



RETIREE NEWSLETTER

Retiree Activities Office (RAO)

Travis AFB, California

Winter 2021

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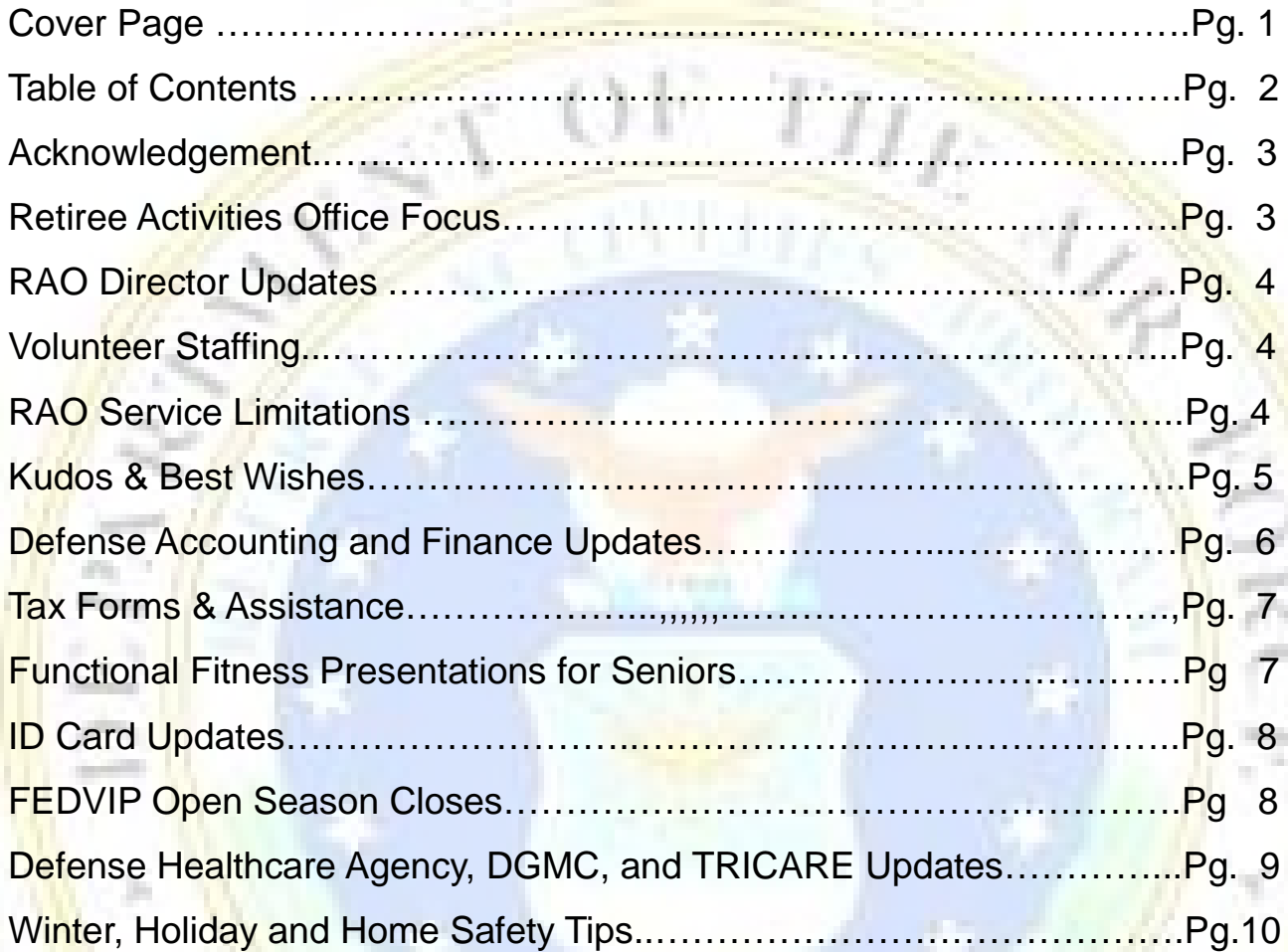
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Acknowledgement

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.

