



Summer 2025 RETIREE NEWSLETTER

Retiree Activities Office (RAO)

Travis AFB, California

**Interim Director,
Travis AFB Retiree Activities Office
707-424-3904/3905
raotravis@yahoo.com**

**Medical RAO Coordinator,
David Grant USAF Medical Center
707-423-3840**

**Interim Director,
McClellan Park Satellite Retiree Activities Office
916-640-8445/8446 raomcclellan@yahoo.com**

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DISCLAIMER

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

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RAO Services

The Travis Retiree Activities Office and David Grant USAF 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 are rebuilding volunteer staffing. If you have three to six hours a week you can spare, please consider serving as a volunteer.

We 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 USAF Medical Center, provide comfort dog services, shuttle medical records from the records section to the clinics, and help the active-duty medical staff.

The Retiree Activities Office in Bldg. 381 assist 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 look forward to discussing volunteer opportunities with interested candidates.

Call for Volunteers

DGMC Medical Appointment Availability



We are losing a few volunteers over the summer due to moves out of the state, health-related issues, and other concerns.

Unless we can bring more people on board, we have about four people available during the summer months to help military retirees and their families with their issues.

If you are a military retiree, sponsored spouse, a self-sponsored SBP annuitant spouse, or a veteran with access to the base and you have three to six hours a week you can spare, we can really use your help.

The program cannot continue to operate unless there are folks willing to donate their time to serve.

We are looking for volunteers that have good people, research, and computer skills. If you can use a web browser (Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, and Yahoo Mail) that's a plus.

Please call 707- 424-3904/3905 for more information.

Military Retirees and their dependents may experience delays in getting medical appointments at David Grant Medical Center this summer.

Increased operations tempo, deployments, military exercises will greatly effect the availability of timely appointment slots.



RAO CLOSURES AND EVENTS

The Travis Retiree Activities Office is closed on Federal Holidays and during Volunteer Staffing shortages

Closures

Juneteenth — 19 June 2025

Independence Day – Friday, 4 July 2025

Labor Day – Monday, 1 September 2025

LOCAL EVENTS

City of Fairfield – Independence Day Parade 4 July 2025 – Starts 10:00 AM downtown.

City of Vacaville – Free 4th of July Concert and Fireworks display Andrews Park.



Fairfield will hold its annual 4th of July Parade downtown on Friday, 4 July starting at 10:00 am.

The event will feature bands, floats, vehicle clubs, military units, novelty acts, and more.

Visit the City of Fairfield's official website at <http://www.fairfield.ca.gov/> for updates and additional information

The City of Vacaville will host a free 4th of July Concert and Fireworks Display on Friday, 4 July 2025 starting at 6:30 pm at Andrews Park.

subject to cancellation due to high winds and Red Flag warnings. Please check the City of Vacaville's official website's events calendar for more information and updates.

Please take some time to reflect on the patriots that came before us that pledged their blood, lives, property, and fortunes so that we can live free today.

Have a safe and enjoyable Independence Day holiday.

CY 2024 TAX SEASON POSTMORTEM

myPay Logins

This year, we had an influx of retirees and spouses that waited three weeks or less before the April 15th filing deadline for help.

Some of the major problems included not receiving their form 1099-R report of pension income/survivor benefit annuities, changeover of banking accounts, change of addresses, divorce (i.e. suspension of SBP premium payments).

Many of the people we helped had not logged into their myPay accounts for months, nor had they downloaded copies of their Retiree Account Statements or SBP Annuity Statements.

In most cases, they were unable to reset their account passwords to access the forms they needed to complete and file their tax returns. Additionally, when they called the DFAS customer service number, they were unable to answer their security questions, and the customer service representatives terminated their calls.

What can a retiree or spouse do to take stress and frustration out of this situation? We recommend looking at your circumstances in July of each year. If you know your firm new address when tax time rolls around, that's the time to think about updating that address in your retiree pay account. If you send in any change to your account in by mail to DFAS, it will take them 45 – 60 days to make the change according to the information on their website.

If you have a myPay account setup, login to it once a month and download your Retiree Account Statement. The Defense Accounting and Finance Service requires users to change their passwords every 150 days. Passwords must be 9 to 15 characters long and must consist of lower- and upper-case alphabetic characters. They must also include.

numeric and special characters. Passwords must not be repeats of the previous five passwords used.

If a user forgets their password, he/she can reset his/her password using the forgot login ID/Password link located below the login prompts on the myPay website.

If you have difficulties resetting your user account passwords, come in and see us. If we can't help you, we will get you to the Trusted Agents over at the Comptroller's office for assistance.

