

**Buckley AFB, CO - RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) NEWSLETTER - Feb 2020**

18401 East A-Basin Ave, Stop 95, Buckley AFB, CO 80011

**Building 606, Room 104**, phone **720-847-6693**, e-mail address: **460sw.rao.org@us.af.mil**

**Normal Hrs of operation:** Mon 1000-1600, Tues 0900-1200, Wed 0900-1200, Thurs 0800-1500 & Fri 0900-1200

**Director: Steve Young, Lt Col, USAF, Ret**

**RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) LOCATION:** We are in **Rm 104** of **Bldg 606**, very close to the main building entrance. As you come in the main entrance, turn left, enter the first hallway on your right and Rm 104 is the first room on your left. **Remember, we assist military retirees from all Services!**

**HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED UNSATISFACTORY SERVICE FROM THE RAO?** We are staffed completely with volunteers who do their very best to help with your issues. While we always strive to provide you with the best possible support, we realize there may be times you experience what you consider to be unsatisfactory customer service when you contact the RAO. Perhaps you never received a response to a voice mail/e-mail you left, you got inaccurate information regarding a question you had or the person who helped you was unable to provide an adequate answer to your question. **If you are ever dissatisfied with the support you get from the RAO please contact the RAO Director to discuss the situation.** The best way to reach me is via my home e-mail - [elkfive@centurylink.net](mailto:elkfive@centurylink.net).

**RAO VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:** We currently have **only 6 permanent RAO volunteers** that support our “Help Desk” (720-847-6693) so the office is not fully manned every day of the week. You can leave a voice mail anytime, and we check Voice Mails frequently to return calls, but **we need more volunteers.** **A typical volunteer spends just one 3-4 hour shift in the office per week.** You don’t need to be an expert on retiree matters, you just need a desire to help military retirees/surviving spouses and a willingness to learn! We will go over reference materials, explain RAO procedures, etc. and you won’t work a solo “shift” until you are comfortable doing so. The job mainly consists of answering phone calls, responding to Voice Mails and meeting with people who come by the office. You either answer customer questions yourself or refer them to the appropriate subject matter expert (SME) and provide them with the contact information for that SME. **If you think you might be interested, or just have questions, please contact me (Steve Young) at my home e-mail - [elkfive@centurylink.net](mailto:elkfive@centurylink.net).**

**HOURS FOR BUCKLEY AFB 6<sup>TH</sup> AVE GATE:** During October 2019 the hours for the 6<sup>th</sup> Ave gate changed. The 6<sup>th</sup> Ave gate hours are currently as follows:

Inbound Traffic: Mon-Sat: 0600-1400

Outbound Traffic: Mon-Sat: 0600-1700

Sunday gate is CLOSED

**Those who feel the new gate hours are a major inconvenience (the back gate only adds about 4 miles to your trip) can contact me directly - I’ll track numbers and provide the info to security.**

The Visitor Center at the 6<sup>th</sup> Ave gate is open Mon-Fri from 0600-1400 and closed weekends, holidays and Space Wing Down days.

The Mississippi Gate is still open 24/7 and it can provide Visitor Center services when the visitor center is closed.

For any questions on gate hours please call 720-847-9252.

**460 FSS EVENTS CALENDAR:** Attached is a 460 FSS calendar showing events planned for February. Under the Outdoor Rec events look at the “Cost” category for your costs as a retiree. The R4R price is for active duty, Guard/Reserve. If a military retiree grandparent brings their grandchild to a trip and that grandchild’s parent is active duty or reserves, the R4R price would apply to the dependent.

**BUCKLEY AFB RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) COFFEE SOCIAL:** We held our last quarterly RAO “coffee social” on Tuesday, 7 Jan at 0900 at the Buckley AFB Panther Den/Community center (Bldg 630). We only had about 15 retirees attend to hear the speakers from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). One presented info on free tax preparation services available in our area and the other had presentations on the “Top Scams in Colorado & How to Stay Safe” and “Technology & Scams: Staying Safe on the Internet.” Both presentations were excellent and very informative. **Our next event is tentatively planned for Tues, 7 Apr** and we have scheduled **speakers from the Casualty Office, base pharmacy and MWR.**

