



RETIREE NEWSLETTER
Retiree Activities Office (RAO)
Travis AFB, California
Spring 2021

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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

Gratitude

Chief Dave Johnson, Director of the Beale AFB Retiree Activities Office (RAO), solicited our help to find and obtain a recliner chair with lift assist.

The Beale RAO was assisting a Vietnam Veteran in their area that had mobility issues, but couldn't afford to buy the chair he needed to improve his quality of life.

We placed a call for donations on our office's Facebook page and also emailed it to retirees in our Travis Retiree, Veterans and Surviving Spouses e-mail group.

Before the morning was well under way, we got a response offering to donate a chair.

We appreciate, thank, and commend Lt. Col. Blake Jessen and his wife Della for their very generous donation of the lift chair. Their gift will greatly enhance the veteran's life and ability to get around. Kudos to Chief Johnson and his crew for looking out for one of our brothers and sisters in arms.

Welcome Back

David Grant's Medical Center's Retiree Activities Office volunteers are back to provide services to patients and their families coming in to the Center for medical treatment and services.

They were out under stay-at-home orders since 13 March 2020 and were called back into service on the 17th of March, 2021.

During the stay-at-home period, their services were sorely missed!

We all extend a hearty "Welcome Back" to Bunny Dominguez and her indomitable staff!

Be sure to say hello and thank the volunteers for their help and selfless service on the way into the Medical Center.

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 be of service to others and a cheerful disposition. We will provide training.

Walk-in Service Update

Effective March 29, 2021, we will see walk-ins fully vaccinated for COVID-19 that completed the 14 day period after the last dose that allows full immunity to kick in.

If you are not vaccinated, please call us at 707-424-3904/3905 or email rao-travis@yahoo.com for assistance .

There are volunteers staffing the office to answer the telephones and respond to emails requesting assistance or information.

Be sure to leave your name, rank, telephone number, email address, and a brief description of the issue you need help with.

If you have an active email address and you want to get base facilities scheduling changes and other information, please email us at raotravis@yahoo.com. We will add you to our military retiree email group in Yahoo mail so we can get important updates out to you as soon as they cross our volunteer desk.

Farewells, Visitor Center & Legal Assistance

Farewell, Safe Journey, & Good Fortune

The Retiree Activities Office staff bids a fond farewell to TSgt Francis Onate. It's our misfortune to lose him, and his gaining unit's good luck to bring him on board.

TSgt Onate unselfishly donated his off duty time to help staff the Retiree Activities Office's Volunteer Desk. We really appreciated his effort in helping military retirees in our area with various issues over the past few years.

TSgt Onate was a key point of contact for base sponsored blood drives and in the assembling of hygiene packets for the homeless in the Bay area.

His drive and talent will be sorely missed. Although he's not retired, his effort to make things better for retirees and the community at large epitomizes the Retiree Activities Office motto "Still Serving"!

Operating Hours Change Travis AFB Visitors Control Center

The 60th AMW's Command Information Chief provided this to our office regarding Travis AFB Visitor Control Center (VCC) operating hours.

Effective 14 March, 2021 the Visitors Control Center hours of operation are:

Monday— Friday: 0600—2130

Saturday—Sunday: 0800—1600

You can still obtain temporary passes before or after VCC hours of operation. Please contact the VCC for more information. Their contact number is: 707-424-1462.

Legal Assistance No Cost/Pro Bono

Currently, the Base Legal Office is only providing will preparation, power of attorney and notary services to Active Duty, Reserve and Guard members on Title 10 orders.

There are several sources of possible no cost legal services in the immediate area that offer legal assistance if you need help.

We recommend you call them to find out if there are any income restrictions in requesting service.

Here are the agencies that may be able to assist you:

Solano County Legal Access Center
Family Law Facilitator
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield CA 94533.
(Solano County Superior Courthouse)

Napa County Family Law Facilitator
825 Brown Street
Napa CA 94599

Legal Aid of North Bay Private Attorney
Involvement Program
1227 Coombs St
Napa, CA 94559

Legal Aid of Napa Valley
1277 Coombs St
Napa, CA 94559
707-255-4933

If you live outside Solano County, please check the JUSTIA Lawyers website at justia.com for listings of agencies in your area that provide no cost legal services.