We aren't taking walk-ins due to the COVID19 shelter-in-place; However, if you email or call us at 707-424-3905/3904 before you show up, just knock on our door and we will provide you with copies of the requested material at the door.

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 they receive the superb service and respect they so rightfully deserve.

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

From the Desk of the RAO Director

Functional Fitness Video Playlist

We are posting the Functional Fitness for Seniors video series in playlist on our Facebook page and YouTube channel so you won't have to scroll through the posts on the main page and on the YouTube channel to view a particular video presentations you may be interested in.

If you have a Facebook account, all you need to do is type in Travis AFB Retiree Activities Office in the search box at the top of your Facebook page. When you press enter, it should land you on our office's Facebook page. At the top of the page you will see a series of tabs. Just click on Videos then scroll down to Playlists, you will see one titled Health, Nutrition and Fitness. Click on it and you will see the videos posted to date. You can watch them one at a time, pause and go back later, or binge watch.

If you want to view the videos on YouTube, enter TRAVIS_RAO_Director in the YouTube search box. When the browser lands on our YouTube Channel page, click on the Playlists tab.

Click on the Health Nutrition and Fitness playlist to view the videos.

Mr. Dale Collins, Health Program Manager/ exercise physiologist and a nutritional specialist from the Beale AFB Clinic will be producing three more videos. The sessions will cover exercise, diet and health maintenance over the next few months.

The sessions are conducted using Zoom and they are scheduled for the third Thursday of each month at 1800 through February 2020.

If you want to participate in the sessions, please contact us by email at raotravis@yahoo.com or call us at 707-424-3904/3905. We email the meeting ID, web link, and passcode to join the meeting a day or two before the session to retirees that register for the presentation.

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.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the program. We schedule volunteers for a three hour tour on desk (0900-1200 and 1200 to 1500).

Service limitations

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the RAO is no longer seeing walk-ins until conditions permit it.

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

Please call us at 707-424-3905/3904 or email raotravis@yahoo.com if you need help.

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've established a military retiree email group in Yahoo mail so we can get important updates out to you as soon as they cross our volunteer desk.

KUDOS & BEST WISHES

Thank You

Our thanks and appreciation goes out to SMSgt Grantham and the presenters that put together the video clips for Travis AFB's Virtual Retiree Appreciation Week event during the week of 26 through 30 October 2020.

The project was a time consuming effort that entailed the capturing of briefings on digital video media, reviewing clips, making edits, adding musical backgrounds and title frames for the clip introductions.

SMSgt Grantham pulled together representatives from the David Grant Medical Center, TRICARE and Pharmacy Services to schedule the recording of the various briefings.

He worked with Ms. Sandy Llavore, DGMC marketing, to produce poster boards advertising the event that were displayed at the BX Pharmacy, Commissary, DGMC and the Travis AFB Exchange.

Chief Edmonds handled the software editing of the clips, established a YouTube Channel for posting the finished products, uploaded the videos to Facebook and YouTube and setup playlist on the sites.

Kudos to the following briefers and organizations:

TRICARE:

Mr. John Dickens/ Ms. Amber Miller

DGMC Pharmacy Services:

SSG Darian Duell-Ray

Fisher House:

Ms. Ivana Jordovic

Healthnet Federal Services:

Ms. Dalis Marten

Solano County Veterans Service Office:

Mr. Ted Puntillo

Defense Accounting and Finance Service

Virtual Retiree Appreciation Week Recap

The Travis Retiree Activities Office extends its gratitude and thanks to all of the retirees and annuitants that stopped in, visited and viewed our Retiree Appreciation Week Video Series.

Through December 2, we had a total of 507 people visit our Facebook page and Youtube channel to view the video segments that we produced.