**CO STATE CAPITOL’S VETERAN & SERVICE MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY:** This event is taking place on **Friday, 7 Feb from 0900-1100 at the CO State Capitol, 200 E Colfax, Denver, CO 80203.** There is a Veteran Focused Legislative **Happy Hour** scheduled for **Wed, 5 Feb from 1600-1800 at VFW Post 1** (841 N Santa Fe Dr, Denver, CO 80204) that will highlight veteran focused bills. Colorado Senate President, and Marine, Leroy Garcia is sponsoring the happy hour event at VFW Post 1 AS A LEAD up to Service Member and Veterans Appreciation Day at the State Capitol. Last year ONLY ONE CO State Legislator asked veterans to testify on ONE bill supporting veterans so this is your opportunity to show veterans are interested in the bills affecting them and want to be heard. ALSO the ball was almost dropped on holding this annual event by the Colorado State House. The Senate, led by this Marine, is picking up the slack because they know how important your past and continued service is. Your attendance can help ensure the veteran voice continues to matter in legislation!! FOR MORE DETAILS you can check out VFW Post 1’s FaceBook page or e-mail David Ortiz (VFW Post 1 - Program Director & Senior VP) at [david@vfwpost1.org](mailto:david@vfwpost1.org)

**VETERAN’S BURIAL BENEFITS:** Recently I had a military retiree contact me asking about burial benefits for veterans so I thought I would pass on the info I provided to him. The benefits you are entitled to fall into two categories, monetary and non-monetary. The link below will provide you some info on the generally modest monetary aspect.

<https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-burial.asp>

From my perspective, the **main** way the government can save you more significant money in this area is if you decide to be buried in a national cemetery vs a “public” or private cemetery. There are 3 national cemeteries in CO - Ft Logan, Pikes Peak and Ft Lyon. In a national cemetery you will still be responsible for costs associated with things like cremation, embalming, a casket/urn and transportation to the cemetery but the government will provide the plot, opening/closing of the grave, a grave liner, perpetual care, a government headstone/marker, a burial flag and a Presidential Memorial Certificate. The link below will provide you with lots of info on this benefit. I’ve also included a link with information about the Ft Logan cemetery since it is the one closest to us.

[https://www.cem.va.gov/burial\\_benefits/](https://www.cem.va.gov/burial_benefits/)

<https://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/ftlogan.asp>

Just FYI, there are some organizations in our area that specialize in funerals for veterans and you can find them with a quick Google search. You should also know there are Veteran Services Officers in every county in CO and they can help answer questions you may have regarding your benefits in this area, about applying for a plot in a national cemetery in advance, etc. Below is a link where you can just click on the county you live in and it will provide you with the name(s) and contact info (phone and e-mail) for the VSO in your county.

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/vets/county-veterans-service-offices>

I encourage everyone to think beyond just burial plans and look at your overall preparation for your passing, as we discussed at several coffee socials. This is something most people choose not to think about or just never

follow through on because it does involve a lot of work to get your affairs in order, documentation organized, etc. You can use Google to find lots of different checklists related to this, but we also have a link to one on our Retiree Activities Office website: <https://www.buckley.af.mil/Units/Retiree-Activities-Office/> Under the “Reporting a Retiree Death” section there is a link to the “Air Force Retiree Mortuary Plan” checklist that you can check out. In addition, there is a good booklet related to this from the VA which you can find at the link below: [https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Planning\\_Legacy\\_Booklet.pdf](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Planning_Legacy_Booklet.pdf)

**BUCKLEY AFB 2020 RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY (RAD):** Just a heads up that we have scheduled our 2020 RAD for Saturday, 3 Oct, at the Leadership Development Center (LDC) on base.

### **EMPLOYMENT EXPOS & JOB FAIRS:**

On **Tuesday, 4 Feb, from 1000-1300**, the Greater Denver job fair will be held at Embassy Suites Denver Stapleton (4444 Havana St, Denver, CO 80239). You can get more information and register to attend at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/greater-denver-job-fair-multiple-colorado-companies-hiring-february-2020-tickets-78667932905>

On **Thursday, 6 Feb, from 1100-1400**, the Denver Career Fair will be held at the Sheraton Denver Tech Center Hotel (7007 South Clinton St, Greenwood Village, CO 80112). You can get more information and register to attend at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/denver-career-fair-february-6-2020-tickets-78216641079>

On **Monday, 17 Feb, from 1100-1400**, a Denver Job Fair will be held at the Holiday Inn Denver-Cherry Creek (455 South Colorado Blvd, Denver, CO 80246). You can get more information and register to attend at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/denver-job-fair-february-17-2020-career-fair-tickets-82105857831>

