss.fsmps.customerservice@us.af.mil Bldg 606 ID card hours are Mon/Tues/Thurs/Fri: 0800-1500 hrs (space available 0800-1400) and Wed 0800-1200 hrs (space available 0800-1100). The MPF is CLOSED Federal holidays & Family days.

Retiree & Dependent ID Cards (Appts Only)

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, you will typically find more online appointments available on the 140th ANG and NOSC sites - both on Buckley SFB - than at the MPF in Bldg 606.

OBSERVANCES IN FEBRUARY: 3 - Four Chaplains Day; 4 - USO birthday; week of 12 Feb - National Salute to Veteran Patients Day; 19 - Coast Guard Reserve birthday

FAMILY DAYS AND HOLIDAYS IN FEBRUARY: Monday, 17 Feb, is Washington's B-Day, so Friday, 14 Feb, is a Family Day. As you know, Family Days impact various operations on base (Pharmacy, MPF ID card section, 6th Ave Gate, etc.) so keep that in mind if you have things to do on base during those days.

REAL ID COMPLIANCE ACT & NEXTGEN ID CARD: As of 1 May 2025, all U.S. residents will need a Real ID-compliant driver's license or identification card to access certain federal facilities, board domestic commercial flights **and access military installations**. Real ID-compliant driver's licenses will have a star in the upper right-hand corner of the card - a NextGen ID will not. If you currently possess the DD Form 2, DD Form 1173, DD Form 1173-1 or DD Form 2765 (blue, pink or tan ID), that card must be replaced by 1 May 2025.

Starting 1 May, these cards will be confiscated at the gate and members holding them will need to get a pass to access the base.

QUARTERLY MEDICAL GROUP TOWN HALL: About 50 people attended the 15 Jan Town Hall in person (a handful of retirees) and roughly 200 attended via the Facebook live event - a big jump over previous Town Halls. The Facebook event and slides are both saved on their Facebook page ([\(2\) Facebook](#)). The next Town Hall is scheduled to take place **Wed, 16 Apr**, from 1600-1700, at the Buckley SFB Chapel (Bldg 316 - across from the A-Basin CDC). The Town Hall dial in is always the same number and code: [+1 410-874-6757](#) Phone Conference ID: 241 738 417# These Town Halls are your opportunity to engage with pharmacy personnel face-to-face to express your concerns and ask questions, so we strongly encourage retirees with any pharmacy concerns to attend. These events are held every three months, on the third Wednesday of the month.

DFAS MYPAY ACCOUNT LOCKOUTS - PASSWORD CHANGE REQUESTS: Once in a while we get calls from retirees who are locked out of their DFAS myPay account and need a new password to regain access. There are several ways to do this, but most require you to answer several security questions, and many people have problems with that, resulting in frustration. DFAS Trusted Agents are now capable of updating personal email and mobile numbers in addition to in-person password resets. For many this may be the easiest solution to the problem. On Buckley SFB there are two numbers you can call to contact a Trusted Agent - 720-847-9689 or 6416. We have a paper with more information on how to locate Trusted Agents outside of Buckley SFB (such as the Air Force Academy and Ft Carson) if needed.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIOD (MA OEP): Each year, people on Medicare have two opportunities to change their plans. The first, known as the Annual Enrollment Period (AEP), runs annually from 15 Oct - 7 Dec. During AEP, anyone on Medicare can make ANY changes to their plans and your coverage choices go into effect on 1 Jan. **After AEP, there's a second chance - for people enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan only** - to make one final change to their plan. This period, known as the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period (MA OEP), runs annually from 1 Jan - 31 Mar.

During MA OEP, anyone enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan has the ability to:

- Switch to another Medicare Advantage plan.
- Drop their Medicare Advantage plan and return to original Medicare.
- Join a Medicare Prescription Drug plan.

During this time, policyholders of Medicare Advantage plans are able to make **one** switch to their policy. The chosen coverage goes into effect on the first day of the next month from when the change was made. For example, if you switch Medicare Advantage plans in Feb, the new coverage becomes effective 1 Mar. MA OEP is the best time to re-evaluate Medicare Advantage plan options if you're thinking about switching to a plan better suited to your needs.

If you are unhappy with your Medicare Advantage plan or your doctor, you can make a final change to your plan.

Ultimately, you should make sure your plan fits your budget and gives you access to the right care.

Here are some possible reasons you might want to switch plans during MA OEP:

- You want to switch from a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) to a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO).
- You're getting an expensive medical treatment, and you want to reduce out-of-pocket costs by choosing a plan with a lower out-of-pocket maximum limit.
- Many medical services are not anticipated, so you only want basic coverage with the lowest premiums possible.
- You lost access to your primary care provider and/or specialists when you switched plans in the fall, and you'd like to resume your care.
- You are unsatisfied for any reason with your plan and want to revert back to your old plan or try something new.

BROOMFIELD VETERAN'S MUSEUM: For those who don't know, there is a Veteran's Museum in Broomfield (12 Garden Center, Broomfield, CO 80020). The museum is free (donations accepted) and is open Tues/Thurs 1000 - 1400 and Sat 0900 - 1500. The museum also hosts Coffee and Conversation meetings at 1000 on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month. You can enjoy coffee, donuts, networking and a presentation by a veteran or historian about a military conflict, branch or event. It's an opportunity to listen to the stories of service and sacrifice, ask questions of speakers and other veterans, see short videos and discuss the broader context of their experiences. **The next Coffee & Conversation is on 8 Feb** with guest speaker Matt Ake. Matt graduated from Penn State University and was commissioned into the United States Air Force as a 2nd Lt. He spent 8 years on active duty and retired from the Air Force Reserve as a Lieutenant Colonel. Matt will give a special talk about the history of Vietnam to help set the stage for the March Vietnam War Symposium. The museum's focus for CY2025 Coffee and Conversation speakers will emphasize Vietnam veterans. More info on the museum website: [home - Broomfield Veterans Museum](#)