Casualty Assistance, Fisher House and the Solano County Veterans Service Office videos led the way in viewership.

We will leave the videos up until they need updating and as changes are made by the agencies providing the information.

**Happy
Holidays!**

The RAO staff wishes you all a safe, joyous, healthy and prosperous holiday season. It's our fervent hope the coming year brings our retiree, annuitant, veteran and active duty community stability, peace and a lot less chaos.

Temporary Office Closure

We closed down the Travis RAO from 4 December through 1/4/2021 due to COVID-19 Pandemic conditions.

The staff appreciates your patience. The Director has been cleared and will be in periodically to answer your calls and emails and he's also responding from his home office.

We expect to have staff back manning the phones after the 4th of January. We won't be taking walk-ins until conditions improve.

Defense Accounting and Finance Service Updates

1099R Tax Forms For Tax Year 2020

DFAS started posting 1099Rs for tax year 2020 on MyPay. Many of you can start downloading and printing the forms needed for your tax returns.

If you have a MyPay account, we recommend you log in by the middle of January 2021 to download and print the copies you need to complete your Federal and State Income Tax returns.

If you don't have a MyPay account setup, you may call DFAS at 800-321-1080 to request a hardcopy by mail.

Update your mailing address with DFAS

With the issue of 1099Rs to Retirees and Annuitants, DFAS stressed the need to review, verify and update your mailing address in their system if it has changed. It was a hot topic in their brief to Retiree Service Officers.

This mostly applies to retirees and annuitants that opted to receive a hardcopy in the mail instead of downloading it from DFAS' MyPay website. You can also update your information over the phone by calling 800-321-1080.

If you have a computer and internet service, DFAS strongly recommends you sign up for a MyPay account on their website.

MyPay lets you receive your Retiree Account Statements and tax forms a lot quicker and gives you the ability to update banking and mailing information immediately without having to sit in a phone queue.



AFRES Retirement Pay

HQ Air Force Reserve sent out an update indicating they would start mailing out letters notifying reservists eligible to start receiving retirement pay at age 60 or that have reached their reduced retirement pay age date.

The letter will include instructions for submitting the package and the documents needed to process the application.

Eligible reservists should receive the letter 90 to 120 days prior to their eligibility date.

If you are eligible and you didn't get the letter, please call our office. We have copies of the forms, instruction fact sheets and the address for sending in your application for retirement pay packet.

SBP Annuitant Newsletter

DFAS announced the launch of the semi-annual SBP Annuitant Newsletter.

Its primary purpose is to keep SBP annuitants apprised of updates and changes to the program and to let them know about progress in the elimination of the SBP/DIC offset.

They dispatched copies of the 1st edition to Retiree Activities and Service Offices in early December.

We have posted copies of the newsletter to our Facebook page and we sent a copy out to our Travis Military Retiree Email group.

If you don't have a computer and would like to get a copy, give us a call after we re-open and we will print one out for you and give it to you at the door.

COLA Increases

COLA for military retired pay, Social Security, and VA Disability will increase 1.3 percent.

You should see a slight bump up in payments in January 2021.

Form 1099R Mailout Dates

DFAS should mail out Form 1099Rs by 31 Jan 2021 to retirees that opted for a hardcopy.

If you normally get a hardcopy and you don't see it by 10 February, 2021, you can call DFAS to request a replacement by mail. If you go this route, it will take 7 to 10 business days to get the replacement form.

This is another good reason to sign up MyPay.



Tax Assistance

Need help with Taxes?

With the New Year approaching, State and Federal Tax Season is also coming up.

Driven by the COVID-19 Pandemic, many avenues of assistance that were available in the past have been suspended or terminated due to pandemic conditions.

We checked with the Fairfield Senior Center and the voicemail response indicated AARP Tax Assistance at their location was suspended until

April 6, 2021.