**THE PATRIOT PROJECT:** In 2002, President George Bush signed Public Law 107-135, which guaranteed chiropractic treatment for all eligible VA patients. However, many veterans don't know this service is available to them, even though it has been included in their Medical Benefits Package since 2004. If you're a veteran suffering from a musculoskeletal disorder, or pain in the muscles, joints and bones, chiropractic care may be a treatment option worth looking into. **The Patriot Project**, launched in 2012 by Dr. Timothy P. Novelli, is now an option for service members and veterans in need. The Patriot Project is a grassroots movement that **provides free chiropractic care to qualified veterans with service related disabilities, active duty service members and their families, and Gold Star dependents**. More information on the Patriot Project can be found at <http://www.patriot-project.org/>. The web site indicates participating doctors will make time available to treat *at least* one armed-service member a week at no charge, but services vary between providers. If you click on the “Participants” link on the website, you can then select CO and get a list of all the 37 (as of now) chiropractors in CO who participate in the Patriot Project. Some offices also take Tricare for those who aren't eligible for free treatment and some offer other services besides chiropractic, like regenerative medicine treatment for soft tissue and joints.

**TRUSTED TRAVELER PROGRAM:** This program allows military retirees with an ID card to bring “guests” in their car who **don't** have a military ID on base freely. When that program gets suspended, as it did for a short time in January, then you have to take those guests without an ID to the Visitor Control Center (VCC) to sign them in and allow base access. As of this writing the program is in effect again but you should know it can be suspended again at any time due to world events and we will not know in advance - just be aware.

**AARP FOUNDATION ELDERWATCH - SCAMS & FRAUD:** If you have questions about a scam or financial fraud there are ElderWatch volunteers who can help you. You can report suspected fraud, get personalized referrals and assistance and obtain information about consumer fraud issues and trends to 800-222-4444. In the AARP presentation at the RAO coffee social they listed the top 5 red flags of a phone scam:

Asking for your credit card, bank account or Social Security numbers

Caller is aggressive and/or pressures you to act quickly

Caller is offering you something that sounds “too good to be true”

You are asked to pay a “nominal” fee for shipping, handling, etc to get your “gift”

Caller says you have been “specially selected” for an offer

You can also call the AARP Fraud Watch Network at 877-908-3360 or get the latest fraud news and advice at [aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork](http://aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork)

**SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN - DEPENDENT INDEMNITY COMPENSATION OFFSET (“WIDOWS TAX”) PHASED ELIMINATION:** The FY20 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), signed by the President on 20 Dec, repealed a decades-old injustice that took money from the pockets of surviving spouses of military members. The Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), created in 1972, allowed a military retiree or retirement-eligible service member to ensure a continuous lifetime annuity for their dependents. However, until now a VA benefit called the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset the money a widow would receive from SBP, dollar-for-dollar. For example, if the surviving spouse was receiving \$10k/yr in DIC, their SBP was reduced by \$10k/yr. This offset was commonly referred to as a “widow’s tax.” SBP and DIC are different programs, paid for by different federal agencies. The FY20 NDAA completely eliminates the Widow’s Tax, but in phases. **No changes will take place in calendar year 2020.** In 2021, one-third of the SBP will be restored and in 2022, two-thirds will be restored. On January 1, 2023, the SBP will be completely restored *and surviving spouses will receive their SBP and DIC payments in full.*

DFAS has set up a website where you can get the latest on this issue: [www.dfas.mil/sbpdicnews](http://www.dfas.mil/sbpdicnews) If this impacts you, **don’t** call DFAS to find out what your “new” SBP payments will be once the change is implemented, they won’t be able to tell you yet. The most important thing you can do at this point is to ensure your annuity account information is up to date and includes your correct mailing address so DFAS can contact you. If you don’t already have a MyPay account, I recommend you set one up so DFAS will also have your e-mail address. There is info on how to set up a MyPay account on page 5 of this newsletter.