SENATOR ELIZABETH DOLE 21ST CENTURY VETERAN'S HEALTHCARE AND BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT: On 2 Jan 2025 President Biden signed the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act into law. This comprehensive and transformative legislation will improve the lives of veterans and their caregivers on several fronts, including Department of Veterans Affairs health care and benefits, streamlining the disability claims process, expanding access to job training and employment opportunities, address veteran homelessness and strengthen mental health services, easing burdens for aging and disabled veterans to receive at-home care and much more. The Elizabeth Dole Foundation ensured that caregivers and their families were prioritized within the legislation, which includes more than 90 sections addressing such critical issues as long-term care, mental health resources, education, job training, VA modernization and many more. The Act will give severely ill and aging veterans the choice to convalesce at home by providing their caregivers increased access to support services. You can contact your local Colorado Veteran Service Officer (VSO), using the link below, for details on how this may apply to your specific situation. [County Veterans Service Offices | Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs](#)

VA LIFE INSURANCE POLICY PREMIUMS TO DECREASE: Veterans and spouses holding VA life insurance policies will see premiums fall this spring, with discounts varying by program and the age of the policyholder.

Here is a snapshot of the savings, which will affect about 3 million total policyholders:

- Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI): Policyholders will pay between 2% and 17% less, with the average policyholder saving 11%.
- Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI): Policyholders will see a reduction in premium rates from 6 cents per \$1,000 in coverage to 5 cents. Those with the maximum \$500,000 in coverage will pay \$25 a month, down from \$30. Rates do not include an additional \$1 a month for SGLI Traumatic Injury Protection.
- Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI): Spouses holding these policies will pay between 11% and 22% less, with an average savings of 13%.

The discounts will be automatic, according to the VA news release announcing the new rates, with no action required by the policyholder.

AMAZON MILITARY VIRTUAL CAREER DAY: This event is specifically designed for veterans, active-duty military members transitioning to civilian life, and military spouses so I realize we probably don't have many in our audience with an interest, but thought I would push it out there just in case there are some who can

benefit. It offers a platform to connect with Amazon recruiters and support teams who value their skills, experience, and dedication.

Event Details:

- Date: **Thursday, February 6, 2025**
- Time: 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM **PST**
- Platform: Virtual (Online)
- Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/49Um33O>

To register, please visit the registration link provided above.

TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS (TAPS): If you who have lost a military retiree spouse, you should know there is a **TAPS 24/7 National Military Survivor Helpline** available to you. There is a caring network of peer professionals standing by to provide emotional support, connection to a wide variety of resources and programs, a listening ear, and open access to all that TAPS provides. Survivors can call 800-959-TAPS (8277) any time, day or night. They will always answer, they always have time, and they always care. **TAPS has a Denver Area Care Group that meets at American Legion Post 1 (5400 East Yale Avenue Denver, Colorado 80222) the second Saturday of every month. The next meeting is 8 Feb from 1230-1400.** There is **no need to register** - just show up at the posted date, time and place. For more information, please email: caregroups@taps.org.

VA DISABILITY BENEFITS CLAIMS ASSISTANCE ON BUCKLEY SFB: On **20 Feb, from 1300-1600, in Building 606, Room 140 (the Military & Family Readiness Center), on Buckley SFB**, there will Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) available to help you file a VA disability benefit claim. You can just show up and walk in, no registration is required. If you are being discharged from the military within 90-180 days, bring a copy of your medical records, your marriage certificate and your children's birth certificates and they can do the rest. You should understand up front that an average Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) claim can take 2 hours or more for a records review and submission and there is almost always "homework" a veteran needs to do before they are completely prepared for an appointment. That being said, there are three things the VSOs at these meetings can do to prepare you for filing: answer any questions you may have about claims and claim processes; process simple requests such as input an Intent to File, for a retiree for instance, to save a date or update address information; prepare you for, and schedule, longer appointments in a VSO office to complete and submit claim documents. This event is scheduled for the third Thursday of every month, so expect the next one to be on 20 Mar. For more info, you can contact Ms. Stephanie Rozmarich at 460MSS.DPF@us.af.mil or call 720-847-6681.

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR QUALIFYING DISABLED VETERANS AND GOLD STAR SPOUSES: Qualified Disabled Veterans and Gold Star Spouses can receive 50% of the first 200,000 value of their home value exempted from their property tax.

To qualify, a veteran must meet each of the following requirements:

- Served active duty in U.S. armed forces.
- Was honorably discharged. Has established a service-connected disability that has been rated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as a one hundred percent permanent disability through disability retirement benefits or have been granted individual unemployability status.

A qualifying Gold Star spouse is defined as a:

- A Spouse of a United States armed service member who died in the line of duty or a veteran whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease.

The veteran or Gold Star spouse must be the owner of record of the property and must have been so since January 1 of the year of application. If the veteran's spouse owns the property, the veteran may meet ownership

requirements if the couple was married as of January 1, and both occupied the property as their primary residence since January 1.

If the property is owned by a trust, corporate partnership, or other legal entity, the veteran or Gold Star spouse will meet the ownership requirement if each of the following items is true:

- The veteran or spouse is a maker of the trust or a principal of the legal entity.
- The property was transferred solely for estate planning purposes.
- The veteran or spouse would otherwise be the owner of record.

Completed veteran and Gold Star spouse applications must be postmarked or delivered to the County Assessor in which the property is located by July 1 of the year in which the exemption is requested. Questions or requests for assistance should be directed to the Colorado Division of Property Taxation at 303-864-7777.

For more information see the following website: <https://dpt.colorado.gov/property-tax-exemption-for-veterans-with-a-disability-and-gold-star-spouses>

COLORADO PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR QUALIFYING SENIORS: In Colorado there is a property tax exemption for qualifying seniors. Requirements for eligibility are as follows:

- The applicant is at least 65 years old on January 1 of the year in which he/she applies; and
- The applicant or his/her spouse is the property owner of record and has owned the property for at least 10 consecutive years prior to January 1; and
- The applicant occupies the property as his/her primary residence and has done so for at least 10 consecutive years prior to January 1.

