



RETIREE NEWSLETTER
Retiree Activities Office (RAO)
Travis AFB, California
Spring 2022

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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. Please advise of any errors, omissions, or suggestions for improving our newsletter.

Your Source of Information

The RAO has a large library of booklets, pamphlets, flyers, brochures and guides offering useful information covering Veteran and Retiree Benefits, Estate Planning, Personal Loss, Consumer Protection, Security of Personal Finances and Credit, and a host of other topics.

Visit our office or email us and let us know what you need. We will provide you with copies of the requested material in office, or if requested, we will email it to you.

You can also access and download many of these guides and documents on our Northern California Facebook group pages through the Travis Air Force Base Retiree Activities Office official Facebook page.

What We Do

Our office is the link between military retirees in our area, Travis active duty units, and DOD, Federal, and State agencies that provide support and assistance to retired military and their families nation-wide.

We provide information and help our retired members, veterans and their families from all Services access the benefits they've earned from their honorable and dedicated service to our Nation and its people.

We are information central for the retired community locally and nation-wide. We provide contact information and referrals for help with retired and SBP annuitant pay issues, TRICARE services, FEDVIP enrollment, ID card renewal appointments, tax assistance, legal assistance, estate planning, and many other issues.

We are not subject matter experts; however, our goal is to get you to the right people that can help you when you need it.



From the Desk of the RAO Director

RAO Spring Closures & Events

The Travis Retiree Activities Office is closed for Federal Holidays and AMC Family Days. Here are our Spring closures through June 19, 2022:

18 April 2022 — Income Tax filing deadline

14— 15 May 2022 (Sat-Sun) Wings over Solano - Travis AFB Open House.

27 May thru 30 May 2022—Memorial Day (27 May is an AMC Family Day)

Medical Retiree Activities Office (MRAO) Volunteers Needed

Ms. Bunny Dominguez, David Grant Medical Center's MRAO Coordinator needs volunteers to assist clinics in the Center.

She lost the services of 30 volunteers due to COVID vaccination and annual training requirements.

She especially needs volunteers to staff David Grant Medical Center's North and South Information Desks.

Volunteers at these desks provide directions for getting to various clinics within the center to patients coming in for medical appointments. They also provide directions to support offices, retail, and recreational facilities to patients and their families that are unfamiliar with the base.

If you have the time and would like to help, you'll need to have the full series of COVID shots plus the booster and attend about 10 hours of computer-based training.

If you want to serve as a volunteer, contact Ms.Dominguez at 707-423-3649 for more information.

2022 Retiree Appreciation Day

We asked the Wing to appoint a project officer to oversee the planning and execution of a live Retiree Appreciation Day event for 2022.

We are shooting for a October 8th event and will keep you posted (world conditions permitting) once the details are firmed up.

Volunteer Staffing

Without great people volunteering their time and efforts, the Air Force Retiree Activities Program would not exist.

We provide military retiree families with the information and help they need to access benefits they earned through their service to this Nation and its people.

If you are interested in volunteering, please give us a call, or email us to express your interest.

The only qualifications are a desire to assist others and a cheerful disposition. We will provide training.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the program. We schedule volunteers for a three-hour tour on the desk (9 am— 12 pm and 12 pm to 3 pm).

Spring & Summer Hours

We have several volunteers taking extended vacations over the spring and summer months. Most of the time, our office is staffed with a volunteer to help you.

At times, volunteers may not be available due to medical appointments and personal reasons.

Please call 707-424-3904/3905 and leave a voicemail with your contact information and a description of your issue. Someone will reach out to you within 24 hours (except weekends). You may also email raotravis@yahoo.com for help.

Defense Accounting and Finance Service

Reserve/Guard Retired Pay Application

Air Force Reservists and Air National Guard members may start receiving retired pay at age 60 or as early as 50 years of age if they meet eligibility requirements for the Reduced Age Retirement.

Receipt of retired pay is not automatic; you have to apply for it!

We received calls from Reservists and Guard members over the last few quarters that didn't receive an application for retired pay from the Air Reserve Personnel Center.

We have the required forms and an instruction sheet for submitting the application we can give you if you don't have a computer or internet service. However, if you have a computer and Internet service it is much easier to do it online through the Virtual Personnel Center (vPC).

To make the process go more smoothly, we recommend you set up a Gray Area Retiree myPay account through Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) and a myPers Account.

The Air Reserve Personnel Center has links to myPers on their website at <https://www.arpc.af.mil/retirement>. The site also features tutorials on completing the forms you need to apply for retired pay and instructions for applying.

