



RETIREE NEWSLETTER

Retiree Activities Office (RAO)

Travis AFB, California

Winter 2021-2022

Volunteers

Walt Jue, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)

Barry Williams, Lt Col USAF (Ret)

Rick Villarina, Jr., Maj USAF (Ret)

Rosemary Ingram, EdD

Roy Sheets, SMSgt, USAF (Ret)

Laurna Sudat, MSgt, USAF (Ret)

Mary Lou Bermudez, MSgt, USAF (Ret)

Ms. Penny Robbins

Jerry A. Edmonds, CMSgt, USAF (Ret)

Director, Travis AFB Retiree Activities Office

707-424-3904

raotravis@yahoo.com

Ms. Bunny Dominguez Medical RAO Coordinator,

David Grant USAF Medical Center

707-423-3649

Jerry A. Edmonds, CMSgt, USAF(Ret)

Interim Director,

McClellan Park Satellite Retiree Activities Office

916-640-8445/8446 raomcclellan@yahoo.com

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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.

Retirees, dependents and annuitants not vaccinated for COVID-19 won't be seen by our volunteers as walk-ins

If this is the case, email or call us at 707-424-3904/3905 and let us know what you need. We will provide you with copies of the requested material at the door, or if requested, we will email it to you.

Focus of the Retiree Activities Office

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 retirees, their families, and surviving spouses receive the superb service and respect they so rightfully deserve.

Our primary focus shall remain on mission accomplishment, compassionate care of our customers, and the drive to constantly improve and excel.



From the Desk of the RAO Director

RAO Winter Holiday Closures



The Travis Retiree Activities Office is closed for Federal Holidays and AMC Family Days. Here are our Winter closures through February 2022:

24—27 December 2021— Christmas holiday and an AMC Family Day on the 27th.

31 December 2021—3 January 2022 — New Year's Day holiday and an AMC Family Day on the 3rd of January.

17 January 2022— Martin Luther King's Birthday

21 February 2022—U.S. Presidents' Day

17 March 2022 — Saint Patrick's Day; we're open; however, Erin go Bragh anyway.

If you have an issue you need help with over the holidays, call 707-424-3904/3905 and leave a message with your name, rank/title, Branch of Service, a contact number we can reach you at. We'll respond on the first duty day after the holiday. You may also email the information to us at raotravis@yahoo.com. The Director monitors email and will respond to requests for assistance.

Holiday Wishes



The Travis RAO staff extends their best wishes for you and your families to have a joyous, safe, happy, and prosperous holiday season. May the new year be a rewarding one for all of you.

Welcome on Board

We are pleased to announce we have a new volunteer on board. Ms. Penny Robbins started training on the Volunteer Desk in mid-October

If you are interested in volunteering please contact the Travis Retiree Activities Office Director. You will need the full series of COVID shots to work the desk as we service retirees that are at high risk for infection. You'll need to bring your vaccination card in with you before starting.

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).

Defense Accounting and Finance Service

Gray Area Retiree Website

Military Gray Area Retirees Now Have a New Avenue to Stay Connected: A New Kind of myPay Account

For Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve and Air Force Reserve Gray Area Retirees, there is a new avenue to stay connected and informed between the time they stop drilling and the time they start receiving retired pay.

It's a new kind of myPay account especially for Gray Area Retirees.

If you are a Gray Area Retiree who uses your new myPay account to keep your contact information updated, you will benefit from receiving important information from DFAS and your Branch of Service, such as news about changes in laws or policies that impact your retirement benefits, reminders about applying for retired pay, and your Services' Retiree Newsletter.

Plus, with current contact information in your new myPay account when you apply for retired pay, DFAS will email you status notifications: when your application was received, when it is being worked, and when it is complete.

Who are Gray Area Retirees?

Gray Area Retirees are members who served in the Guard or Reserves and qualified for retired pay, have retired from their service (stopped drilling), but are not yet at the age where they can start receiving retired pay. The time between their retirement from the service and the date when they are eligi-

ble to begin receiving retired pay is the "gray area." The "gray area" applies even if the member is in the Retired Reserve.

A Guard or Reserve member is generally not eligible to start receiving retired pay until they reach age 60. However, some periods of active duty or active service can reduce the age requirement below 60 years of age (Reduced Age Retirement). The earliest age that a Gray Area Retiree can start receiving reduced age retired pay is age 50.

Find Out More

DFAS has additional helpful reference information for military Gray Area Retirees and a downloadable "Gray Area Future Retiree myPay Login Tips" with specific instructions at: <https://www.dfas.mil/grayarea>.

***Article provided courtesy of DFAS.*

Update your myPay Profile

Over the last quarter, we've had around five instances where Gray Area Reservists haven't received the application for retired pay packets from HQ AFRES.

We think the primary cause is failure to update account information in myPay to include change of address.

If you have moved recently please login to your myPay account and update your profile information. It's also a good time to ensure your Arrears of Pay and Survivor Benefit Program beneficiaries are correct.

This is especially important if you went through a divorce years ago and the previous spouse didn't meet the Former Spouse Protection Act's time frame for benefits. Don't leave your current spouse unprotected. This applies to all retirees.