For the computer and Internet phobic, you still have the option of using snail mail to make changes to your retiree pay account or survivor benefit accounts.

Visit our office and we will provide you with the forms, instructions and mailing addresses. We recommend using certified mail return receipt requested. Be prepared to wait 45 to 60 days to see the changes go into effect.

Depending on individual circumstances, we encourage everyone that can financially handle it to invest in an internet capable laptop or tablet device.

YouTube features a lot of free tutorials that can guide you through the basics, so you don't always have to pay for expensive computer classes. You can watch those on a computer at your public library.

If your budget won't allow it, your public library often has terminal available at no cost.

Federal, State, and local governments are moving more information and services online. There is a lot less personal service, so a lot of the knowledge, research, and skull work we need to function is up to us.

DEFENSE ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE SERVICE CALLS TO CUSTOMER SERVICE



Retirees and SBP Annuitants, calling the Defense Accounting and Finance Service (DFAS) for help should have these documents on hand before the call.

- Retirement Pay Account Statement.
- Copy of Retirement Orders
- DD Form 214
- SBP Annuity Payment Statement.

Why do you need to have these available? Because, the customer service representative will ask you a series of questions to verify your identity.

They may ask you what your actual retirement date was. Who you have allotments going to, who is receiving them, and what the amount of those allotments are? They may also ask you any number of questions about your pay account.

This might also include answers to challenge questions you set up for your myPay account if you set up one. If you answer any of their questions incorrectly, they will normally end the phone call and lock you out of your account for 24 hours.

Military retirees and self-sponsored SBP annuitants that want to effect changes

by mail may send those request forms to the following addresses:

For changes to Military Retiree Pay Accounts mail change request to:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Retired Pay
8899 E. 56th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46249-1200

For changes to SBP Annuitant Accounts mail change forms to:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Annuitant Pay
8899 E. 56th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46249-1200

We recommend you check the Retiree/Annuitants section of the DFAS website to see what forms you need to send in to make a change or call our office for help.

All written requests for help must include requesters' full name, day time phone number, social security number, and signature. We recommend mailers send correspondence by certified mail return receipt requested.

REAL ID COMPLIANCE



The Next Generation Identification Card replacing the old blue and salmon colored DD form 2 is Real ID compliant.

If it has not reached its expiration date it gives you access to military installations, government buildings and facilities, airports, and air travel within the United States.

For overseas travel, you will still need a U.S. Passport and possibly visas depending on the country you are traveling to. If you plan on overseas travel, please check with the country's consulate to find out what the entry and vaccination requirements are before booking your travel.

Airline customer service representatives can't deny the Real ID validity of the new Next Generation ID Card. They can't use that as a reason to deny a passenger boarding.

They can deny boarding if they suspect you are drunk or under the influence of drugs. They may also deny boarding if you are unruly or abusive to their staff and other passengers.

If you are overbooked, they can deny you boarding.

Overbooked passengers are normally offered accommodations or incentives for losing their seats. To avoid this, it's wise to check in as early as possible.

We recommend military retirees and dependents who possess the old blue and salmon colored DD Form 2 ID Cards replace them quickly as they are being phased out by October. This will prevent a last minute rush on the 60th and 349th FSS Customer Service ID DEERS and ID Card Offices.

RELATIVES VISITING

Do you have family members coming for a visit this summer? Do you plan to take them out to Travis to see the Air Museum, or perhaps have lunch at the Food Court in the BX or the Delta Breeze?

If they are entering the base they will need to possess a Real ID compliant form of identification. This could include:

- U.S. Passport
- U.S. Passport Card
- Enhanced State Driver's License
- Permanent Resident Card
- Veteran Health Identification Card

This is just a partial list from the TSA website. Please call the Travis AFB Visitors Center at 707-424-1462 for more information.

Courtesy and the Golden Rule

This is just a general observation on my part. Depending on how you view things, it may hold water, or it may not.

Just looking around the area and on the installation, I've observed instances where there seems to be little regard for the community at large or other people.

To cite a specific example of this, the fuel pumps at the Travis Shoppette are a prime example of this.

On any given day, nearly half of the pumps are out of order. Yet, some customers insist on leaving their vehicles after fueling parked at the operative pumps. Afterwards, they go inside the Shopette to shop while other people are waiting to fuel up their vehicles.

The right thing to do is pull away from the pump, park in one of the other Shoppette parking spots so other people can fuel up and get on with their business.

Last week an airman left his pristine orange colored Ford Mustang with black racing stripes parked at the pump for over 20 minutes. I loved the nice chrome silver medallion on the trunk (Nice touch!) while he went in to the Shoppette or Popeye's to get something to eat.