There are two application forms for the senior property tax exemption. The Short Form is for applicants who meet the basic eligibility requirements. The Long Form is for surviving spouses of eligible seniors and for applicants who may qualify under the exceptions to the basic requirements. Both forms are available from the county assessor's office.

Completed applications should be submitted to the assessor on or before July 15 of the year for which exemption is requested. If the application is not filed by July 15, the assessor must accept late applications through August 15, but late applicants will not have appeal rights for an application filed after July 15.

More information on this can be found at the following link: <https://dpt.colorado.gov/property-tax-exemption-for-senior-citizens-in-colorado>

DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR TRICARE WEST REGION BENEFICIARIES: As we have previously mentioned, if you currently live in the West Region and pay for your TRICARE coverage using a bank electronic funds transfer, credit card, or debit card, you must securely give your recurring payment information to the new West Region contractor, TriWest Healthcare Alliance. Although the initial deadline to complete this action has passed, the **Defense Health Agency has now extended the payment deadline for West Region beneficiaries to Friday, 28 Feb 2025.**

PHARMACY OPERATIONS:

The pharmacy is upgrading their Audiocare refill line on 4 Nov. The new refill number is 720-615-2857. The old number will still work for approximately two months. **For patients interested in text notifications of when their prescriptions are ready, please speak to a pharmacy team member to enroll - have your cell phone number and carrier/company available.** You can call 720-847-7450 if you need to speak to someone in the pharmacy.

The pharmacy will normally close at 1500 on the last Friday of each month. There is a lot of good information on the pharmacy website - here is the link: [460th Medical Group - Buckley Space Force Base > Health Services > Pharmacy \(tricare.mil\)](#) **The site also lists a phone number for the Pharmacy Patient Relations/Advocate, which is 720-847-6603.** The e-mail for the advocates is: usaf.buckley.460sw-mdg.mbx.pharmacy-patient-advocate@mail.mil.

New Prescriptions

Activation of new prescriptions by customers via phone or the Genesis Patient Portal is no longer required.

Electronic prescriptions will automatically be activated

Hardcopy prescription activation is via the Pharmacy DROP BOX

Urgent prescriptions will be ready the same day

Routine prescriptions ready after 1400 on the 2nd duty day

Refills

There is a 5 duty-day turnaround - after 1400

There has been an education adjustment for patients regarding the turn-around time for new prescriptions and refills. The pharmacy asks that beneficiaries call in their refill medications 7 days prior (for a 30-day supply) or 21 days prior (for a 90-day supply) to ensure they do not run out of medications before their refill will be ready.

BUCKLEY PHARMACY HOURS OF OPERATION:

Lobby Hours of Operation:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 0730-1630

Wednesday: 0930-1630

Thursday Extended Hours: 1630-1730 **Pick-Up Only**

Drive-Thru Hours of Operation:

Monday - Friday: 1300-1600

FUTURE CLOSURES:

7 Feb - closed from 1330-1500 for a Wing function

14 Feb - Family Day

17 Feb - President's Day

28 Feb - close at 1500 for "Final Friday - Med Group Morale Time"

Reminder: the pharmacy is closed every Wednesday from 0730 to 0930 for Training

GETTING INFO ON PHARMACY CLOSURE DATES: The RAO generally provides you with information on "routine" pharmacy closures (holidays, family days, training days, Med Group functions, etc.), but we realize it can be difficult to get information on last-minute closures, as happened on Christmas Eve day and 9 Jan for the National Day of Mourning. We thought it might be helpful to provide you with a little background on why this is the case.

720-847-7450 is the number to call for customer questions or concerns, but it only allows 2 lines to be open at a time. So, if there are already 2 customers (1 being helped, 1 on hold) it will give you a busy tone. Prior to the update with the AudioCare system, the pharmacy could manually update the recording on the refill line (720-615-2857) with info on any future or last-minute closures. However, with the AudioCare update ongoing, the pharmacy is currently required to submit a ticket to update this information, which can take days.

We asked the pharmacy if they could use the phone text system (that notifies customers when prescriptions are ready) to make last-minute notifications. When they looked into it last year, they were told the system isn't capable of sending mass notifications using phone numbers stored in the system. The people who manage the system thought that capability would be good to have, so perhaps they will look into it.

The pharmacy is considering two websites where they *may* be able post last-minute changes more quickly. However, just last week they were notified they are not allowed to post any new content on one of those, the Med Group Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/460thMedicalGroup/>

We will provide you with more information on this subject when it is available to us.

WINGS OVER THE ROCKIES AIR & SPACE MUSEUM AND WINGS OF EXPLORATION AT CENTENNIAL AIRPORT: Below is some information regarding February events for the museums, and links where you can get further information.

February:

- Breakfast Fly-In
 - Date: 2/8
 - Exploration of Flight at Centennial Airport (13005 Wings Way Englewood, CO 80112)
 - <https://wingsmuseum.org/events/breakfast-fly-in-feb/>
- Cockpit Demo Day
 - Date: 2/8
 - Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum
 - <https://wingsmuseum.org/events/cockpit-demo-day-feb>
- Drone Showcase
 - Date: 2/22
 - Exploration of Flight at Centennial Airport (13005 Wings Way Englewood, CO 80112)
 - <https://wingsmuseum.org/events/drone-showcase/>

