



RETIREE NEWSLETTER
Retiree Activities Office (RAO)
Travis AFB, California
Fall –2024

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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.

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In this issue

RAO Director Updates.....	Pg 3
Volunteer Recruiting & Tidbits.....	Pg 4
Veterans' Events/Commissary.....	Pg 5
Local Events/Space A Travel.....	Pg 6
Retired Pay Account Review.....	Pg 7
Missing Record of Military Service?..	Pg 8
Holiday Shopping Safety.....	Pg 9
Retiree Activities Office Info.....	Pg 9



From the Desk of the RAO Director

2024 Fall Closures & Events

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

Closures

Columbus Day — 11 October through 14 October 2024

Veterans Day — 8 November through 11 November 2024

Thanksgiving — 28 November through 29 November 2024

Christmas — 25 December through 26 December 2024

Events

Travis AFB Military Retiree Appreciation Day: 5 October 2024

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Resource Fair: 8 November 2024 Travis Main Exchange

FEDVIP Open Season: 11 November through 9 December 2024

Dixon CA Veterans Stand Down: 13 November 2024

Volunteer Programs

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 supply 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 help and supply 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, supply 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 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 look forward to discussing volunteer opportunities with interested candidates.

Volunteer Recruiting & Tidbits

Volunteers Needed

Many organizations on base need additional volunteers to help provide services and information to active-duty families, military retirees, and disabled veterans.

Here are key points of contact if you are interested in serving as a volunteer and you have three to six hours of free time to spare:

Director, Travis Retiree Activities Office

Phone: 707-424-3904/3905

Email: raotravis@yahoo.com

David Grant USAF Medical Center

Volunteer Coordinator

Phone: 707-423-3840

Travis AFB Aviation Museum

Volunteer Docent

Phone: 707-424-8180

Travis AFB

Military Family Readiness Center

Volunteer Resources Coordinator

Phone: 707-424-2486

Please note that volunteer applicants need to have a current DOD ID card granting entry to Travis AFB.

If you need more information or details about serving as a volunteer, please call any of the contacts listed above.

FEDVIP Open Season

. FEDVIP Open Season for calendar year 2025 begins on 11 November 2024 and ends 9 December 2024.

Retirees and retiree families needing dental and vision insurance or enrollees unsatisfied with their current vision and dental insurance have the opportunity to change or enroll with a FEDVIP insurance carrier during this period.

We recommend visiting the BENEFEDS website at <https://www.benefeds.com> for more information.

The BENEFEDS website features tools that enable retirees to review plans and premiums.

These tools help enrollees find a plan that offers them the services they need at a price that fits their household budgets.

Vision insurance and dental insurance are priced separately, so retirees will have to run the tool twice.

When open season closes on 9 December 2024, retirees won't be able to enroll in a vision and dental insurance plan through FEDVIP until November 2024.

The Office of Personnel Management oversees the FEDVIP program. FEDVIP isn't managed by TRICARE.

Travis AFB

Military Retiree Appreciation Day



The 60th AMW is hosting the annual Military Retiree Appreciation Day event on 5 October 2024.

The event will be held at the Travis Aviation Museum; it starts at 08:00 am

and ends at 3 pm.

The event will feature briefings given by base units and agencies, military service organizations, veterans service organizations, and other entities about issues, services, and changes that affect military retirees and their families.

The Band of the Golden West is providing a guitarist to play background music during event registration and sign in. Door prizes will be given out during the event.

All military retirees and their sponsored family members (from all service branches), surviving spouses, and disability rated veterans with access to Travis Air Force Base are encouraged to attend.

Veterans Events/Commissary Corner

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Resource Fair



The Air Force Sergeant's Association in collaboration with the American Legion and the Travis Retiree Activities Office will hold a Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Resource Fair on 8 November 2024.

The resource fair will be held in front of the Travis AFB Main Exchange (AAFES) and will run from 10 am until 6 pm.

Dixon, CA North Bay Veterans Stand Down

The annual North Bay Veterans' Stand Down will be held at the Dixon May Fair grounds on 13 November 2024.

Healthcare, mental health, employment, and housing resources will be available and are targeted at homeless and unemployed veterans.

Military retirees and veterans that want to volunteer to help with the event may call 707-365-5073 or email info@nbstanddown.org.



2024 Veterans Day Events & Ceremonies

Currently, Fairfield, Vacaville, and Dixon have not posted updates on their websites about Veterans Day events hosted by their cities.

Information will probably be available in October when their fall activities guides are mailed out.

For updates, the event schedules can be accessed at the following websites:

<https://visitfairfield.com/>
<https://downtownvacaville.com/>
<https://dixonmayfair.com/>

Information about veterans' events at the Greater Sacramento Valley National Veterans Cemetery can be accessed at: <https://www.cem.va/cems/nchp/sacramento.asp>.

