



## **RETIREE NEWSLETTER**

**Retiree Activities Office (RAO)**

**Travis AFB, California**

**Summer 2023**

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## ***Disclaimer***

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## ***Acknowledgement***

Articles appearing in this newsletter are compiled from Department of Defense, Department of the Air Force, local sources, other installation RAO newsletters, and other U.S. 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***

#### **CLOSURES**

The Travis Retiree Activities Office is closed for Federal Holidays and AMC Family Days.

Summer 2023 Closures:

- ◆ AMC Family Day & Independence Day — Monday, 1 July 2023 through Tuesday, 4 July 2023
- ◆ Recognition Ceremony— Honoree : 6 July 2023 — Ms. Bunny Dominguez, MRAO Coordinator, David Grant Medical Center, Commander's Conference Room
- ◆ Friday, 1 September 2023 through Labor Day, 4 September 2023

### ***Volunteer Programs***

The Travis Retiree Activities Office and David Grant Medical Center's Medical Retiree Activities Office programs would not function without a cadre of active volunteers! Volunteer shortages affect our ability to provide services to the local retiree community.

We assist and provide services to military retirees, family members, and surviving spouses. Medical Center volunteers work the Pharmacy customer service windows, provide patients with directions to various clinics inside David Grant Medical Center, provide Therapy Dog Services, shuttle medical records from the records section to the clinics and assist the active-duty medical staff.

The Retiree Activities Office in Bldg. 381 assists military retirees, veterans, and their families in making ID Card renewal appointments, reserve, and guard members in applying for retired pay, estate planning, and retiree and annuitant pay issues. We provide referrals and guidance in accessing earned benefits and services.

We are in the process of re-vitalizing both programs as we have experienced a post pandemic drop in the number of active volunteers in the program. If you have three to six hours a week you can spare, please consider serving as a volunteer.

# Volunteering

## Retiree Activities Office Volunteer Programs

Retiree Activity Offices at Travis, McClellan and David Grant Medical Center staffing levels have taken a big hit due to losses caused by the receding COVID pandemic, medical issues, and deaths.

In the Travis and McClellan RAOs, the average volunteer age is about 77 years. The situation is also true of the Medical Retiree Activities Office at David Grant Medical Center.

The RAOs at Travis and McClellan assist local retirees, their spouses, and surviving spouses with any number of issues affecting their receipt of earned benefits. Issues we address include retired and annuitant pay issues, reporting the deaths of retirees or annuitants, estate planning, referrals for VA benefits, access to local social service agencies, referrals for housing, fraud prevention, and identify theft.

MRAO volunteers augment clinical staff taking on limited duties that free up active-duty hospital personnel to provide medical care to patients coming in for treatment.

This includes volunteers staffing the North and South Information Desks, shuttling medical records between the Records Section and clinics for patients coming in for appointments.

Volunteers staff the customer service windows at the BX Pharmacy and they provide therapy dog services to active duty and retiree family members in inpatient status.

David Grant Medical Center's MRAO program has a critical need for volunteers.

For these volunteer programs to survive and continue providing services, the programs need a continual influx of people willing to give their time, skills, and effort as volunteers.

The Travis RAO has application packets available for David Grant Medical Center's MRAO program.

If you can spare three to six hours a week to serve

as a volunteer and you carry a current DOD/Military ID Card, please call us at 707-424-3904/3905. You may also visit our office in Building 381. We are located at Travis in the old hospital. Our office is directly across from the Pass and ID office in Room E118 on the first floor.

There are many volunteer opportunities on Base; we look forward to discussing those with you.

## 2023 Retiree Appreciation Day

We submitted Wing Strategic Calendar Request and TQT forms to the Wing Commander's Action Group requesting the appointment of a Project Officer and NCO and the assembly of a planning committee to set up the event.

We requested the RAD be held on a Saturday so working age military retirees and their partners can attend.