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT NEEDS MENTORS: It is common to hear the phrase “Leave no soldier behind” when serving on active duty. It is just as applicable after a vet leaves the Service, when many have non-visible wounds they end up “treating” with drugs and alcohol. Too often these individuals end up in the judicial system for various reasons. You have the opportunity to help these veterans navigate their court mandated treatment. The Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) in the 18th Judicial District of Colorado provides treatment and support for veterans who are involved in the justice system. The program is for veterans who want to take responsibility for their actions and address their trauma and substance abuse issues. This District’s Mentor Corps was cut in half after the District split and, as a result, they are in serious need of additional mentors. If you, or another vet you know, think you would be a good fit for this program and want to help fellow vets, you can reach out to Todd Kramer (Army), Veteran Mentor Coordinator, Colorado 18th Judicial Veterans Treatment Court at todd.kramer@judicial.state.co.us For more information on Veterans Treatment Court see the following link: [Veterans Court | Criminal Justice Programs Unit](#)

TRICARE ONLINE PATIENT PORTAL DECOMMISSIONING: On 1 Apr, the TRICARE Online (TOL) Patient Portal will no longer be available. We’re told people who received care at military hospitals or clinics **before** the MHS GENESIS Electronic Health Record was implemented (Feb 2017?) will have records on the TOL Patient Portal. The Department of Defense’s new electronic health record, MHS GENESIS, has replaced the TOL Patient Portal. As part of the transition, the DOD is decommissioning the TOL Patient Portal. If you want to keep a copy of any legacy health records you have on the TOL for personal use, you must download them from the TOL Patient Portal before 1 Apr. We believe people who retired or separated after 1 Jan 14 can access their records on TOL if they don’t contain sensitive information. For more information you can see the following link: [TRICARE Online Patient Portal Decommissioning: Download Your Health Records Now > TRICARE Newsroom > TRICARE News](#)

2025 GIFT TAX EXCLUSION AMOUNT: The IRS announced an increased Gift Tax Exclusion amount for 2025. The annual Gift Tax Exclusion amount per recipient is now \$19,000 (up from \$18,000 in 2024). For married couples, they can give \$38,000 to one recipient tax-free without reducing their lifetime Estate and Gift Tax Exemption amount. The Gift Tax Exclusion applies to each recipient so an individual can make unlimited tax-free gifts to various beneficiaries as long as the gift to each recipient is under the annual exclusion amount. The recipient of a gift will not owe taxes regardless of the amount nor will they need to report the gift to the IRS. Example, Mr. and Mrs. Smith would like to gift their adult son \$50,000 to purchase a new home in 2025. The first \$38,000 of the gift amount is reduced by the annual exclusion (i.e., \$19,000 x 2). Only the \$12,000 above the \$38,000 will reduce their lifetime Estate and Gift Tax Exemption amount, which is \$27.98 million in 2025 for married couples (\$13.99 million for single filers). Mr. and Mrs. Smith are then required to file a Form 709: U.S. Gift (and Generation-Skipping Transfer) Tax Return to report the reduction of their lifetime exemption amount. No taxes are owed by the Smith's assuming they have not already used up their lifetime exemption amount. Please consult with a CPA or financial advisor with any questions before making a larger gift. *Source:* <https://www.irs.gov>

SOCIAL SECURITY EXPANDING APPOINTMENT-BASED SERVICES: Social Security is expanding appointment-based services at their [local Social Security offices](#). By scheduling appointments, they hope to reduce wait times, streamline service delivery, and improve the overall customer experience.

Effective 6 Jan 2025, they will require customers to schedule an appointment for service in their field offices, including requests for Social Security cards. We encourage customers to become accustomed to their:

- [online services](#), where many transactions can be completed conveniently and securely, and
- [automated services](#) available on our National 800# at 1-800-772-1213.

Customers who are not able to handle their business online, or with the automated options, may call their [local Social Security office](#) or the National 800# to schedule an appointment.

They want to make clear they will not turn people away for service who are unable to make an appointment or do not want to make an appointment. For example, members of vulnerable populations, military personnel, people with terminal illnesses, and individuals with other situations requiring immediate or specialized attention may still walk in for service at their field offices. Some of their offices also have minimal to no wait times, and they will still serve customers who walk in.

You can request a replacement Social Security Card at [Replace Social Security card | SSA](#)

“GREEN BURIALS” OFFERED AT PIKES PEAK NATIONAL CEMETERY: This pilot program started in the Fall of 2024 at some cemeteries in three states - Arizona, Colorado and Florida. The pilot will help the VA gather information and define procedures for expansion to more cemeteries. For a burial to be considered "green" by the VA, the body may be cremated or buried, but preparations must be free of chemicals or embalming fluids and the urn or casket must be biodegradable or securely wrapped in a biodegradable shroud. The National Cemeteries Preservation and Protection Act of 2022 allowed the VA to establish sections of the graveyards for green burials. The National Cemetery Administration has always accepted naturally prepared remains or those in biodegradable containers for burial in national cemeteries, but the pilot will let veterans and their families select a final resting place tailored for their wishes. The legislation also gave the VA the authority to decide what types of markers should be used to delineate the graves in these sections, as most green burial cemeteries do not feature upright headstones.

The VA manages 155 cemeteries nationwide and funds an additional 121 state, territorial and tribal veterans cemeteries. The House Veterans Affairs Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs subcommittee held a hearing 13 Nov on the VA's plans to provide 95% of the nation's veterans access to a national, state or tribal veterans burial site within 75 miles of their homes.

INCOME TAX FILING ASSISTANCE: It's that time of year again so I thought some of you might be interested in 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. The only ones I have found online are in Colorado Springs or Limon. 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 at this time.

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 last time I checked, AARP will do taxes for *anyone* at no charge - you don't need to be an AARP member. At the AARP link it indicates their site locator tool is expected to be up and running by mid-January. Last year when they were up and running there were ~20 different AARP tax-aide locations listed within 25 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-aide site located nearest you or visit [AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Locator](#). You should be able to find sites by Feb, and most usually require an appointment. Call the site you are interested in for details.