If you are looking for activities during the fall and national holidays, these are good options to use that are local.

Retirees and Veterans who don't have access to the Internet or email, may call us at 707-424-3904/3905

Travis AFB Commissary Fall Operating Hour Changes

- ♦ Labor Day—2 Sep 2024: 9am-5pm
- ♦ Indigenous Peoples Day-14 Oct 2023: 9am-5pm
- ♦ Veterans' Day-11 Nov 2024: 9am-5pm
- ♦ Christmas Eve-24 Dec 2024: 9am-4pm
- ♦ Christmas Day-25 Dec 2024: Closed
- ♦ New Years Day-1 Jan 2025: Closed

A sidewalk sale will be held 19-22 Sep 2024.

Check the Defense Commissary website at <https://corp.commissaries.com/> for sales flyers and services available at the Travis Commissary.

*Information obtained through DECA Website.

Local Events/Space Available Travel

Pumpkin Patch Festival



The Western Railroad Museum is holding a Pumpkin Patch Festival on Saturday, October 12th, 2024. The festival will run on weekends through the end of November.

The Western Railroad Museum is located at 5848 State Highway 12 in Suisun City, Ca.

The event will feature a train ride through Gum Grove Farm for the best pumpkin patch in the area.

Food and family activities will be available. The event promises fun for all.

This event is not sponsored by the cities of Fairfield and Suisun City. See <https://visitfairfield.com> for more information.

Home and Garden Show

Are you looking for ideas to spruce up your home and landscaping? There's a Home and Garden Show scheduled on the 21st and 22nd of December in the City of Dixon at the Dixon May Fair Grounds.

The event will start at 8 am and end at 4 pm on both days.

Periodically check the Dixon May Fair's website at <http://www.dixonmayfair.com> for updates and information about other activities and events happening at the fair ground.

Space Available Travel

Summer has just ended, kids are back in school, and vacations for the most part are over for this year.

You may already be thinking about where you want to go and what you want to do and see during the next vacation season.

One of the benefits you earned when you retired from your respective service is the privilege of traveling Space Available (Space A) on military cargo, tanker, and contract commercial flights when empty seats are available.

Military Retirees and their sponsored dependents are eligible to fly using Space A as Category VI passengers. Space A travelers are prioritized based on the category they are assigned so travelers in Category I through V are offered seats ahead of Cat VI travelers.

Seat availability, number of travelers on the list for the destination you want to travel to, and their priority affect whether you get a space on the plane.

We recommend you do some research ahead of time by visiting the Air Mobility Command's Space Available web page before embarking on the Space A adventure.

The web address for the site is longer than most people want to enter, so go to your favorite web browser and type in AMC Space A Travel. The first link in the search results should take you to AMC's Space Available Travel Page.

Their site features a frequently asked questions page that can make navigating Space A registration a breeze and answer any questions you have using this mode of travel.

They also have a link to Air Terminals (all branches of the service) that post flight information and seat availability.

The links cover terminals inside the United States and overseas. You can check terminals within your route of intended travel to look at connecting flights to your destination.

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Defense Accounting and Finance Service (DFAS)

Space A Travel

Space A Travel is not guaranteed. There's always the possibility of being bumped en-route to your destination by higher priority passengers, or active duty traveling to meet mission requirements.

Space A travelers must have enough funds to make alternate travel arrangements in case flights aren't available. Flights might also be cancelled due to weather, natural disasters, or seats filled with higher priority passengers. Travelers should also have enough funds to cover lodging, meals, and ground transportation at destination.

For overseas travel, the AMC Space A Travel Page provides the required documents and records needed to enter overseas locations (passports, visas, immunizations, etc.).

There are federally mandated airport and head tax fees Space A travelers are required to pay (maximum is a little over \$40.00 if traveling overseas). Please check AMC's Space A Travel Page for more information.

Although a lot of this information may seem foreboding, forethought and planning can help you get that Space A seat you wanted and keep some of the stress out of your vacation planning.

Happy flying and safe travels!

Verify Pay Account Information

The winter holidays, and the 2025 tax filing year is just a few months away.

Those of us with myPay accounts will be able to access and print our 2024 Form 1099-Rs by the end of December. Retirees requesting 1099 R hard copies should get them in the mail by the second week of February 2025.

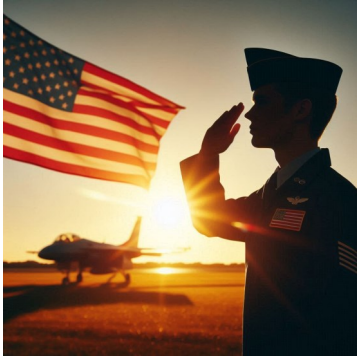
If you haven't done it in a while, now is the time to log in to myPay to verify your retirement pay account information to ensure DFAS has your correct mailing and email address on file, and the right beneficiaries designated for Arrears of Pay and Survivor Benefit Program Annuities (in the event of death).