At the time, I waited for the pump to clear. I had no idea who the Mustang belonged to, or how long the Mustang was going to sit there.

When the Airman did show up, I did notice he was dressed sharp as a tack, haircut was high and tight, and he was

still working on the remnants of his lunch (needed to work on the courtesy thing though).

I hoped he had fueled his car before he left it. No dice – he hadn't fueled it! So, he wasted another five to seven minutes of my time (and probably three other people's time who could have fueled up) while he was munching away.

Is he the only person I've seen to do this? No! I've seen a number of retirees do it on the weekends when I've come out to take care of errands. So, I won't hold this over the youth of Athens.

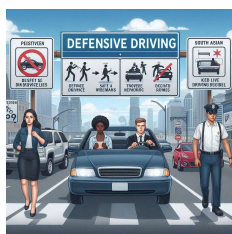
Some of the other things I've observed are fast food containers and beverage cups dumped in the parking lots and on local streets both on and off base.

Next to dumping trash, people's failure to clean up their pets' scats off sidewalks and their neighbors' lawns rank high on this list of discourtesy.

Most of us have trash pickup service, so please think before you act. Take it home with you and dispose of it properly. It's your community.

So do the right thing and practice the Golden Rule. Think about how your small actions affect others and reflect on your community.

Road Safety – Defensive Driving



Stating the obvious, there's a lot of road work going on in the Bay Area on I-80 and Highway 50.

Unfortunately, a lot of people are in a rush to get to their driving destinations and discarding good driving habits and practices in the rush.

Over the next few months, drivers need to practice good defensive driving techniques more than ever.

Here are some things we've notice over the last few weeks driving between our area, San Francisco and Sacramento.

Drivers tailgating at high speeds, weaving in and out of traffic at high speeds, abrupt changing of traffic lanes without using turn signals. Driving at speeds well in excess of posted speed limits in road construction zones.

Drivers making long trips should ensure they are well rested and alert before getting behind the steering wheel.

Don't tailgate other drivers regardless of speed, it may take longer to stop your car than you think. Practice the three second rule. If your car can reach the bumper of the car in front of you in less than three seconds you are driving too close.

If you have to make a call on your cell phone, don't do it while you're driving.

Drive at a speed that keeps up with the flow of traffic, but don't go crazy. If you need to change lanes, use your turn signals; the drivers behind you aren't mind readers.

If you take prescription medications, be cognizant of the side effects. You can still be cited for a DUI for drugs that make you drowsy. Hand the keys to your significant other, a friend, or family member

Slow down for the cone zone when road crews are working. We want those folks to get home safe and in one piece.

Also, don't pass on the right to get ahead of traffic. Chances are pretty good you will either cause an accident or make a few drivers really angry in the process.

Avoid road rage confrontations. Let them rant and go. It's better you get home safe to your family and friends instead of us reading an obituary in the morning paper.

Be safe, have fun, and enjoy your summer.

Password Books

The biggest issue for many of the retirees and surviving spouses coming for help centers around forgotten user login credentials for myPay, MHS Genesis, Social Security, Medicare, MilConnect, and the IRS.

There's an easy way to solve this issue and keep track of password changes. You don't necessarily need to be a Microsoft Office or Google Docs user to set up electronic documents to track your login IDs and passwords.

You can purchase password books through any number of office supply chains. The books are set up like the address and telephone books we used to keep when we all used (don't laugh) landlines. The pages are tabbed alphabetically.

The books are not expensive, and you don't need to be a touch typist to maintain them.

If you decide to go through this method, we'd recommend you enter your passwords in pencil as most of the government sites will require you to change your passwords every six months or so.

We recommend you keep the books secured in a fireproof safe and stored away from prying eyes. You don't want to give anyone the keys to the kingdom.

Life After Military Service

Most of us have been around this block ages ago, but for the newbies there are many things to consider.

Those of you recently retired have been through the Transition Assistance Program briefings. You are thinking about where you're going to put down roots. What are you going to do for a living? Are you going to pursue higher education?

Before making final decisions, we would recommend doing a bit of homework before jumping in feet first.

When looking for a place to settle down, what's its cultural climate?

How expensive is it to live there? Are there good social support facilities available there for you and your family (if you have one). Do the values of that community and area mesh with yours? Will you and your family be happy there?

What is the tax structure like? If the taxes are high, does the community get a good return on the tax dollars paid into the public coffers? If not, you might want to consider another location.

Remote areas may look great for those that value peace and tranquility. But it comes with a price. That price often entails lack of quick access to government, medical, and information services we take for granted in urban and metropolitan areas. So, choose wisely.