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>

FREE MILTAX SERVICES AVAILABLE TO RECENT RETIREES: If you separated from service within the last 12 months, you are eligible to file your taxes for free with MilTax e-filing software and support. Veterans are eligible for free support from Military OneSource, including MilTax, until 365 days past end of tour of service, retirement date or discharge date. This includes service members on the Temporary Disability Retirement List, as well as their immediate family including spouses, children and anyone who has legal responsibility for a service member's children, for the benefit of the children. You can visit Military OneSource to learn more about eligibility. [Military Tax Services](#) | [Military OneSource](#)
MilTax from Military OneSource is:

- No cost to eligible users and includes access to tax consultants
- Designed to account for the complexities of military life
- Offers secure industry-leading software, provided by the Defense Department

Contact Military OneSource at 800-342-9647 for more information.

DFAS 1099-R TAX FORMS FOR 2024 ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE: The fastest and most secure way to obtain a copy of your 1099-R is through myPay. Retirees and annuitants can log in to myPay anytime and print a copy of their 1099-R. Instructions are at: <https://myPay.dfas.mil> For retirees without a myPay account, 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. Use the following instructions to get your 1099-R through Telephone Self-Service:

- Call 1-800-321-1080 or 317-212-0551
- Select option "1" for Self-Service
- Select option "1" 1099-R
- Select option "1" to request copies of your tax documents
- Enter 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.

GREATER DENVER AREA VETERANS JOB FAIR: On Thursday, **17 Apr**, from 1100-1500 there will be a job fair hosted by RecruitMilitary at the Gaylord Rockies Resort and Convention Center in Aurora. More information at myRecruitMilitary

BUCKLEY SFB SNOWLINE: With winter right around the corner base operations are sometimes impacted by snow/weather. Sometimes there is delayed reporting for non-mission essential personnel, or the base is only open to mission-essential personnel. The 6th Ave gate hours may be impacted, as well as the commissary, Exchange, ID card section, pharmacy, etc. For delayed reporting of non-mission essential personnel, most facilities on base will also have a delayed opening: the Exchange and ID card section normally open 1 hour after NET reporting time; the pharmacy tries to open by 30 min after the NETS reporting time; the Commissary tries to open by the NET reporting time. **If the base is only open to mission-essential personnel, the Exchange, Commissary, Pharmacy and ID card section will ALL be closed.** The bottom line is this, if the weather forecast is calling for snow you should check the Buckley SFB Facebook page ([Buckley Space Force Base | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/BuckleySpaceForceBase)) and/or call the Snowline (720-847-7669) for the latest base information before you head to base.

QUILTS OF VALOR: Quilts of Valor (QOVF) was founded in 2003 when the mother of a soldier deployed in Iraq had a dream. Her first image was of a despondent soldier fighting his war demons, then an image of the same soldier being comforted by a quilt. What she took from this vision was "Quilts = Healing" and started this organization. Since 2003 QOVF has provided over 400,000 Service Members and Veterans with a quilt. Basically, any Active Duty, National Guard/Reserve or retiree from any Service, that served during a declared war/conflict/police action/peacekeeping mission, that received an honorable discharge is eligible for a quilt. For more general information and details see: <https://www.qovf.org/>

To nominate yourself, a service member, or another veteran to receive a *Quilt of Valor*, please go to:

<https://www.qovf.org/nominations-awards/>

- Select "*Nominate a Service Member or Living Veteran*" - follow the prompts, providing information about your (her/his) service.
- When you get to the section that reads: "*If you have coordinated this nomination with a local QOVF group or individual, please add the name of the group and the name of the person you contacted*"
 - Please enter "Buckley SFB RAO".

Once your request has been received, you will be contacted and offered the opportunity to receive a quilt at a future award ceremony. The RAO is currently working to organize an award ceremony on base in late summer 2025. You will be offered the opportunity to be considered for that event or, if more convenient for you, another ceremony in a different location during 2025. For questions, please reach out to Sandra Lazaroff, CO State Coordinator for QOV: Sandra.Lazaroff@QOVF.org

U.S. ARMY RETIRED SOLDIER HANDBOOK: The 2025 version of the U.S. Army Retired Soldier handbook is now available online: <https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Retirement/post-retirement> The purpose of the handbook is to provide current and updated information for Retired Soldiers and their Families, about the benefits and entitlements they've earned through their years of service. It's important that all Retired Soldiers maintain a working knowledge of their benefits and entitlements in order to take full advantage of them. In addition to the information presented in the handbook, Retired Soldiers should refer to the Army Echoes newsletters which also outline changes in benefits and entitlements. The current and previous editions of Army Echoes dating back to 1997 are available at the link provided above.

U.S. ARMY SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES: Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) is the official Army program designed to provide long-term support to surviving Families of fallen Soldiers. The Army has a network of SOS coordinators at locations across the country. Contact phone numbers are listed by state and county, or by country at https://dcs9.army.mil/sos_staff_Locator . Use the drop-down lists to find survivor coordinators by state/county or country/ region. If a coordinator is not listed, you can call 210-834-0494 or the IMCOM toll free number - (833) 313-1960 for survivor assistance. Locally, you can contact Alison Patton at 720-250-1564 or alison.l.patton2ctr@army.mil

MyHealtheVet - SIGN-IN CHANGES COMING: The VA will transition to two modern, secure sign-in options in 2025: a Login.gov or ID.me account. After this transition, Veterans, beneficiaries and caregivers looking to access VA's online services (VA.gov, the VA: Health and Benefits mobile app, and other VA online services) will need to sign in with either a Login.gov or ID.me account. Veterans and other beneficiaries will no longer be able to use usernames and passwords for My HealtheVet after 31 Jan 25, or DS Logon after 30 Sep 25. The Virtual Health Resource Center (VHRC) team at the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center is offering in-person, hands-on help sessions to assist Veterans with creating a secure sign-in account. Veterans can stop into D1-187 Mon-Wed from 0800-1430. Veterans can also call the VHRC directly at 720-723-6279. Another back up number is 720-857-5233. This is incredibly important because a high percentage of Veterans use MyHealtheVet to order prescriptions and message their care teams.