We proposed the event be held either the 21st or 28th of October 2023 between the hours of 9:00 and 15:00.

We will provide additional information in the Fall Newsletter and through email and on our RAO Facebook page as it becomes available.



## Fair Winds, smooth sailing & good fortune!

Ms. Bunny Dominguez, David Grant Medical Center's Medical Retiree Activities Office (MRAO) Coordinator is leaving us. Ms. Dominguez served 54 years as a volunteer. She held the coordinator position for the past 13

years.

Bunny managed a staff that fluctuated between 30 to 100 volunteers over the course of her years in the position and got the program up and running again post-COVID.

Bunny's biggest strengths are her devotion to the volunteer program and looking out for her people. Her actions epitomize the Air Force Retiree Services Program's moto "Still serving!"



## Reserve/Guard Retired Pay Applications & ID Card Renewals

### Grey Area Reserve & Guard Retirement Pay Applications

Effective 1 May 2023, the Air Reserve Personnel Center ported the online reserve and guard retirement pay application from myPers to myFSS/myVector.

If you are a grey area reservist or guard member nearing eligibility to receive retired pay, you will need to set up log in credentials on the myFSS website to access and complete the application for reserve or guard retirement pay.

Grey area reservists and guard members are normally eligible to receive retired pay at age 60 or as early as 55 years of age if they activated and deployed overseas in support of combat operations. The age 60 eligibility requirement is reduced 90 days for each three months of activated status; under this condition the minimum retirement pay eligibility age is no lower than 55 years of age.

Log in credentials need to be set up at the myFSS website. Reservists and Guard members can access the site by typing myFSS in a web browser's search box.

Grey area reservists and guard members that need more details about the change may visit the Air Force Retiree Services' website at [Air Force Retiree Services](https://www.retirees.af.mil/) <https://www.retirees.af.mil/> > Home (af.mil). Click on the News tab at the top of their page. We recently checked the site and the article detailing the change was the first listed.

renew unexpired ID cards issued on the new, solid plastic card stock.

DOD expects to have all expired retired military/family member ID Cards replaced by the new card by 2026.

If you have the old military retire ID card bearing indefinite as the expiration date, you may continue to use it.

Those cards only need to be replaced when they are damaged, delaminated, stolen, or lost. However, if you want the new card, you may still go in as a walk in or make a renewal appointment through the 60 FSS' website,

60 FSS Pass and ID has a self-service kiosk outside their section where you can scan in and submit your application and support documents at the kiosk.

If there are no issues with the application, you should be able to pick up your ID cards in 7 to 10 business days.

If you have questions, enter 60 FSS in your internet browser's search box. Their link should be the first entry in the search list. Click on the DEERS, ID Cards, CAC link. That will get you to the appointment scheduler and FAQ section.

### ID Card Renewals



60 FSS Pass and ID services walk-ins Monday through Friday from 07:30 to 14:00. They are closed the third Thursday of each month for a training day.

Military Retirees and their immediate family members do not need to



### Travis Commissary— Special Hours

Independence Day, Tuesday July 4th - 9:00— 17:00

Labor Day, Monday, September 11 — 9:00—1700.

Sidewalk Sale—September 2023, exact date to be determined.

# DFAS Updates

## Protect Your Identity



DFAS reminds myPay users that its customer service representatives do not make unsolicited calls regarding debt or payment errors. Additionally, its representatives do not ask for payments via phone calls or using online peer-to-peer money transfers.

If you get a call from someone saying they represent DFAS, you can verify the call's legitimacy by calling 1-888-332-3411.

Unfortunately, phishing expeditions are made through various email clients. In the RAO's email box, we delete about five emails a week from scammers trying to obtain personal identity information.

Clicking on poisoned internet links can often send a user to a site posing as an official government or banking website.

These spoofed sites will usually generate messages asking users to confirm their personal information with an end goal of stealing identities.

Here are tips that can help keep your online financial transactions secure.