We will periodically check the Travis AFB Legal Office web page for updates and we'll let retirees registered in our Facebook groups and email list know when the current service restriction ends.

Defense Accounting and Finance Service Updates

DFAS Retiree Newsletters

We posted the March 2021 DFAS Retiree Newsletter file to our Facebook retiree/veterans group pages and emailed it to members of the Travis Military Retirees email group.

If you have access to our Facebook page and groups, or are a member of our retiree email group, we encourage you to pass copies on to retired friends or acquaintances that don't have Internet service or access to a computer.

You can also have them call us at 707-424-3904/3905 and we'll print a copy for them they can pickup at our door.

If you visit dfas.mil, they post the newsletter on the retiree and annuitants page. You access it by left clicking on the Retiree and Annuitants tab at the top of the main page. You can go through one topic at a time, or download a printer-friendly copy of the file on your computer in PDF format for review or printing.

We had some issues with site certificate errors while trying to download the file.

We recommend you use the Microsoft Edge browser to access the dfas.mil site.

Use MSN or Yahoo's search the internet search box when entering www.dfas.mil and select the first item in the search results list that reads Defense Accounting and Finance Service.

If you enter it in the browser engine's search box (first one at the

top of the page), it will take you to the website, but generate the certificate error when you attempt to download the newsletter.

Estate Planning Review

Does your spouse, or trusted family members know who to contact upon the event of your death? Do you have the correct beneficiaries designated in your retiree pay records to receive your arrears of pay settlement? Do you have a will in place and a power of attorney giving a family member or spouse authority to handle your financial affairs and make decisions about your medical care if you're incapacitated?

DFAS recommends you check your Retiree pay account periodically to make sure your records are up-to-date and the correct AOP/SBP beneficiary designated.

With tax season rapidly approaching its end, now is a good time to accomplish a review of your estate plan and make sure your family knows what's available to them, the actions they need to take, and who to notify upon your passing.

It will make their lives easier and a lot less stressful when settling your final affairs.

SBP Eligibility After Divorce

DFAS' March 2021 Retiree Newsletter contained an excellent article covering SBP eligibility for former spouses.

A former spouse loses SBP annuity coverage unless the retired sponsor, specifically request continued coverage, or the court orders the retired sponsor to continue it as part of the divorce settlement.

If you're contemplating a divorce you and your soon-to-be ex-spouse need to have a discussion and a good understanding of what happens with SBP after the divorce is finalized.

If you need a copy of the DFAS March 2021 Newsletter, you can download it from the Retiree and Annuitants page on the DFAS website.

You can also download it from the files section of the Northern California Retiree and Veterans Facebook group pages. You can access group pages through the Travis Air Force Base Retiree Activities Office main Facebook page.

News You Can Use

Federal & State Income Tax

The 15 April 2021 deadline for filing 2020 Federal and State Income Taxes has changed. They extended the deadline to 17 May 2021. The new file by date did not change dates quarterly payments are due if you are self-employed or own a business.

If you can't meet the new deadline, you need to file for a filing extension.

If you are granted an extension, you'll have until 15 October 2021 to file. The extension will not prevent penalties or interest from being assessed for under or late payment of taxes.

Please note the IRS only holds payment of refund claims for a total of three years.

Please visit the irs.gov website for more tax filing information.

Tax Assistance

Need help with Taxes?

The IRS has a free tax assistance program locator on their website at <https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/>.

The IRS updated the list of agencies offering no cost tax assistance since we posted our original article in the previous Winter Newsletter.

You're free to check AARP's site as they do have some no cost online information availa-

ble.

If you know a military retiree or spouse that needs help, aren't computer literate, don't have internet service, or a computer, have them call 707-424-3904/3905 for assistance.

Soliciting Topics

In February, we wrapped up the Functional Fitness for Seniors Video series sponsored by Beale's Medical Clinic and the Beale RAO.