**COMMISSARY/BASE EXCHANGE/MWR ACCESS FOR VETERANS IN 2020:** The Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 authorized veterans authorized access to in-person commissary, military exchange and morale, welfare and recreation privileges on DoD and Coast Guard installations beginning 1 Jan 2020. **Initially, only those with a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) and caregivers registered with the VA’s Comprehensive Program for Caregivers will be authorized base access.** Caregivers will be presented a letter by the VA to certify they qualify for access - they will also require a valid form of ID (real ID-compliant driver’s license, US passport, etc). Before gaining access for the first time all new users will be required to go through a background check - those with felony convictions, felony arrest warrants and other types of derogatory information related to criminal history or terrorism will be turned away. This process will be handled by the Visitor Control Center (VCC) on base. In addition to the 5% surcharge all commissary users currently pay, new customers with the VHIC will have to pay a 1.9% fee when using a commercial credit card and a .5% fee for debit cards. The regular veteran ID card (VIC) will not provide base access. Those veterans who are not in the two categories mentioned above will need to wait on “Phase Two” - the timeframe for that has not been announced.

**INCOME TAX FILING ASSISTANCE:** It's that time of year again so I thought some of you might be interested in a few tax preparation options available in our area, if you don't do your own using Turbo Tax or whatever. While H&R Block and others obviously charge you to do taxes, **there are at least two free alternatives.**

There is normally an H&R Block Tax Booth located in the food court of the Base Exchange. Their prices generally run from about \$59 (W2 income only) - \$189 (paid mortgage interest, etc) depending on the complexity of your taxes.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers *free* tax help to people who generally make \$56,000 or less, persons with disabilities and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals.

In addition to VITA, the **Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE)** program offers *free tax help for all taxpayers, particularly those who are 60 years of age and older*, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors. The IRS-certified volunteers who provide tax counseling are often retired individuals associated with non-profit organizations that receive grants from the IRS.

The **web site** at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-you-by-volunteers> provides you with two links where you can search (by zip code) for places near you that offer **free** tax return preparation by volunteers. One link is for the "VITA/TCE Locator Tool" and one is for the "AARP Tax-Aide Site Locator Tool."

The tax preparers at the AARP Tax-Aide sites will do taxes for *anyone* at no charge - you don't need to be an AARP member. There were 17 different AARP tax-aid locations listed within 20 miles of my zip code - at libraries, retirement homes, senior centers, rec centers, etc. Some of them allow you to make appointments on-line and others you have to call. If you have additional questions for them you can call the AARP tax-aid site located nearest you or visit <https://cotaxaide.org>.

**BASE PHARMACY - PHONE IN PRESCRIPTION ACTIVATION PROCESS:** After hearing from one frustrated retiree, I've met with both the base pharmacy and a representative from the base Patient & Family Advocacy Council regarding the requirement for patients to call the pharmacy to "activate" prescriptions submitted electronically. The primary concern is the long wait times on hold to reach a person and activate the prescription. At my **last meeting on 23 Jan** we discussed several potential options to improve this process and the POC I am working with agreed to look into those. I will provide updates on this in future newsletters. In the meantime, **if you have any complaints, suggestions, etc related to the base pharmacy you can contact one of the Patient Advocates, SSgt Sable Fry of the 460 SW MDG, at [sable.k.fry.mil@mail.mil](mailto:sable.k.fry.mil@mail.mil)** In addition, any of you that use the base pharmacy phone in prescription "activation" process **specifically**, and find it unsatisfactory, are welcome to send an e-mail to me personally at [elkfive@centurylink.net](mailto:elkfive@centurylink.net). Please provide some specifics on your experience in the e-mail (routine problems, extensive wait times, dropped calls, etc). This will help give me a feel for the number of retirees who consider this a problem and provide info I can relay to Maj Boral and the Patient and Family Advocate council.

**PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS UNDER TRICARE:** We've gotten several calls from people who are not aware of their options for getting prescription medications under Tricare - either regular Tricare or Tricare for Life (TFL). So, even though I'm sure most of you already know this, here is some basic info for those who may not. Under Tricare there are four basic options to obtain medication prescribed by your doctor - using these could save you money. From cheapest to most expensive, the options are: a military pharmacy; the Tricare Express Scripts home delivery program; a Tricare retail network pharmacy (~58k locations) and; a non-network pharmacy. Tricare requires your prescription be filled with a generic product if one is available. At a **military pharmacy** (like the one on Buckley AFB) you can receive up to a 90 day supply of *most medications* at **no cost to you**. Using **Express Scripts** home delivery you can receive up to a 90 day supply of *most generic medications* for a **\$10 copay and brand-name medications for a \$29 copay**. For prescription drugs not on the Tricare's preferred list the copay is \$60. At an **in network retail pharmacy** (like a Walgreens, Rite Aid, Walmart, etc) you can receive up to a **30** day supply of *most generic medications* for a \$13 copay and \$33 for brand name medications. Prices at non-network

pharmacies will vary. If you have any questions you can call the Buckley AFB Pharmacy (720-847-7455) or Express Scripts (877-363-1303, 800-282-2881 or visit <https://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE/index.shtml>).