PHARMACY CLOSURES AND YOUR TRICARE BENEFITS: Access to the TRICARE Pharmacy Program impacts many military retirees, their families, and their survivors. A recent announcement from a national in-network pharmacy chain has highlighted how this network is shrinking. Walgreens will close about 1,200 stores over the next three years. The chain hasn't announced which locations will close, but it's not the only TRICARE network provider likely to have fewer locations in the coming years - about 900 CVS stores have closed or are closing, and a planned merger involving Kroger could reduce that brand's footprint. The brick-and-mortar TRICARE pharmacy network has lost about one-fourth of its locations since 2022, with a disproportionate impact on beneficiaries in rural areas and those with complicated prescription needs.

DFAS QUICK TOOLS FOR RETIREES, SPB ANNUITANTS AND SURVIVORS: There is a DFAS website with lots of helpful information for retirees, SBP annuitants, and survivors. It has links and online tools that allow you to report deaths, change your address, a customer guide, request your 1099-R, access checklists related to retiree/annuitant deaths, etc. You can find all this at the following website:
<https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/Quick-Tools-for-Retirees-SBP-Annuitants-Survivors/>

DFAS CUSTOMER GUIDE TO ONLINE TOOLS: You can access this customer guide directly at the following link:
https://www.dfas.mil/Portals/98/Documents/RetiredMilitary/askDFAS%20Online%20Tool%20Guide%20Retirees%20and%20SBP%20Annuitants%20May2024.pdf?ver=5JPcRQ_O5c7cW9DZ4R6EAQ%3d%3d

TRICARE MANAGED CARE SUPPORT CONTRACTOR CHANGE: Starting 1 Jan 25, new T-5 regional contracts will also take effect in the U.S. The Managed Care Support Contractor (MCSC) for regular TRICARE programs in the old 21 state West Region will change from Health Net Federal Services (HNFS) to TriWest Healthcare Alliance for the new 26 state West Region. The TRICARE for Life (TFL) MCSC will still be Wisconsin Physician Services (WPS, 1-866-773-0404) www.tricare4u.com

UPDATE YOUR TRICARE PAYMENT INFORMATION WITH TRIWEST: If you currently live in the West Region and pay for your TRICARE coverage via credit card or bank electronic funds transfer, you can now securely give your recurring payment information to the incoming West Region contractor, TriWest Healthcare Alliance online. You may get an email or letter from TriWest to let you know you can set up your payment information online or download a printable Automatic Payment Authorization Form for mailing to provide your recurring payment information. TriWest will **not** charge your recurring payment method before 1

Jan 25, but it will need to have your payment information on file before 31 Dec (**extended to 28 Feb**). Your recurring payment information **won't** automatically transfer from Health Net Federal Services, LLC or Humana Military. If you don't provide TriWest with payment information before 1 Jan 25, you may be involuntarily disenrolled from TRICARE and lose your health coverage. Don't cancel your current recurring payment method after you've set up your new payments with TriWest. If you live in the West Region on 1 Jan 25, HNFS and Humana Military will stop collecting payments after your December payment.

You don't need to take any action if:

- You pay by a military pay system allotment. Allotment payments will transfer automatically.
- You live in a state that's staying in the East Region. Humana Military will keep your current payment information on file.
- **You have TRICARE For Life**, the US Family Health Plan, or a TRICARE health plan overseas. The new contracts won't affect you.

To securely give your payment information to TriWest:

1. Visit tricare.mil/west.
2. Look for information and the link on how to securely set up your recurring payments.
3. Select the link. Then, select the "New User? Sign Up Now" option.
4. You'll be asked to input your email address. A verification code will be sent to you.
5. Check your email for the verification code. Then, enter it to continue.
6. Complete the information requested (name, address, etc.) in the secure forms.
7. Select your payment method.
8. Complete all fields.
9. Submit.

LEGAL OFFICE OPEN FOR RETIREES & DEPENDENTS: Legal provides **limited** legal assistance services for military retirees and their dependents. **Wills for retirees and dependents will only be done on Wednesdays and Thursdays of each week from 1300 to 1500 and you must have an appointment.** For notary services and powers of attorney, walk-ins for retirees are available on Mon-Thurs from 0800-1200. Retirees have the option of conducting their legal assistance appointment by telephone or in person. Legal expects the will appointments to fill up very quickly and they will **not** have a "waitlist." Thus, legal may ask that retirees call back in 2-3 weeks to check for open appointments once they are booked for several weeks. **Prior to scheduling an appointment for a will, medical directive or power of attorney, legal will require a ticket # or worksheet, as well as your DoD ID Number** which is located in the lower right front of the old (DD Fm 2) ID card (10-digit number). You can obtain a ticket # from the AF legal assistance website at [U.S. Air Force Legal Assistance \(AFLASS\)](https://www.aflegalassistance.com) when you go to the site to fill out the required information for whatever document it is you want completed. **If you call legal to make an appointment, they will not give you an appointment unless you have the ticket number issued by the website.** For any questions call base legal at 720-847-6444.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES: There are numerous organizations that can provide mental health services in Colorado. We've listed a few examples here:

Below are a couple generic links to mental health website pages for the **VA Eastern CO Health Care System (ECHCS)** and **VA** that *might* provide some useful info. The VA ECHCS page does have a phone number in the upper right to contact someone. The one for the VA has info and a "Contact Us" box at the upper right corner of the page and at the bottom left of the page is a Veterans Crisis Line number.

[Mental Health Care | VA Eastern Colorado Health Care | Veterans Affairs](#)
[Mental Health Home \(va.gov\)](#)

You can also **contact a Veteran Service Officer (VSO)** since they are the experts at dealing with the VA and very knowledgeable about what services are available where. The link below will take you to a website where you just click on the CO county you are in and it will give you a list of VSOs in your county, along with their contact info (phone and e-mail). If you contact a VSO from your county and you aren't happy with them, don't hesitate to reach out to one in another county.