The IRS has a free tax assistance program locator on their website at <https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/>. The closest one currently is in Oakland.

We will keep you updated as other sources of help become available.

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

If you have retired friends that need help that aren't computer literate, don't have internet service, or a computer, have them call us. at 707-424-3904/3905. We can provide them with phone numbers and locations if available.

Functional Fitness & Nutrition for Seniors

Mr. Dale Collins, Health Promotions Manager & Exercise Physiologist from the Beale AFB Clinic in collaboration with the Travis and Beale AFB RAO is presenting three more ZOOM video chats discussing functional fitness and general nutrition for seniors. Here's the schedule:

- ◆ Dec 2020– Balanced dieting—the overseas edition

- ◆ Jan 2020—At your core, lower back and core exercise
- ◆ Feb 2020—Leg exercises to keep you moving

These videos will be held at 6:00 PM, Thursdays on the 3rd week of each month starting in October

Please reserve a spot in the chats by emailing a request to raotravis@yahoo.com to view and participate. Meeting IDs and access codes will be emailed out the day before the event. You may also call in your request to 707-424-3904.

Copies of each video will be added to the health and nutrition playlist on our Facebook page and YouTube Channel.

Retirees and their family members may view them at a time that meets their needs if they were unable to register in for the Zoom session.



ID Card Renewal Scheduling Change

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.

The ID Section is currently only issuing mission critical ID cards and they are not accepting ID Card renewal appointments through ID Card Office Online for retirees and their dependents, or as walk-ins.

Retiree and Dependent ID cards should not be confiscated at entry gates until the 30 June 2021 expiration date. You may still renew your ID card using the eID process. If you choose this method, the new card will be good for one year.

You can download instructions for using eID on line through <https://www.travisfss/idcards/>. If you need additional information, please call our office at 707-424-3904. We will let everyone know when this process changes.

The 349th Pass & ID section will renew ID cards but you need an appointment.

If you need an appointment, contact them at 707-424-2345/2346.

ID Card Office Online Update (ICDO)

Within acceptable commute distances, Beale AFB's Pass and ID Section is the only one that has posted available ID Card renewal appointment slots on the ID Card Office Online web page.

If you would like to experiment with it, you can access the scheduler at:

<https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/>

You may still use this site to obtain telephone numbers and addresses for Pass and ID shops servicing your area.

A few are scheduling appointments over the phone.

ICDO is an excellent tool for finding Pass and ID Offices near your town.

We have a short ZOOM video clip uploaded to our Facebook page that shows you how to schedule an ID card renewal appointment or locate Pass and ID Offices within your commuting area.

FEDVIP Open Enrollment Season Ends

FEDVIP Open Enrollment season ended on 14 December 2020.

Retirees wanting to enroll in a Dental/Vision insurance program will have to wait until November 2021 when Open Season will begin again.

However, if you experience a life qualifying event, you may be able to enroll in the program after open season ends.

What are life qualifying events? We've listed them here:

- ◆ Change in Sponsor Status
- ◆ Change in Family composition
- ◆ Death in the family
- ◆ Divorce

For more information on what qualifies as a life changing event, see the Office of Personnel Management website at <https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/life-events/>.



David Grant Medical Center Updates

COVID-19 TESTING

If you're exposed more than 15 minutes to someone exhibiting cold or flu-like symptoms and you're worried it might be a COVID infection you can get tested at Travis.

The tents in front of David Grant Medical Center's South Parking Lot are the testing location.

Testing is Monday through Friday from 0800 until 1600.

You may be required to complete the certification form indicating whether or not you have 3rd party health insurance.

The test is done by swabbing samples from your nasal passages. It's a bit uncomfortable, so brace yourself before you show up.

We recommend you check the David Grant Medical Center Facebook page prior to heading out in case the testing schedule changes.

Stay healthy! Wear a mask, wash your hands frequently, maintain six feet of social distancing and keep trips out to a minimum.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Once immunizations are available and given, we may be able to go back to some semblance of normal.