**MILITARY HONOR PLATES:** One of the newsletter recipients pointed out to me the CO DMV offers “Qualified Exempt Military License Plates” for several categories of veterans - those who have earned the AF Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, etc. This means the applicant may be issued one plate exempt from ownership taxes and registration fees (sales/use tax not exempt). You can find more info, and application forms at [https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/DR2002\\_1.pdf](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/DR2002_1.pdf)

**GENERAL & MRS CURTIS E. LEMAY FOUNDATION:** **The LeMay Foundation helps widows and widowers of all Air Force Retirees, both officers and enlisted, through financial grants of assistance** and provide assistance for as long as it is required. They have some spouses who have been receiving monthly checks for over fifteen years. They can also help them with a specific need in a single disbursement (a new pair of eyeglasses, minor home repairs, dental work, etc). They do not offer loans - all funds given are considered grants. You can find more info at <https://www.lemay-foundation.org/>

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERAN (DAV) MOBILE SERVICE OFFICES (MSOs):** Housed in a fleet of well equipped “offices on wheels” DAV’s Mobile Service Offices (MSOs) travel to smaller towns and rural communities across the country to counsel and assist veterans to educate veterans and their families on the benefits and services available to them in thanks for their service. Aided by Department and Chapter Service Officers, the MSO program provides support to veterans developing, filing and winning claims for benefits administered under federal, state and local laws. National Service Officers (NSOs) counsel and assist with the development of evidence, completion of required applications and prosecution of claims, bringing benefit and services education to veterans and their families where they live - all services provided by DAV NSOs are free of charge. For more info on free DAV services call Carmen McGinnis in the Denver VA Regional Office (155 Van Gordon St) at (303) 914-5570. **Right now the web site below shows no locations in our area for Jan but you can check for updates.**

To see an MSO calendar for any date or location, you can use the following link:  
[http://donate.dav.org/site/PageServer?pagename=MSO\\_Events\\_All](http://donate.dav.org/site/PageServer?pagename=MSO_Events_All)

**FREE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE LIFE-TIME ACCESS PASS FOR DISABLED VETERANS:** Veterans with a service connected disability rating are eligible to enter Federal parks for free with the Lifetime National Parks Access Pass from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. The Access Pass also admits disabled any passengers in their vehicle, and provides discounts on other things such as camping, swimming, board launching, and guided tours.

**DISABLED VETERANS FLY SPACE AVAILABLE FOR FREE:** When congress signed the *John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act* last year, 100% service connected disabled Veterans became eligible for Space Available Travel. Better known as ‘Space-A’, or military hops, Air Mobility Command (AMC) maintains an extensive network of flights throughout the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam and American Samoa. Supplementing this network, several Air National Guard and Naval Aviation Units have flights available. You can get more info on Space-A at <https://www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Travel-Site/AMC-Space-Available-Travel-Page/>

**BUCKLEY AFB LEGAL OFFICE - WHAT CAN THEY DO FOR YOU?** The majority of the retirees go to base legal for estate planning to include wills, power-of-attorneys, advance medical directives, and living wills. All of these are done *by appointment only* on Tuesday afternoons. They also visit legal for assistance with matters such as probate, divorce, elder abuse/scams, and other legal matters. These appointments are scheduled on Thursday afternoons. Legal *does not* provide assistance for any of the following: criminal matters; real estate/closing documents; official matters in which the US Government has an interest; matters on behalf of third parties (their children); commercial enterprise to include private organizations, rental properties, home businesses;

trusts; any representation of a client in a court or administrative proceeding. Legal will do wills and witness/notarize documents but they will not do trusts. **Customers can make an appointment with legal by calling 720-847-6444 (Bldg 1030, the 460<sup>th</sup> SW HQ building).**

**CORRECTING & REQUESTING MILITARY RECORDS:** Air Force veterans who need to have an error corrected or an injustice removed from their military records should complete a DD Form 149, Application for Correction of Military Record. The form instructions advise mailing the package to the address on the back of the form, but the DD Form 149 is currently being revised for an address change. The intake office on the back of the form has relocated from Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas, to Joint Base Andrews, MD. To ensure an application is received and processed in a timely manner, mail the DD Form 149, along with any supporting documents, to: SAF/MRBC (AFBCMR), 3351 Celmers Lane, Joint Base Andrews NAF, Washington, MD 20762-6435 or send the package by email to [usaf.pentagon.saf-mr.mbx.saf-mrbc@mail.mil](mailto:usaf.pentagon.saf-mr.mbx.saf-mrbc@mail.mil).