[County Veterans Service Offices | Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs](#)

There are also **Veterans Benefits advisors in Building 606 on Buckley SFB**, where the Retiree Activities Office (RAO) is located - Tyrone Groce and Deloris Evans. They can be reached at 720-847-4838/4839 and may have some ideas on people and/or organizations you can contact.

Another organization you can contact is the **Cohen Veterans Network**, a non-profit that offers mental health services for veterans and their family (link below). If you go to Clinics and Resources at the top, then click on Locate a Clinic, you will see there is one in Greenwood Village here in Denver - The Steven A. Cohen Military and Family Clinic at University of CO at Anschutz Medical Campus on 7800 E Orchard Rd, Greenwood Village. Their phone number is 303-724-4255.

<https://www.cohenveteransnetwork.org/>

Tricare also provides some mental health resources. The first link below is to the general Mental Health Care site and the second link to the Mental Health Appointments table.

[Mental Health Care | TRICARE](#)
[Mental Health Appointments | TRICARE](#)

Mental health problems can affect your thoughts, mood, and behavior.

- If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text 988 or chat at [988Lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org). 988 connects you with a trained crisis counselor who can help.
- If you or a family member needs help, call a [crisis hotline](#)
- If you're not sure, you can call the [Nurse Advice Line](#).

Another option available for health and wellness assistance is the **Mt Carmel Veterans Center**. They can support treatment services including, but not limited to: depression, anxiety, trauma or relationship struggles, PTSD and life transitions. They offer donation-based counseling services. You do NOT need a referral; you do NOT need to have insurance. You need only call to schedule your first appointment. Through partnerships with local universities, Mt. Carmel is able to offer a range of counseling services for individuals, couples, families and children. They also have active group counseling opportunities. Treatment is provided by licensed professionals, post-grad/prelicensure therapists, and graduate interns supervised by an on-site supervisor who is a Licensed Professional Counselor. All clinicians are uniquely trained and experienced in providing military specific services. All of the graduate interns are chosen from the top accredited Universities along the front-range, have completed advanced coursework in mental health services, and provide confidential, trusted and supervised care. Many providers have either served or are military connected. Interns are currently provided by Denver University, University of Colorado - Colorado Springs, University of Northern Colorado, Regis University, Denver Seminary and Colorado Christian University. You can reach the Mt Carmel Veterans Center at [719-309-4758](tel:719-309-4758).

HAVING PROBLEMS WITH THE GENESIS PATIENT PORTAL? For members looking for assistance with the MHS-Genesis Patient Portal, the pharmacy recommends reaching out to the MHS help desk and/or reviewing the FAQ's they provide. They believe the best place to call for help is the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) at 800-368-3665. You can also try the Global Service Center (800-600-9332). **You need to**

make sure your information in DEERS is correct, to include your email address, as this must match the Genesis login email used.

PRESCRIPTION OPTIONS WHEN BASE PHARMACY IS CLOSED: Resourcing for DoD pharmacies does not provide staffing for extending hours for an on call or emergency service as a standard. The Buckley SFB pharmacy is not resourced that way as the surrounding area is able to support emergence prescription needs. In delivering the Tricare Benefit, the option for utilizing the prescription benefit outside of Buckley Pharmacy open hours is to utilize an in-network pharmacy in the surrounding area. Using the Express Scripts In-Network Pharmacy locator (<https://www.express-scripts.com/frontend/standalone-ui/#/find-a-pharmacy/commercial-oe/search>), there are two pharmacies in the surrounding area providing 24-hour pharmacy availability (Walgreens @12051 E Mississippi Ave in Aurora and CVS @4005 E 8th Pl in Denver).

PRESCRIPTION REFILLS USING MHS GENESIS PATIENT PORTAL: The Defense Health Agency has launched a new feature that lets you request prescription refills through MHS GENESIS. We've posted a flyer about this on the RAO website. We're told prescription refills through the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal became available on 29 Feb. You can refill prescriptions by selecting the "Rx Refills" tab in the upper right panel on the portal's homepage. Through your MHS GENESIS Patient Portal, you'll be able to:

- See all your prescriptions that are available to be refilled.
- Choose which ones you want refilled.
- Choose where you want to pick up the refill.
- See when your prescriptions are ready to be picked up.

This new feature also applies to existing prescriptions that have remaining refills. You can request a refill once you've used 75% of the previous fill, and no earlier. To access the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal, visit <https://patientportal.mhsgenesis.health.mil>.

DFAS "WHAT TO DO WHEN A MILITARY RETIREE DIES" CHECKLIST: DFAS has created a PDF checklist for actions required to complete with them following the death of a military retiree. The checklist includes all the pertinent information about the required forms and supporting documents, along with important reminders. The checklist also provides helpful tips on how to submit the documents to DFAS. You can find the "What to Do When a Military Retiree Dies" Checklist on their new Quick Tools page. The checklist can be found toward the top of the page: <https://www.dfas.mil/raqquicktools> They have also added more information to their webpage on DFAS.mil for reporting the death of a retiree and the next steps your family will need to take.

Report a Retiree's Death - <https://www.dfas.mil/retdeath>

BUCKLEY SFB PHARMACY NEEDS VOLUNTEERS: The Buckley pharmacy wants you to volunteer! They are looking for volunteers to assist in the pharmacy, connect with the pharmacy team and other beneficiaries as a pharmacy volunteer. Current opportunities include helping to dispense at the window, preparing prescriptions for the pickup system, prepacking medications, along with other opportunities. Requirements for volunteering include: 1) over 18 years old, 2) current vaccination statuses, 3) availability to come in at least twice monthly (due to training requirements), 4) a positive attitude and willingness to work with an infectious team! Please reach out to the pharmacy by phone (720.847.9355 (option 4, option 4)) or in person. We have posted a volunteer application form on the RAO website.

