



RETIREE NEWSLETTER

Retiree Activities Office (RAO), Travis AFB, California

Fall 2016

VOLUNTEER COUNSELORS

Walt Jue, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF (Ret)
Rick Villarina, Jr., Major, USAF (Ret)
Lou McDermott, Captain, USAF (Ret)

Roy Sheets, SMSgt, USAF (Ret)
Laurna Sudat, MSgt, USAF (Ret)
Carl Downey, MSgt, USAF (Ret)
Mrs. Nanie Larson

Bob French, Captain, US Navy (Ret)

Director, Moffett Federal Airfield Satellite Retiree Activities Office

George Moses, CMSgt, USAF (Ret)

Director, McClellan Park Satellite Retiree Activities Office

Ms. Bunny Dominguez

Medical RAO Coordinator, David Grant USAF Medical Center

David C. Wigley, CMSgt, USAF (Ret)

Director, Travis AFB Retiree Activities Office

Acknowledgement

Articles appearing in this newsletter are compiled from local sources, newsletters received by this RAO and from other military sources. Information has been edited and reprinted for the benefit of our retiree population. No commercial gain is derived for this publication. News items are current as of their use in this newsletter.



Focus of the Retiree Activities Offices

Our customers are retired American service members and their dependents. They have earned our respect, and their retirement benefits, by dedicating their lives to the preservation, protection and defense of the Constitution of the United States of America. They have sweated and bled in distant lands, foregone the stability and pleasures of family life, and followed the orders given to them without regard to personal cost. They should take great pride in their accomplishments. In addition, they are entitled to the fulfillment of the contract drawn with our country. At the Retiree Activities Office, we take great pride in supporting the fulfillment of this contract. It is our mission to maintain open communication and to ensure they receive the superb service and respect they so rightfully deserve. Our primary focus shall remain on mission accomplishment, compassionate care of retirees and their families, and the drive to constantly improve and excel.

FROM YOUR RAO DIRECTOR

This month's message is again about recruiting volunteers for the Travis AFB Retiree Activities Office. We celebrate the arrival of SMSgt Roy Sheets, USAF, Retired, who has joined us (a “get-one” for MSgt Carl Downey, USAF, Retired. Thanks!).

We remain at a low level of staffing. This renewed recruiting appeal is to retirees, their spouses, active duty members with availability and their spouses, as well. Current commitment would be six hours per week, with a reduction to three hours per week as staffing levels increase and stabilize. Qualifications include a sincere desire to serve and assist retirees and their families (see the Focus of the Retiree Activities Offices above). Comprehensive knowledge of all retiree issues is not a prerequisite to becoming a volunteer, but a willingness to learn and the courage to reach out for answers and solutions on behalf of retirees is essential. After a brief period of on the job training, volunteers will work independently during their assigned service periods.

Call me to talk about your entering into this challenging and satisfying mode of “Still Serving.”

DAVID C. WIGLEY, CMSgt, USAF (Retired)
707.424.3905 david.wigley.1@us.af.mil

RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY TRAVIS AFB



DATE: OCTOBER 15, 2016

TIME: 0800-1300

LOCATION: HANGAR 837
(299 BOYLES ST.)

- FREE FOOD
- PRIZES/RAFFLES
- CONCERT (BAND OF THE WEST)
- INFORMATION/FUN BOOTHS
- AIRCRAFT STATICS
- HERITAGE FILM
- SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED BEFORE US...

Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) 2016 is coming! Please plan to join us for a wonderful day. Questions? Call your RAO at 707-424-3904. See you there!



Vallejo Veterans Memorial Building Council

420 ADMIRAL CALLAGHAN LANE, VALLEJO, CA 94591 www.VallejoVetsBldg.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

World War II Veterans to be honored on December 17, 2016 to commemorate World Peace II; Deadline to submit names is November 11, 2016

VALLEJO, CA (AUGUST 1, 2016) – The Vallejo Veterans Memorial Building Council (VVMBC) in collaboration with many of the Cities and Veterans organizations in Solano County will honor World War II Veterans on Saturday, December 17, 2016 at 1300 hours (1:00 PM) at the Vallejo Veterans Memorial Building, 420 Admiral Callaghan Lane, Vallejo, CA 94591. “World Peace II” will commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II.

To receive various Certificates of Appreciation, the VVMBC respectfully requests that you must be: a) Resident of Solano County; b) awarded the World War II Victory Medal; and c) want to be honored. Please submit your complete name, mailing address, and phone number by Veterans Day, November 11, 2016 to VVMBC Volunteer, Nestor Aliga, at nestor.aliga@comcast.net or mail to 120 Sheila Court, Vallejo, CA 94591.