- ◆ Don't use public WIFI hotspots.
- ◆ Do use a security screen on your laptop, or avoid
- ◆ using it when surrounded by other people.
- ◆ Do ensure you have good antivirus and malware detection and prevention software installed on your computing devices and use it at least weekly.
- ◆ When on internet connections to financial institutions, use VPN software and have your system's firewall activated.
- ◆ Delete emails from people you don't know or organizations you haven't heard of or have done business with.
- ◆ Stay off websites that would embarrass your mother or sisters.
- ◆ Think long and hard when clicking on links in text generated on your cell phone or computer in response to warnings about virus infections, delinquent taxes, unpaid debts, etc.
- ◆ Don't panic if your browser generates messages indicating your system has been hacked or infected by malware and accompanied by a phone number or link to call or use to fix the issue. Close the browser and re-open it. These are phishing expeditions.
- ◆ To prevent the aforementioned, refer to the don't embarrass your Mom bullet.
- ◆ Keep your login credentials secure, locked up and private.



# Survivor Benefit Program & Home Security

## 2023 Special Open Enrollment Season



Please note there are six months left to enroll in the SBP Program during this special enrollment season.

This open enrollment season will end on 1 January 2024. It is open to military retirees, who with the concurrence of their spouses, declined coverage when they retired. Current enrollees and their spouses may disenroll at this time if they choose.

Retirees that declined coverage at retirement date and who decide to enroll during open season are required to back pay SBP premiums from their retirement date until the date coverage is established at open season enrollment and there are interest penalties involved.

Retirees that are currently covered who decide to disenroll, will not get premiums refunded and will still be required to pay through the date of disenrollment.

Open season enrollment may be affordable if a retiree has been retired for five years or less (our opinion). If you want to get a breakdown of costs you can submit a letter of intent to enroll to DFAS and they'll provide a breakout of costs.

This gives retirees an opportunity to review the projected expense and decide whether or not it is in their families' financial interest to enroll in the program. Retirees have 30 days to make a final enrollment decision.

Back due premiums and interest have to be paid upon enrollment, or over the next 12 months in equal installments.

If you need additional information regarding open season, please visit the DFAS website and click on the Retirement and Annuitants tab at the top of the page.

The second link on the Retirement and Annuitants page sends you to a detailed explanation of the special open season.

You may also call Mr. Fred Salas, Travis Air Force Base Casualty Assistance Representative and SBP Counselor for additional information and answers to your questions. His telephone number is 707-424-2106.



## SECURE YOUR HOME DURING VACATION

What are some of the steps you can take to keep unwanted guests from sacking your home while on vacation?

- ◆ Contact the Post Office and stop mail deliveries during your vacation.
- ◆ Stop newspaper deliveries during your vacation dates.
- ◆ Install wooden or metal dowels in your window tracks.
- ◆ Install timed smart light and appliance switches in your home that turn on lights, televisions, and audio equipment at random to create the illusion someone is home.
- ◆ If on an extended trip, hire a landscaper to mow your lawn.
- ◆ Keep shrubs, trees, and decorative plants trimmed away from your windows and entrances.
- ◆ Keep your vacation plans to yourself (except for a trusted friend or family member that checks on your property while you're away).
- ◆ Check your washing machine hoses and connections and replace hoses if needed; turn off the water to the washer before you leave to prevent water damage.
- ◆ Install a home security camera system and periodically check it while out.
- ◆ Save your local police department's phone number on your phone so you can call them if something shows up amiss.



# Summer Community Events

## Local Fun Stuff



Is your budget tight? Insufficient money for travel? Need an activity to deal with the blahs of summer?

Sometimes the best activities are available right in front of you.

The cities of Fairfield, Vacaville, Dixon and Winters sponsor a series of outdoor concerts and events during the summer months. The events are local and do not entail expensive travel or overnight hotel stays.

If you want to know what is available, most cities publish an events guide for each of the seasons. They also host web pages that list event schedules, dates, locations, and cost.