TRICARE FOR LIFE HANDBOOK: If you have Tricare for Life (TFL), you can find the Tricare for Life Handbook at this link - [*TRICARE For Life Handbook*](#) The handbook was updated in Jan 2024.

HQ AIR RESERVE PERSONNEL CENTER RESERVE RETIREMENT COUNSELING CELL (RRCC): We hear from a lot of Gray Area retirees from all Services, typically as they are approaching 60, start working on their retirement packages, and have questions or run into problems. On 1 Jun 23 ARPC activated a Reserve Retirement Counseling Center (RRCC) to help AF Reservists or Guard members working on their retirement package. If you click the link below it will tell you a little about this group.

RRCC Contact Info: 800-682-1929, E-mail: arpc.dpt.rrcc@us.af.mil

BUCKLEY SFB COMMUNITY CENTER EVENTS: The Buckley Community Center has upcoming trivia nights, and more. You can see info on their activities on the Community Center Facebook page at: [Buckley Community Centers | Facebook](#)

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 \(dfas.mil\)](#)) 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/>

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

1. Go to **<https://mypay.dfas.mil>** in your web browser on a computer or connected device.
2. Click on the "Forgot or Need a Password?" link
3. Enter two of the following: your Login ID, Social Security Number and/or registered email address (previously registered in myPay). Check the box affirming you are the account owner and click "Continue."
4. If you previously set up the security questions, you'll be presented three security questions to answer. When finished answering the questions, click "Check my Answers."
5. If you answer the security questions correctly, you will be able to reset your password online.

If you haven't set up security questions, or answer them incorrectly, you'll get the option to have a temporary password sent to you. You can choose to send the temporary password to: A) Your mobile phone via text if your mobile phone number is registered in myPay; OR, B) The mailing address you have on file with DFAS in your pay account. When you receive the temporary password, go back to myPay and log in to reactivate your account. If you need assistance accessing your myPay account, please contact the myPay Customer Care Center toll-free at 1-888-332-7411, select option 5 or at 1-317-212-0550.

DFAS MYPAY ACCOUNTS FOR ANNUITANTS: If you weren't aware, widows/widowers who are receiving Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) payments from DFAS can have a myPay account, which is the quickest and most convenient way to manage your annuity pay. This online account allows you to view your SBP annuity account detail, including your Annuitant Account Statement, change Direct Deposit information, change your mailing address, and print and view IRS forms, such as the 1099-R. **Only annuitants who are current receiving an SBP annuity payment or SSIA pay can use myPay.** If you've never used myPay, it's easy to get started. Go to <https://mypay.dfas.mil> using the internet from your computer or your mobile device browser and click "Forgot or Need a Password" to have a temporary password mailed to you. The password will be mailed via regular mail to the address you have on file with DFAS and you will receive it in about 10 business days. Once you have received a password, return to the myPay home page and click "Create your myPay Profile" to get started. Enter your SSN and temporary password. You can get a downloadable myPay guide at: [Slide 1 \(dfas.mil\)](#)

MYPAY SUPPORT AT DEFENSE FINANCE & ACCOUNTING SERVICE (DFAS): For problems using myPay, or establishing/changing your myPay password, contact the DFAS Centralized Customer Support Unit toll-free at 1-888-332-7411 or commercial at (216) 552-5096. This support line is available Monday through Friday, 0800 to 1700, Eastern Time. The Centralized Customer Support Unit can also provide assistance on how to use the options available to you in myPay. The support unit will also provide support for establishing and changing your password.

HOW TO UPDATE YOUR DEERS INFORMATION: When your life changes, make sure you update the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). Wrong information in DEERS can prevent you from using your TRICARE benefits properly. There are four ways to update your contact information in DEERS:

- Online via milConnect
- By phone: 800-538-9552 (TTY/TDD: 866-363-2883)
- By fax: 831-655-8317
- By mail:

DMDC Support Office
Attn: COA
400 Gigling Road
Seaside, CA 93955-6771

You also need to update your information with:

- Your regional contractor
- The pharmacy contractor
- Your dental contractor (if you have dental coverage)
- Your doctors

SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN (SBP) AND DFAS NOTIFICATIONS: You need to ensure you inform DFAS about life-changing events promptly to ensure the correct premiums are billed and your dependents don't face delays or difficulties in receiving their SBP annuity payments. Below are two examples of common life events and deadlines for changing your SBP coverage:

At retirement, you're single with no children. After retirement, you marry or have a child. You need to notify DFAS within ONE YEAR by sending them a DD Form 2656-6 and a copy of the marriage or birth certificate if you want SBP coverage for them.

You divorce and elect former spouse coverage. Your former spouse passes away and you later re-marry. You need to notify DFAS within ONE YEAR of your re-marriage by sending them a DD Form 2656-6 and a copy of your new marriage certificate if you want SBP coverage for your new spouse. You can find out more about changing SBP coverage at: <https://www.dfas.mil/changesbp>

MY AIR FORCE BENEFITS WEBSITE: While the site is mainly focused on active-duty folks, there is a **lot** of information on there of interest to retirees/surviving spouses as well. The site has about 180 fact sheets on various benefits and a section for "Transition and Retirement Planning." If you look under the "Benefit Library" tab (top left of the page), and click on the "Resource Locator" link, you can then click on CO (or any other state) to see a wealth of information on resources in your state (with base specific resources as well). I strongly encourage you to check out this website. [Home | An Official Air Force Benefits Website \(af.mil\)](http://www.af.mil)

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.

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 the RAO e-mail - raobuckley@gmail.com.

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 SFB in Bldg 606 with Benefits Advisors (Mr Tyrone Groce & Ms Deloris Evans) who can normally be reached at 720-847-4838 from Mon-Fri 0800 - 1600.

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 SFB 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

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.**