Walk-in Influenza-like Illness Clinic

David Grant Medical Center provided us with this update on 12/8/2020.

DGMC implemented an outdoor walk-in clinic for patients suffering with flu-like symptoms or suspected COVID-19 infections.

The clinic is located in the South Parking Lot among the COVID-19 test tents. The clinic is open Monday through Friday 0800 until 1600. It will be closed during weekends, federal holidays and Family Days.

Additional Resources

DGMC Coronavirus Hotline

707-423-3000 Opt 1 M-F 0630-1600
General Information:
www.travis.tricare.mil

Nurse Advise Line (NAL):

Available 24/7
1-800-TRICARE, Opt 1
www.mhsnurseadvice.com

COVID Testing & Triage Tent/Walk In Clinic

M-F 0800-1600
South Parking Lot

For COVID-19 test results

MHS Genesis Patient Portal <https://patientportal.mhsgenesis.health>

Or Call

707-580-928
M-F 800-1600

TRICARE Select

There was some confusion caused by the TRICARE Select article in the Afterburner detailing a requirement for retirees enrolled in TRICARE Select to setup auto-payments through TRICARE before 14 December 2020 during open enrollment season.

If you are 65 or older and you are enrolled in Medicare Parts A&B, you are automatically moved to TRICARE for Life so this doesn't apply to you.

It does apply to retirees under the age of 65 that are not covered under TRICARE Prime.

If a retiree under 65 years of age lives in an area that is more than a 30 minute drive from a military treatment facility, they have an option to enroll in TRICARE Select.

This also applies if the Military Treatment Facility doesn't have the capacity or sufficient staff to provide services to retirees in their area and can't inpanel them for care due to these factors.

Under the previous scenario, enrolling in TRICARE Select makes good economic sense. The premiums are in line with the premiums charged for TRICARE Prime.

If you have more questions or concerns, please contact the TRICARE Benefits Advisor.



Winter and Holiday Safety Tips

Holiday Tips

Tend to live Christmas Trees carefully. Make sure you put them up in an area free of combustibles. Pine needles are highly flammable and you don't want your home burning down during a time that's supposed to be happy occasion.

When stringing lights and other electrically-powered decorations be sure not to overload outlets, Octopus extension cords and power strips.

A lot of people like to imbibe adult beverages during this season, so if you're hosting a party be a good wingman. Look after your guest!

If it looks like they've had too much to drink, give them a ride if you're sober and if you're buzzed order an Uber or taxi to get them home safely.

Have lots of food and non-alcoholic beverages available. Above all have fun!

Trip Safety

It's been a rough 10 months with the Pandemic.

Although the California is encouraging people to delay travel, there are going to be some that decide to travel to small family gatherings. If you do and you're driving tips:

- ◆ Get plenty of rest before heading out on the highway. Take adequate rest stops during the trip. Be alert while driving.
- ◆ Let a trusted friend know where you are headed and when you expect to safely arrive at your destination.
- ◆ If you're heading over the mountains, make sure you have blankets, water, snacks and finger food, first aid kit, and an emergency repair kit in case the car breaks down or weather conditions halt traffic.
- ◆ Come back home safe and healthy — we really do want to see you alive and kicking next year. The world wouldn't be the same without you!



Home Safety

It's that time of year when we spend an inordinate amount of time putting up decorations, and stringing up lights on our homes like the Griswold family did in National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation.

That said, ladder safety is a must this time of year. Always inspect a ladder to make sure it's not damaged or missing hardware. If it is damaged, replace or repair it.

When you erect it make sure it's on a stable surface and don't step above the safety warning rung. If you weigh more than its safe weight limit, don't use it.

Regardless of age or gender it's really dangerous to take a header off a ladder. Bones don't mend as quickly and a fall can be downright deadly.

A little foresight and planning will keep you out of the ER and your bones intact.