We recommend you set up a Gray Area myPay account to ensure DFAS has your current contact information including your current postal address, phone number, and email address.

DFAS needs this information and your current email address so they can keep you apprised of changes in the retired pay system and send you eligibility notices when you approach those eligibility milestones.

If you have problems completing the online or hardcopy reserve retired pay application, call the Total Force Service Center - San Antonio at 1-800-525-0102.

Reservist sending the retired pay application in by mail should mail it using certified mail, return receipt requested. The reservist should get a confirmation of receipt from the Air Reserve Personnel Center.

Reservist & Guard Reduced Age Retirement

Reservist and Guard members that went into Gray Area Retired status after January 29, 2008, could be eligible for retired pay as early as 50 years of age.

The age 60 requirement is reduced by three months for each cumulative 90 days of qualifying active duty service performed.

Qualifying service requirements:

- ◆ Involuntary mobilization
- ◆ Voluntary active duty
- ◆ Medical treatment/medical evaluation for disability purposes or medical studies.

Visit the Air Reserve Personnel Center website at <https://www.arpc.af.mil/retirement> for complete details. If you don't have a computer to access the site, visit our office and we will print out the information you need and give it to you.

News You Can Use

Durable Power of Attorney



We have seen an uptick in clients

(surviving spouses and non-sponsored dependents) coming in for help obtaining tax forms, financial issues, applying for benefits, renewing ID cards, accessing bank accounts to pay bills, and other issues.

We all like to think we'll stay healthy, maintain our faculties, and handle our affairs until we die.

Unfortunately, life sometimes deals us a crummy hand; due to a stroke, illness, or mental decline, we lose the ability to take care of ourselves.

Please don't put your spouse and family members in a bind. Your spouse or a trusted family member needs a durable power of attorney and a medical directive giving them control of finances and medical decisions. The time will come when you may no longer be physically or mentally capable of handling them.

Spouses applying for conservatorship to handle your affairs is an expensive and time-consuming process. I contacted lawyers in Tennessee. They charge \$3000.00 as a retainer fee and bill \$250.00 per hour for legal services.

Conservatorship contested by family or the State can get expensive. The only people that get rich off this proposition are the lawyers and the State.

The Legal Office offers retirees and spouses Power of Attorney and Notary services on a walk-in basis, Monday through Friday, 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.

2022 Tax Season

The filing deadline for getting your Federal and State Income Tax returns in is April 18, 2022, for your 2021 return.

If you're waiting for documents to complete your return and can't get it in by April 18, 2022, you can apply for an automatic six-month extension by filing an IRS Form 4868.

Taxpayers needing no to low-cost assistance in preparing their returns may use the IRS' VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) locator tool to find locations that offer the service in their area.

You can access the VITA locator tool and get other tax preparation guidance at the [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov) website.

According to the locator tool, Travis Credit Union is offering free tax assistance services at:

Travis Credit Union - Vacaville
1 Travis Way
Vacaville, CA 95688
707-469-4317
Volunteer Prepared Taxes

Tue 10:00AM to 3:00PM. Hours available depend on volunteer availability. Wed 10:00AM to 3:00PM Hours available depend on volunteer availability; Sat 10:00AM to 3:00PM Hours available depend on volunteer availability. Call (707) 469-4317 to make an appointment and confirm their schedule as changes do occur.

Support of Non-sponsored Next-of-Kin

Many widowed military retirees and surviving spouses have non-sponsored family members without access to military facilities.

Normally, non-sponsored family members settle affairs of the deceased.

A widowed retiree or a surviving spouse may give their non-sponsored family our contact information for help.

We can be a source of assistance in helping them settle your final affairs with various agencies.

We can email them contact numbers, benefits guides, and final affairs planning checklist. We can take some of the anxiety out of a very stressful period.

ID Card Renewals

ID Card Renewal Confusion

A few retirees and spouses think they need to have their ID Cards coded INDEF for both the card expiration date and the benefits expiration date on the back of the card replaced.

The answer is no! Retirees and dependents don't need to replace cards using the new stock. Cards are still valid and meet REAL ID requirements for gaining access to the base, clearing commercial airport security, and boarding aircraft.

U.S Passports, a U.S. Passport Card, and a California Real ID Driver License meet Real ID Card requirements.

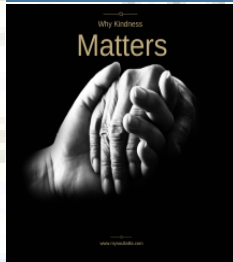
A re-issue is required when your current unexpired card is damaged, delaminated, or your appearance has changed to the point they can't match your face to the photo on the ID.