Mr. Collins, the Beale Retiree Activities Office in coordination with the Travis AFB RAO plan on producing more videos targeted towards health maintenance and other activities impacting retiree family lifestyles and finances.

They asked for input from retirees in our area regarding topics you would like presented in a video conference format.

Now is your chance to make your wants and needs known!

Please email or call in your topic suggestions to our 707-424-3904/3905 number, or email them to the rao-travis@yahoo.com email address.

We will forward your suggestions to CMSgt Johnson and Mr. Collins at Beale.

Chief Johnson indicated they would host a Zoom planning session with our office to discuss future presentations. We will keep you posted.

ID Theft—Fraud Alert

Availability of COVID-19 vaccinations and the 2020 Tax Filing Season are bringing out the scammers.

On the tax front, the IRS and the California State Franchise Tax Board will never contact you by phone. They normally do it by official mail.

If you get a call from someone representing themselves as an agent of a government organization, or agency and they start asking for your personal information, hang up.

If you think you have an issue and you have a computer and internet service, go to IRS or Franchise Tax Board's official websites, get their phone numbers and call them directly with your concern..

The same is true if someone offers to schedule you for a COVID-19 vaccination for a small fee, or that offers some miracle cure at a bargain price.

For information regarding COVID-19 vaccine availability, check your county's Public Health Office's official web page. David Grant Medical Center also provides updates. Call 707-423-3000, Option 1 for the latest updates.

ID Card Appointments and Prescription Refills



ID Card Expiration

Due to COVID-19 constraints, the Department of Defense extended ID Card expiration dates. ID cards expiring after January 1st, 2020 will be honored as current through 30 June 2021.

ID Card Scheduling Update

If you need to renew an ID card, the 60th FSS MPF Pass and ID shop is now scheduling in-person ID card appointments on line.

Retirees may now schedule ID card renewals with the 60 FSS MPF Pass and ID Card section.

Do not use the RAPIDS ID Card Office Online site to schedule an appointment. The Travis Pass and ID Section has its own commercial appointment scheduling website. The web address is:

www.travisafbmpf.setmore.com.

We recommend you use Microsoft Edge as the browser to access their appointment site. Using Google, Safari, or Thunderbird with this web address triggers a security certificate error message in Windows, iOS

and Linux.

When you use Microsoft Edge, do not enter the website's URL in the search box at the very top of the browser's search engine page. Enter it in the second Internet search box in the home page of MSN, Bing, or Yahoo.

Press the enter key. The browser will present a list of related web pages. Select the first one in the list by left clicking on it. It should read, "Book your appointments with Travis Air Force Base ID cards....".

Once you land on their page, just follow the prompts to schedule your appointment. If you experience difficulties accessing their site, please give us a call.

Now that the 60th FSS MPF has opened up ID Card appointment scheduling, we highly recommend if your ID card is set to expire, you schedule an in-person appointment using their online scheduling site as soon as possible.

COVID-19 driven changes and constraints probably created a large backlog of people needing ID card renewals. Appointment slots will likely be booked and filled fast.

Ordering Prescription Refills through MHS Genesis

If you have an MHS Genesis account, you can order your prescription drug refills through the MHS Genesis Patient Portal (if you're not enrolled see the MHS Genesis benefits article on the next page).

SMSgt Hollars-Connolly, Pharmacy Manager, provided the following instructions for ordering refills:

1. Log on to <https://patientportal.mhsgenesis.health.mil/>
2. Choose "Messaging" on the left side of the main page.
3. Choose "Inbox" then "Send a Message."
4. In the "Inbox" type **Travis Pharmacy** and choose "Travis Pharmacy Prescription Activation." from the options.
5. In the "Message" box provide: **patient's DoD ID#, date of birth, medication(s) requested and phone number.**
6. Choose "Send" for the message to be sent to the pharmacy.

Benefits: It's easier (at least for most people) to type in a refill request using a computer keyboard than it is to enter it from a smartphone's touchscreen keyboard.



David Grant Medical Center Updates

MHS Genesis Account Login Benefits

In today's healthcare environment, patients and their healthcare teams are increasingly finding that directly messaging each other is an efficient and effective way to help manage patients' healthcare needs.