If you get a local community events guide, we encourage you to review it. You just might find an event that meets your needs and that protects your wallet.

## Fairfield/Suisun Summer Events

Fairfield Farmers Market occurs every Thursday. It operates from 3 PM to 7 PM and it will run through September 24th. The location is 600 Texas Street in Fairfield.

Fairfield Summer Music Series schedule:

- 23 June— Papa Joe and the New Deal
- 14 July — Country Greens
- 28 July — Rendishun
- 11 August— Project 4
- 28 August — L.J. Bryant & Friends

8 Sep — Country Greens

The music starts at 6 PM and ends at 9 PM. See City of Fairfield or the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce websites for details

Suisun City 4th of July event happens on the waterfront and runs from 11 AM until 9:00 PM. The event hosts vendors and features live music, amusement rides, and community acts. See the flyer posted on the Suisun City website.

Dinners and Movies in the Park, Heritage Park, Suisun:

30 Jun—Minions: The Rise of Gru

7 Jul—Sonic the Hedgehog 2

14 Jul—Lightyear

21 Jul—Back to the Future

28 Jul—DC League of Superpets

Music on the Waterfront, Harbor Plaza Stage, Suisun

8 Jul — Time Bandits

9 Jul— Jazz on the Waterfront

\*\*Information obtained through Fairfield, Suisun, and Vacaville city websites.

## City of Vacaville Summer Events

The Creekwalk Music Series runs from 16 June through 11 August. The concerts start at 6:30 PM and run until 9:30 PM in Andrews Park.

A concert is scheduled on 4 July at the Creekwalk featuring Crossman Connection.

# Leisure Activities and Hobbies



A key to living a rich, active, and healthy life in the golden years is involvement in social activities that engage us mentally, socially, physically, and spiritually.

If you are in a club, community, or social group you are enthusiastic about, please share it with us and we'll post it to our newsletter and Facebook page.

Now let's get the ball rolling! If you are a photo bug, there is a group of photographers that meets in Round Table Pizza next to Nugget located at the intersection of Brown's Valley Road and Montevista Avenue in Vacaville.

The group is called LightWriters. The purpose of the group is to swap photography and camera gear tips, socialize, and have fun.

Currently, there are no dues involved. The group sponsors monthly photography challenges, photography education presentations, field trips, and it also sponsors an annual photography exhibition and contest at the Vacaville Art Gallery.

Members also give presentations about overseas trips to share photos taken at all points East and West.

The group currently meets on the first Wednesday of each month. Members that want to eat gather at 6:30 PM for food and beverage (at their own expense). The membership meeting starts at 7 PM sharp.

If this group sounds up your alley, please visit a session, socialize, and meet great people.

## Vacation/Daycation Travel and Lodging Resources

ITT Ticket and Travel Office/Outdoor Recreation:

Telephone 707-424-565.

Website: <https://travisfss.com/odr/itt>

### AMC Space A travel Site:

<https://www.amc.af.mil/AMC-Travel-Site/AMC-Space-Available-Travel-Page>

Travis AFB Passenger Space A

Telephone: (707) 424-5774 / 1854

Email: 60aps.SpaceA@us.af.mil

### Air Force Lodging (Air Force Inns): WebsAir Force Inns:

[Air Force Inns \(dodlodging.net\)](http://www.dodlodging.net)

## Fees and Travel Expenses

Space A travel and lodging are not guaranteed. Travelers must have enough funds to defray air travel and lodging costs in the event lodging and military air travel are not available.

There are fees involved when catching a hop on a military flight. Here's the current fee structure for Space A Travel:

International Head Tax Fees: \$19.70

Domestic Travel to and from Alaska & Hawaii: \$9.90

Domestic Travel within CONUS—\$4.50

Federal Inspection and Customs Usage Fees (returning from an international trip) \$16.95

We recommend checking the AMC Space A Travel page periodically for changes that may occur.