It is estimated that there may still be 1,600 WWII Veterans living in Solano County based on data from http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp that 5% of all living Veterans served during the WWII era. The VVMBC is expecting that at least 300 WWII Veterans will submit their names so they can receive personalized certificates of appreciation.

In 2011-2012, about 200 World War II Veterans and recipients of the Congressional Gold Medal were honored to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day with certificates from the President of the United States, U.S. Congress, California Legislature, Solano County Board of Supervisors, and the Mayor of Vallejo, and brochures from the National Park Service.

In 2013-2014, over 450 Korean War Veterans were honored on the 60th anniversary of the Armistice with certificates from the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Republic of Korea, U.S. Congress, California Legislature, Solano County Board of Supervisors, and the Mayor of Vallejo, and brochures from the National Park Service.

In 2014-2015, nearly 600 Vietnam War Veterans were honored on the 50th anniversary of Tonkin Gulf with certificates from the President of the United States, U.S. Congress, California Legislature, Solano County Board of Supervisors, the Mayor of Vallejo, and the VVMBC, and along with pins, buttons, stickers, and memorabilia from the Pentagon and brochures from the National Park Service.

Contact: Nestor Aliga, 707-853-0062

YOU CAN LEAVE THE MILITARY -- BUT IT NEVER REALLY LEAVES YOU.

This article sums it up quite well.

(Thanks to Col. Robert Whitener, USMC (Ret))

Occasionally, I venture back to one or another military post where I'm greeted by an imposing security guard who looks carefully at my identification card, hands it back, renders a crisp salute and says, "Have a good day, Sir!" Every time I go back to any Military Base it feels good to be called by my previous rank, but odd to be in civilian clothes, walking among the servicemen and servicewomen going about their duties as I once did, many years ago.

The military is a comfort zone for anyone who has ever worn the uniform. It's a place where you know the rules and know they are enforced -- a place where everybody is busy, but not too busy to take care of business. Because there exists behind the gates of every military facility an institutional understanding of respect, order, uniformity, accountability and dedication that becomes part of your marrow and never, ever leaves you.

Personally, I miss the fact that you always knew where you stood in the military, and who you were dealing with. That's because you could read somebody's uniform from 20 feet away and know the score.

Service personnel wear their careers on their uniforms, so to speak. When you approach each other, you can read their name tag, examine their rank and, if they are in dress uniform, read their ribbons and know where they've served.

I miss all those little things you take for granted when you're in the ranks, like breaking starch on a set of fatigues fresh from the laundry and standing in a perfectly straight line military formation that looks like a mirror as it stretches to the endless horizon. I miss the sight of troops marching in the early morning mist, the sound of boot heels thumping in unison on the tarmac, the bark of drill instructors and the sing-song answers from the squads as they pass by in review.

To romanticize military service is to be far removed from its reality, because it's very serious business -- especially in times of war. But I miss the salutes I'd throw at senior officers and the crisp returns as we crisscrossed with a "by your leave sir". I miss the smell of jet fuel hanging heavily on the night air and the sound of engines roaring down runways and disappearing into the clouds. I even miss the hurry-up-and-wait mentality that enlisted men gripe about constantly, a masterful invention that bonded people more than they'll ever know or admit. I miss people taking off their hats when they enter a building, speaking directly and clearly to others and never showing disrespect for rank, race, religion or gender.

Mostly, I miss being a small cog in a machine so complex it constantly circumnavigates the Earth and so simple it feeds everyone on time, three times a day, on the ground, in the air or at sea.

Mostly, I don't know anyone who has served who regrets it, and doesn't feel a sense of pride when they pass through those gates and re-enter the world they left behind with their youth.

Face it - we all miss it.....Whether we had one tour or a career, it shaped our lives.

From our Friends at DFAS

Former Spouse SBP Coverage Open Season: The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (NDAA FY16) amended the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) statute to provide a member who had made an election to provide SBP or Reserve Component SBP (RCSBP) coverage for a former spouse the ability to cover a subsequent spouse if the former spouse dies. The enactment of this legislation included provisions in the form of an open season period to accommodate members whose covered former spouse beneficiaries were already deceased when the legislation was enacted.

Who Is eligible for this Open Season? Members who have been identified as a military retiree who once elected former spouse coverage which is now discontinued have been contacted via direct mail. However, some members may be eligible to elect coverage for a current spouse during this open season period if before November 25, 2015 they had a former spouse beneficiary under the SBP who died before that date and if they were on November 25, 2015 married to a subsequent spouse. This Former Spouse SBP Coverage Open Season DOES NOT APPLY if they are not currently married or if their former spouse SBP coverage was discontinued for any reason other than the death of their covered former spouse.