Health Matters & Veterans Benefits

Express Scripts Co-Pay Changes in 2022

Effective January 1st, 2022, Express Scripts co-pays are increasing for retirees that order their prescription drugs using this program.

Here's a re-cap of new 2022 co-pay fees as listed on the Express Scripts website:

Home Delivery—Express Scripts Pharmacy (up to 90 day supply)

Generic Formulary drugs—
\$12.00

Brand-Name formulary drugs
\$34.00

Non-formulary drugs \$68.00

Tricare Retail Network Pharmacies (up to 30 day supply):

Generics— \$14.00

Brand Name — \$38.00

Non-formulary—\$68.00

Visit the militaryrx.express-scripts.com for details regarding prescriptions filled using non-network pharmacies. They also have a link to the Formulary Search Tool which is useful in letting you know about your medication coverage and costs.

Medicare Advantage Plans

Open Season for FEDVIP plan year 2021 ended on 13 Decem-

2021.

Unless you have a life qualifying event, you'll have to wait until next November to pick a Dental and Vision Insurance carrier and plan if you want one.

Each season, we get bombarded with flyers, brochures, and other forms of advertising from various healthcare organizations touting Medicare Advantage Plans.

We get many calls from retirees and surviving spouses asking if they need to purchase one of these plans.

The choice is yours to make. Medicare Advantage plans are identical to TRICARE for LIFE and Medicare Part A & B. So, unless there's some special circumstance, you don't need it.

Some plans bundle a prescription drug plan, vision, and dental and may offer more coverage; however it may cost you more in premiums.

In most cases, Medicare Advantage Plans require you to prepare your own claims paperwork.

It may be useful if you live in an area where doctors don't take Medicare for payment. Mr. John Dickens, DGMC TRICARE Benefits Advisor at (707) 423-7921 has more information.

New 2022 Veterans Disability Rate Tables Available

The VA's new 2022 Disability Rate Tables are now available on their website.

You may access them at <https://www.va.gov/disability/compensation-rates/veterans-rates>.

You can also get directions for adding dependents to your VA disability.

Please visit <https://www.va.gov/view-change-dependents/> to review instructions for adding dependents to your disability.

**** Details provided courtesy of AFPC/DPFF (Retiree Program Office)**

Keep It Real Fitness & Nutrition

Mr. Dale Collins, Health Promotions Manager from the Beale AFB Medical Clinic resumes fitness and Nutrition Zoom video presentations in January 2022.

There are two presentations left this year. Here's the schedule:

Tuesday, Jan 18, 2022— Increasing Exercise and Working with Injuries.

Tuesday, Feb 15, 2022— Sleep for Success

The presentations begin at 6 p.m. We'll send out the link, meeting ID, and passcode out before the event.

News You Can Use

Legal Office Services Update



The Travis AFB Legal Office is offering Legal Assistance services

to military retirees and their spouses. The following information was provided by the Legal Office regarding legal services scheduling for retirees:

Retirees may schedule an appointment for Will preparation or Legal Assistance on the last Wednesday of each month by appointment only. Legal limits will appointments between 09:00 and 10:30 A.M on this day. Legal Assistance appointments are scheduled between 13:00 and 13:30 P.M.

Retirees will need to complete a Will preparation worksheet before the appointment will be scheduled. The worksheet can be prepared on line at the following web address: aflegalassistance.law.af.mil

After you complete the worksheet, the site will issue you a ticket number. Print it out, or write it down. You will need it to make your appointment.

Once you have your ticket number, you may schedule you Will appointment by phone at 707-4214-3251, or email the Travis Legal Office at 60AMW.jag.legalassistanceappt@us.af.mil

The Legal Office offers retirees and their spouses Power of Attorney and Notary services on a walk-in basis, Monday through Friday 9:00 A.M. until 14:00 P.M.

2022 Tax Season

Retirees with access to MyPay should be able to download their 2021 Form 1099R's now..

If you opted to continue receiving a hardcopy by mail and you haven't received it by the middle of February, please call DFAS at 1-800-321-1080.

Federal and California Income taxes must be filed by Monday 18, April 2022.

There's a tool to find free tax assistance at the [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov) website. We ran the tool and they haven't updated last year's list of Volunteer Income Tax Assistance locations yet.

Recommend checking with your local community Senior Center to see if they're offering Tax Assistance services in 2022 for Tax Year 2021.

We will send out updates by email and on our Facebook page as we become aware of organizations that will offer free or low-cost tax assistance services.

COLA and Medicare Part B increases

Retirees will see a 5.9% increase in their retirement pay in January.

VA disability payments will also increase by 5.9%.

Surviving spouses receiving survivor benefit annuities should also see a 5.9% increase in their annuity and social security payments (if they're drawing social security).

If you're a retiree or retiree spouse drawing social security and enrolled in Medicare Part B, you'll see a 5.9 percent increase in your social security income.

Medicare part B premiums will be increased from the current \$148 .50 per month to \$170.10 per month.

The Medicare part B premium increase may reduce your Social Security payments slightly,

Please see the [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) website for more information.