When actually integrated into patients' lives, valued added benefits of a patient portal include ease of communication, faster solutions and efficient chronic disease management.

The MHS Genesis (electronic health record) is the mechanism for 60th Medical Group enrolled patients to accomplish this type of two-way communication.

For 60th Medical Group patients, the MHS Patient Portal replaced TRICARE On-Line (TOL) Messaging on 6 September 2019 with the transition to MHS Genesis. The Patient Portal is available 24/7.

Once registered for the patient portal...these are the types of things you can currently and locally accomplish via the patient portal:

- View certain diagnostic test results
- Review you immunizations
- Send a message to your pri-

mary care manager (PCM)

- Read what a provider wrote about your visit
- Access a health information library
- Activate new prescriptions
- Note: Personal health notes and results are available for care provided on/after 6 January 2019

Additional features and capabilities through the Patient Portal are anticipated in the future.

To register and access MHS Genesis Patient Portal:

- Visit www.patientportal.mhsgenesis.health.mil
- To create (if not already created) as DS Logon: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect>
- Premium Level Access registration at "my access center" is required to view your health record
- You can update your information (current phone number and current address in DEERS.

o Failure to keep this information current may result in future denial of claims, specialty visits and services

o To make updates in DEERS, visit: <https://www.tricare.mil/DEERS> or call 1-800-538-9552.

By Mr. Scott Dawson, DGMC, Director, Patient Communication/Experience

DGMC PHARMACY UPDATE



The following changes to DGMC Pharmacy Operations

were provided by SMSgt Hollars-Conolly, Pharmacy Manager, DGMC:

The DGMC Hospital Pharmacy is closed to all patients. Patients need to activate new prescriptions by phone (707-423-7657) or through the MHS Genesis Patient Portal (<https://patientportal.mhsgenesis.health.mil/>)

The DGMC Satellite Pharmacy in the AAFES arcade building is open for services. Activate by phone or through the MHS Genesis Patient Portal.

Hardcopy prescriptions for controlled substances must be dropped off at the BX Pharmacy.

Pickup all prescriptions at the BX Pharmacy. Refill procedures will remain the same. Turn around time for refills is 4 days.

Day Tripping & Fire Season Safety



With California's gradual loosening and modification of COVID-19 restrictions, many of us have a need to get out and about to maintain our sanity.

For the mobile and not so mobile among us, China Camp State Park (just outside San Rafael) is the perfect place to get some fresh air and take in some beautiful scenery.

The park is just about 50 miles down the road from Fairfield. It has several moderately difficult to easy hiking trails, great views of San Pablo Bay and the boats traversing it, low cost picnic areas, and an old Chinese Fishing Village (established in the late 1800s), beach, and a snack bar if you don't want to pack a lunch.

The day use fee is \$3.00 per day for hiking and general use. The picnic areas' day use fee is \$5.00 per day payable at the picnic area kiosks.

As part of the entry fee, you can pick up a glossy brochure covering the history of the park and point-of-interest maps at no extra charge.

Some interesting features in the park are the nature trail hiking area around Turtle Back Hill, Miwok Meadows, and the shrimp processing shed in the China Village area.

If you have grandchildren, or relatives visiting this is a good way to keep them entertained during the visit and provide some interesting educational opportunities for the grandkids.

This park was featured on one of the late Huell Howser's "California's Gold" episodes on PBS.

Highly recommend a trip to the park. It's worth the drive out and you will get a nice respite from cabin fever!!



Fire Season Safety

Now that Spring is with us, California's notorious fire season is just around the corner.

The last few fire seasons have been particularly bad in our area.

If you live hilly, fire-prone areas, now is the time to look over your property and make it as fire-proof as possible by clearing defensible space around it.

Since many of us live in developments surrounded by grassy hills, it's a good idea to sit down with the family and prepare an evacuation plan in the event emergency responders give orders to leave homes.

Part of that plan should include checking gutters and other areas around the home to clear fire ignition sources and combustibles.

A little planning and work now may relieve a lot of heartbreak and anxiety later in the summer and early fall.