How do I make an election to cover my current spouse? If a member has not already been contacted, but believes the open season may apply to them, and has an interest in making the election, please direct their inquiry to us at the address found here <http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/about/aboutus/customer-service.html>. Once we have received their inquiry, we will provide them with the necessary supporting documents which may include:

- Certificate of Death for the Former Spouse
- Marriage Certificate for Current Spouse
- Birth Certificate for Current Spouse
- Expression of Interest Form

Once we receive all required documentation, we will prepare an estimate of the costs associated with the coverage, and any retroactive premiums due from the effective date of the coverage. We will provide this estimate to them along with a blank "Final Election" form. Once they have reviewed the figures, if they decide to elect the coverage, they will need to complete and sign the "Final Election" form and return it to us. The election must be made with the form provided or in writing. It must be received by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service-Cleveland with a postmark on or before November 24, 2016.

Please be advised that once made, this election is irrevocable. Coverage may only be established at the level of coverage previously elected for their former spouse.

The member is responsible for all premiums due from the effective date of the election. The option to cover a current spouse during this open season will run through November 24, 2016.

When will my election become effective? Married ON the Date of the Death of the Former Spouse – If the member had been married for at least 1 year on the former spouse's date of death, the effective date is the 1st day of the 1st month after the date of death of the former spouse. *(Continued on next page)*

Married AFTER Death of the Former Spouse - If the member married after the former spouse's date of death (or in the 1 year period preceding the date of death of the former spouse), the effective date is the 1st day of the 1st month after the 1st anniversary of the marriage.

For members who are not fully paid up, retroactive premiums will be effective on the date of the election. Such members will be responsible for all premiums for this time period. An estimate of premiums and payment options will be provided after receipt of a member's expression of interest form. The member will be required to pay the premiums in either a lump-sum amount or over a period of months, but all premiums must be paid within 24 months of the date of their final election. (Source: DFAS)

VA News

Veterans' Diseases Associated with Agent Orange: VA assumes that certain diseases can be related to a Veteran's qualifying military service. We call these "presumptive diseases." VA has recognized certain cancers and other health problems as presumptive diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service.

Veterans and their survivors may be eligible for benefits for these diseases.

- AL Amyloidosis, A rare disease caused when an abnormal protein, amyloid, enters tissues or organs
- Chronic B-cell Leukemia's, A type of cancer which affects white blood cells
- Chloracne (or similar acne form disease), A skin condition that occurs soon after exposure to chemicals and looks like common forms of acne seen in teenagers. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.
- Diabetes Mellitus Type 2, A disease characterized by high blood sugar levels resulting from the body's inability to respond properly to the hormone insulin
- Hodgkin's Disease, A malignant lymphoma (cancer) characterized by progressive enlargement of the lymph nodes, liver, and spleen, and by progressive anemia
- Ischemic Heart Disease, A disease characterized by a reduced supply of blood to the heart, that leads to chest pain
- Multiple Myeloma, A cancer of plasma cells, a type of white blood cell in bone marrow
- Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, A group of cancers that affect the lymph glands and other lymphatic tissue
- Parkinson's Disease, A progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects muscle movement
- Peripheral Neuropathy, Early-Onset, A nervous system condition that causes numbness, tingling, and motor weakness. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of herbicide exposure.
- Porphyria Catenae Tarda, A disorder characterized by liver dysfunction and by thinning and blistering of the skin in sun-exposed areas. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.
- Prostate Cancer, Cancer of the prostate; one of the most common cancers among men
- Respiratory Cancers (includes lung cancer), Cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea, and bronchus
- Soft Tissue Sarcomas (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma)A group of different types of cancers in body tissues such as muscle, fat, blood and lymph vessels, and connective tissues. (Continued on next page)

Live healthy, there are steps Veterans can take to help prevent heart disease, cancer, and other common diseases of aging. Get the recommended health screenings, eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, and don't smoke. Learn more about healthy living.

Children with birth defects VA presumes certain birth defects in children of Vietnam and Korea Veterans are associated with Veterans' qualifying military service.

Veterans with Lou Gehrig's Disease VA presumes Lou Gehrig's Disease (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or ALS) diagnosed in all Veterans who had 90 days or more continuous active military service is related to their service, although ALS is not related to Agent Orange exposure. - See more at:

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/conditions/index.asp#sthash.8pJN91wx.dpuf>

The latest from the Social Security Administration

Your Social Security Statement is now at your fingertips: Have you ever received a Social Security Statement in the mail? You know, the one that shows all the earnings you've had each year and how much you could receive per month in Social Security benefits when you retire? The Statement contains crucial information workers need to plan for a comfortable retirement. Now, thanks to my Social Security, this information—and so much more—is only a few minutes away!

Your personal my Social Security account is secure and gives you ready access to your earnings records, Social Security benefit estimates, and printable Statements. Those who already receive benefits can view their payment history, current status, and manage their benefits.