Retirees that don't have a computer, internet service, or a myPay account, may call 1-800-321-1080 and use the self-service option to verify their account information.

Retirees without myPay accounts, are highly encouraged to set one up. Even though the password setup requirements are quite onerous, the ease of downloading retiree account statements, tax forms, starting and stopping allotments, and changing federal and state income tax withholding outweigh the cons of the password setup process.

Ordering Military Service Records and Medals

Missing/Lost DD Form 214's



Natural disasters, personal files lost during moves, burglaries, fires, and just plain forgetting where things were stored can impede a retiree or veteran's quick access to their Record of Military Service (DD Form 214) and Medical Records.

The DD Form 214 and medical records are the key documents needed when filing for veterans benefits, seeking employment, or filing for disability and death benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Retirees and Veterans can order replacements using the following means:

- ◆ Retired or separated before October 1st, 2024
 - Send a completed form SF 180 to the National Personnel Records Center:
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138
- ◆ Order on line through eVetRecs application at <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html>.
- ◆ The SF 180 or a letter requesting copies of a DD Form 214 may also be mailed or faxed to 314-801-9195.

Retirees and Veterans leaving the service after 1 October 2024 have the following options for ordering their Record of Military Service and medical records:

- ◆ Register for a free premium account on the Department of Veterans Affairs' eBenefits site.
- ◆ Email, mail or fax a signed and dated SF-180 to the Air Force Personnel Center's military personnel records center. The email address is dpsomp.incoming@us.af.mil. Their fax number is 210-565-3124. Their mailing address is listed on back of the SF 180.

We recommend using return receipt requested

when mailing in completed SF 180s to the National Personnel Records Center or the Air Force Personnel Center's military personnel records center.

Medals and Decorations

Retirees and veterans may request replacements for lost medals and ribbons.

Send a completed Standard Form 180 to the National Personnel Records Center.

Mark "Other in Section II, Items 1 and 2, and write in "Medal Replacement".

Mail the completed SF 180 to:

National Personnel Records Center (NPRC)
1 Archive Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138

You also have the option to fax the completed form to the NPRC. Their fax number is 314-801-9195.

The NPRC verifies the awards the retiree or veteran earned and then sends the request and records verification to the Air Force Personnel Center or the Air Reserve Personnel Center (for reservists). The medals will be mailed to the requesting retiree/veteran.



Shopping Safety and Reminders

The holiday season is just around the corner. The shopping madness begins on Friday, 29 November; (the day after we finish napping off Thanksgiving dinner and dessert).



While out and about shopping, please take stock of your personal safety. Here are a few tips to safeguard your person and your property.

- ◆ Park your car in a well lit and highly trafficked areas in store parking lots.
- ◆ Don't leave purchases in plain view in your car. CRV's usually have a security shade in the trunk. Use it to obscure your purchases.
- ◆ Shop with friends, there is safety in numbers.
- ◆ Be aware of your surroundings and people in your vicinity. If you get vibes that something may be off, go back in the store.
- ◆ Have your car keys out and in hand so you can get in your car and leave quickly. A lot of people get robbed while they are distracted looking for keys.
- ◆ Keep your purse secured to your person and zipped up. Handbags and purses left unattended in shopping carts or left open on a shoulder are invitations for theft.

A little attention to your surroundings and taking steps to ensure your safety will help you sail safely through the holiday shopping season and spare you a lot of grief.

Help us help you!

Every once in a Blue Moon, we will get a complaint that we don't answer our phones. Here is what we see when we check our service logs.

Many times the calls we get come in after operating hours. We normally have someone on the volunteer desk from 9 am until 3 pm, Monday through Friday (excluding Federal holidays and AMC Family Days).

The other problem we run into is callers not leaving a voicemail message for us.

We do check our missed call log to get the phone numbers and the time people call in after operating hours. We also periodically check it during operating hours when we may be busy with a walk in client or we have to step away from the desk.

We return missed calls. The problem with is we often get phone system generated messages indicating the person getting our call is not accepting phone calls or their voicemail box hasn't been setup or it's full. If you have voicemail service please set it up and that old messages are cleared. If you haven't heard from us, you may send an email request for assistance to rao-travis@yahoo.com. We respond to emails so one of our volunteers should contact you by email.

Change your Clocks

Don't forget to adjust your clock. On Sunday, 3 November 2024 at 2 am. We all get an extra hour of shut eye until Spring 2025. It's that glorious time of year we can all make ourselves one hour younger.