If you have an actual calendar date for benefits expiration on the back of the card, you'll have to renew the card on your 65th birthday or by the date indicated in the benefits expiration date.

The benefits expiration date on the back of the card indicates a change in DEERS status. Retirees and their spouses need to be enrolled in Medicare Part A & B at age 65 to transfer to TRICARE for Life.



Be Kind!



A few weeks ago, I witnessed an interpersonal encounter between a beleaguered AAFES clerk in the Power Zone

and a customer that was upset AAFES was selling computers that weren't upgradeable to Windows 11.

I understood the customer's frustration as I've been bitten by Microsoft's operating system updates twice within the last 7-years (the last one turned my desktop into an expensive paperweight until I configured it as a Linux Mint system).

The customer complained at the wrong level! A clerk probably had no input on AAFES' buying processes and absolutely no input on what Microsoft does in the way of its operating system changes.

Another thing to consider is AAFES probably contracted to buy those systems months before Microsoft announced and rolled out Windows 11.

A better approach would have been to talk to the Exchange's manager or contact HQ AAFES with your concerns. Reach out to the people that have the power to handle your problem.

The good news for retirees in this situation is Microsoft will provide updates and security patches to Windows 10 through 2025. Check their website for details.

The lesson — make sure you reach out to the people that can do something about your problem.

Is the person providing you service the real cause of your irritation? A little understanding goes a long way.

Review Online Profiles

A recurring issue we get in updates from Defense Finance and Accounting Service concerned bad contact information customers left in their profiles.

Please check your online profiles in DFAS' myPay system, Defense Health Agencies MHS Genesis System, and other military and governmental sites to ensure those are current.

Failure to keep your contact information current (especially email addresses) may lead to you not getting updates and other information.

Recommend checking the beneficiaries you designated to receive Arrears of Pay and SBP annuities to make sure those are current

Most of these sites require you to periodically change your login password. If your current password is due to expire, now might be the time to update it to ensure you have secure and timely access to your information.

Day Tripping & Holiday Safety

Wings over Solano



Travis Air Force Base will host the Wings Over Solano Open House on 14 and 15 May 2022 between the hours of 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM (Saturday and Sunday).

The hospital gate will open at 9:00 A.M. for attendee parking.

Please check the Travis.AFB.mil/Air Show website for details.

We checked with 60 AMW/PA to see if photography of aerial demonstrations will be allowed and they indicated it would.

If you want to try your hand at photographing aircraft in flight, this is a great opportunity. I know I will.

See you there!

Grizzly Island Wildlife Area Reopens



Grizzly Island Wildlife Area reopened mid-February after Elk and Duck season ended.

It's a great way to spend the day if you like to hike, fish, go birding, or if you're a novice wildlife photographer.

With gas prices over the roof, this is an affordable alternative to driving up to Sonoma County, or Lake Tahoe if you need to scale back your trips due to travel costs and distances.

The great thing about visiting is there are no entry or parking fees (yet).

To get there, take Sunset Avenue/Grizzly Island Road to the bridge and Solano County boat launch (about 15 miles from Suisun).

Make a right-and turn on to the bridge and continue to the Ranger Station.

At the Ranger Station, pull into the parking lot in front of the kiosk, sign in, and pickup a map and a self-guided tour printout.

The guide and maps give you information on authorized parking, hiking and wildlife viewing areas

When you leave, stop at the Ranger Station and sign out.

Grizzly Island is open from sunrise to sunset.

Grizzly Island will only be open to Elk and Duck hunters August 2022 through Mid-February 2023.

Take water, snacks, sun screen, and insect repellent with you. There are portable toilets at the Ranger Station.

Enjoy your visit and packout your trash when you leave.

Spring Safety



The weather is getting warmer and Memorial Day is just around the corner.

It's barbeque season again! Now is the time to get the old grill cleaned up and perform a safety inspection of the hoses and tank.

Propane tanks are safe to use for five years. Check the date stamped into the carrying handle. If the date reflected has passed, purchase a new propane tank for your grill.

If the tank is still serviceable, coat the connections and rubber gas supply lines with soapy water.

Turn on the gas supply valve and look for leaks. If you see air bubbles popping up, replace the tank or the hoses if that's where the leak is occurring.

When you barbeque, observe safe meat handling (especially with chicken) to prevent contamination, food poisoning, or exposure to Salmonella.

Keep a meat thermometer handy to check the internal heat of the meat to insure its cooked and maintained at a safe temperature.

Salads containing mayonnaise or eggs should be kept in the refrigerator until served and eaten.

Enjoy the weather, good company, and stay safe and healthy!