To open a personal my Social Security account, go to www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount and select “Create an Account” to get started. You must be 18 years old, have a valid Social Security number, U.S. mailing address (or a military address if deployed overseas), and an email address.

In some cases you may have to contact your local Social Security office to open a my Social Security account.

Once registered, you can:

- * Verify your earnings history;
- * View estimated Social Security benefits based on your past earnings;
- * View Social Security and Medicare taxes you've paid over your lifetime,
- * Print your current Social Security Statement; and
- * Request a replacement Social Security card (in some states)

If you're currently getting benefits, you can:

- * View benefit payment information;
- * Change your address and phone number;
- * Start or change electronic payments;
- * Get a replacement Medicare card;
- * Get a replacement 1099 for tax season; and,
- * Get a benefit verification letter.

When you sign up for a personal my Social Security account, we use a secure authentication process to protect the privacy of your identity and your Social Security Statement information. In addition to your unique username and password, you can also further protect your my Social Security account with a secure code texted to your phone every time you log in.

Just one more way Social Security strives to provide customers with peace of mind. Learn more at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount (SOURCE: Social Security Blog Article at <http://blog.socialsecurity.gov/your-social-security-statement-is-now-at-your-fingertips/>)

We Request Your Assistance, Please

Please forward this newsletter to as many friends and family as you know would benefit from the information contained in it. Also, encourage your fellow military retirees and surviving spouses to provide us an email address so we can keep them informed of items of interest and especially those matters that may impact their retired lifestyle.

Thank You!

Address Changes

NOTE TO RETIREES AND ANNUITANTS:

Please **DO NOT** send change of address information to the Retiree Services Section at the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC). The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) is the agency responsible for maintaining and changing correspondence addresses for retired members receiving retired pay and recipients of Survivor Benefit Plan annuities who may receive correspondence (including the *Afterburner*, News for USAF Retired Personnel) from official Air Force agencies. You'll need an email address to make this most effective. See below.

Also

If you have a myPay account with the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) you will receive notices from the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) Retiree Services Section. For example, AFPC just recently updated the *Afterburner*, the AF Retiree Newsletter, and sent out notice and links for access to DFAS myPay account holders.

If you don't have a myPay account, visit the DFAS website at dfas.mil to get your account started. Here is the *Afterburner* link until then:

<http://www.retirees.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-160613-012.pdf>



Attention: A worldwide retiree\veterans events schedule is available at:
<[http://www.hostmtb.org/RADs and Other Retiree-Veterans Events.html](http://www.hostmtb.org/RADs_and_Other_Retiree-Veterans_Events.html).>

The events schedule includes retiree appreciation days (RAD), health fairs, resource fairs, seminars, stand downs, town hall meetings and other events that are of benefit to retirees and veterans.



TRICARE: Enroll in the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program
Source: NAUS Weekly, March 10, 2016

Do you see your dentist at least twice a year for regular checkups? If so, you have an excellent chance of keeping your teeth and gums healthy for a very long time. Because your mouth is the gateway to the rest of your body, maintaining good oral health is important—but even routine dental care can be costly, sometimes averaging several hundred dollars each year. Fortunately, the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) can keep you smiling *and* help you maintain your overall health, all at an affordable cost. Here are just some of the many reasons why more than 1.5 million current enrollees find the TRDP to be such a good value:

- ✓ You get your routine annual services—two cleanings (or *three* with diagnosed Type 1/Type 2 diabetes), two exams and an x-ray—with no cost share when you

see a TRDP network dentist. And, these services don't count towards your annual maximum or deductible!



(TRICARE Retiree Dental Program Continued)

- ✓ Seeing a network dentist network helps you save an average of 22% on your covered dental care. With the TRDP, there is a large nationwide network of dentists from which to choose. To find a network dentist near you, use the “Find a Dentist” link at trdp.org.
- ✓ Network dentists accept the TRDP allowed fee for covered services, so there are no surprise costs beyond your expected cost share and deductible, where applicable.
- ✓ Each enrollee gets a generous \$1,300 annual maximum, a \$1,200 annual dental accident maximum and a \$1,750 lifetime orthodontic maximum.
- ✓ The TRDP coordinates benefits with other dental plans, allowing you to maximize your coverage under both plans.

To enroll in the TRDP, visit trdp.org and choose the method that works best for you. Enrolling online using the Quick Link to the Beneficiary Web Enrollment (BWE) site is quickest, or you can print an application from the TRDP website and mail it to Delta Dental along with your prepayment amount. After enrolling, you're encouraged to register for the online Consumer Toolkit®, where you can verify your program eligibility; review your benefits, coverage levels and remaining maximums and deductibles; check on the status of your processed claims and claim payments; and sign up for paperless (electronic) Explanation of Benefits statements.