ID Card Renewal & Base Gym Updates

Extended ID Card Expiration Dates due to COVID Conditions Ends

All Retiree and Dependent ID cards that expired between January 1, 2020 and July 31, 2021 were extended through January 21, 2022.

The extension ends on the date indicated above, so those cards need to be renewed.

We checked the 60 FSS MPF's website on 12/16/2021 and appointments are booked up through February 10, 2022, so you'll need to come in as a walk-in.

You can also use RAPIDS ID Card Office appointment scheduler online to find other ID Card issuing offices in our area that may have appointment slots available. You may also call us and we can schedule an appointment for you, or provide you with other options.

Lost, Stolen, or Expired ID Cards

If your ID Card is lost or stolen you'll need to file a police report and print a copy of it to get your ID Card replaced.

If you want to enter the base for a reissue of a stolen, lost, or expired ID Card, you'll need to bring at least two Real ID-compliant documents with you. Here are some examples:

- * A Real ID-compliant Drivers License
- * A Current U.S. Passport
- * Social Security Card
- * State birth certificate with a raised seal.
- * Marriage certificate for



spouse

We also highly recommend the sponsor bring a copy of their retirement orders, or a copy of their DD Form 214 with them along with a copy of a Retiree Account Statement (RAS), or 1099r issued by the Defense Accounting and Finance Service.

We'd normally not tell people to bring in their RAS or 1099r; however, we recently had a retiree that came into the MPF for an ID card re-issue, but they couldn't find him in the system. The RAS and the 1099r reflect retirees are drawing retired pay and should serve as proof a retiree should be in the DFAS pay system.

ID Card Renewal Option

Check with the 349th AMW (AFRES) Customer Service Section at 707-424-2345 if you can't get an ID Card Renewal Appointment through the 60 FSS/MPF.

They handle walk-ins on Wednesdays between 8 and 9 A.M.

They renew by appointment only on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between the hours of 8 A.M. and 3 P.M.

You may call, email, or use the RAPIDS IDCO appointment scheduler to make an appointment.

Their email address is
349FSS.CustomerService@us.af.mil.

Base Gym Open to Retirees and Dependents



Good news for those of us that weren't aware of it.

The holidays are with us and so are the extra pounds from all of those goodies laying around.

If you want to keep the damage to your waist down to a minimum, here is the base gym's schedule:

Monday— Friday 6 A.M.— 9 P.M.

Saturday—Sunday 8 A.M.— 5 P.M.

If you use the gym, you'll need to wear a mask entering the gym and exiting it; however, you don't need to be masked while physically exercising in the facility.

Retirees and dependents are not required to bring a towel with them to wipe down the equipment, but it is recommended.

Gym staff members are not requiring users to present a vaccination card entering the facility.

Day Tripping & Holiday Safety



Cullinan Ranch Trail

Are the walks around your block getting boring? Do you need a change of scenery to get going?

There are two nature trails available within 12 to 25 miles of Fairfield that may be of interest to you; especially, if you're a walker, hiker, or bird watcher.

Hill Slough in Suisun and Cullinan Ranch Trail off Highway 37 outside of Vallejo have straight and level nature trails that run about 4 miles round trip.

Cullinan Ranch has about 10 –12 parking spaces available at the entrance. The nature trail has around six bird and wildlife viewing platforms and information kiosks along the path.

It has a dock near the entrance people use to launch canoes and kayaks at no-cost.

Cullinan Ranch Trail is part of the San Pablo Bay Wildlife Refuge Area and it's managed by the California Department of Forestry.

Hill Slough is on Grizzly Island Road and it's located just past the 4-way stop where Sunset Avenue becomes Grizzly Island Road.

On the weekends, you can park in the heavy equipment parking area on the right-side of the road. The nature trails are level gravel trails on the left-side of Grizzly Island Road.

Pelicans, Pintail Ducks, raptors, Egrets, Herons, Avocets and Black Neck Stilts abound at both locations. If you're extremely lucky, you might spot a river otter or two and maybe a Coyote.

Spring through early Fall we recommend you apply or spray mosquito and tick repellent on your skin to keep the bugs off.

We recommend going early if possible. Parking maybe limited at times.

It's a great way to get some fresh air and exercise as well as enjoy viewing wildlife.

The best thing about both is the parking is free and there are no entry fees you to pay.

Holiday Safety



Holidays feature lots of good food and libations. Roads crowded with drivers and people rushing about to get their gift lists squared away.

Unfortunately, the season brings spikes in car accidents and deaths caused by alcohol consumption and inattentive driving.

If you're hosting a party or get-together, make sure you have plenty of non-alcoholic beverages available. Don't let guests that over imbibe drive away from your home intoxicated.

Groups attending parties where adult beverages are served should have designated drivers to help guests that have had one too many get home safely.

If you're traveling long distances, take plenty of rest breaks along the way and have an emergency kit including blankets, flashlights, snacks, and water for the trip.

Be mindful of road conditions, speed limits, and erratic and angry drivers. Give the former a lot of room on the road.

If you're prone to speeding and taking chances, a few minutes shaved off a trip aren't worth your life and limbs.

Be safe, have fun, and come home alive.