You can get additional information at the following link: <https://www.afpc.af.mil/Career-Management/Military-Personnel-Records/> Scroll down to the “RECORDS CORRECTION” section for more information. On this same site, in the “REQUEST COPY OF MILITARY RECORDS” section, you will find the following info on how to get a copy of your military records. “Air Force veterans who separated or retired on or after Oct. 1, 2004, may request their records in two ways: register for a free Premium account on the Department of Veterans Affairs’ [eBenefits site](#), or email, mail or fax a signed SF-180 to AFPC’s military personnel records section. The form can be emailed to AFPC/DP1OR Military Records Incoming at [dpsomp.incoming@us.af.mil](mailto:dpsomp.incoming@us.af.mil), faxed to 210-565-3124 (DSN 665-3124) or mailed to the AFPC address on the back of the form. *Requests for records or documents cannot be made by phone.*”

You can find additional information on getting copies of your records from the National Archives web site at <https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center/military-personnel> or calling 314-801-0800.

**REPORTING THE DEATH OF A RETIREE TO DFAS ONLINE:** Reporting the death of a retiree can be a difficult task for family or friends. We know that waiting on the phone and talking to one of our customer service representatives is not high on the priority list right after someone passes away. **DFAS has re-introduced the option to report the death of a retiree online.** To use the online Notice of Death option, click on the link at the top of the Retired Military & Annuitants main page, which is located at <https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary.html>. This will take you to a form where you will enter all of the pertinent information. When reporting a retiree’s death, be sure to have the following information available:

- Retiree’s full name
- Retiree’s SSN
- Retiree’s date of death
- Cause of death
- Marital status (if married, the wedding date)

The form also asks for your name, address, phone number and email address. If you are completing this form on behalf of someone else, such as the spouse or child of the deceased retiree, please use the contact information of the person you are helping to make the report. Updates on the status of the claim will be sent to the email address provided, including an email verifying that the notification was received. If you need any assistance you can always contact the Buckley AFB Casualty Assistance Representative, Loretta Lopez, at 720-847-6946.

**ELDERCARE LOCATOR:** The Eldercare Locator is a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging connecting people to services for older adults and their families. This locator allows you to search for a variety of topics using ZIP codes, or city/state, to find services nearest you. You can get more info at the following link: <https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx> or call 800-677-1116.

**STATE VA BENEFITS:** Everyone knows about the federal benefits available to veterans, but did you know many *states* also offer great benefits to their veterans? State benefits range from free college and employment resources to free hunting and fishing licenses. Most states also offer tax breaks for their veterans and specialized license plates, some states even provide their veterans with cash bonuses just for serving in the military. A handy summary of the benefits each state and territory offers can be found here: <https://militarybenefits.info/state-veterans-benefits/> There may be a benefit available to you or your family that you didn't know about!

Other **Federal VA benefit numbers:** life insurance 800-669-8477; status of headstones and markers, 800-697-6947; special issues such as Gulf War/radiation/Agent Orange/Project Shad call 800-749-8387; and GI Bill and education matters call 888-442-4551. Visit the Federal website at [www.va.gov/](http://www.va.gov/) for more info.

**DENVER VA REGIONAL BENEFITS OFFICE HOURS & LOCATIONS:** *Do you have a question about your VA Benefits? Compensation Claim, Pension Claim, Aid and Attendance, Appeals, survivor and burial benefits, Home Loans, Employment, or Education*

The VBA Office in the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center is holding office hours:

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. (last appt. at 3:30 p.m.)

Phone: (800) 827-1000

Location:

Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center

Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)

1700 North Wheeling Street

Aurora, CO 80045

Sign up to meet with a counselor in the Pharmacy waiting room.

**We also have a Veterans Affairs Office on Buckley AFB in Bldg 606. There are two Benefits Advisors there (Mr Groce & Mr White) who can be reached at 720-847-4838 from Mon-Fri 0800 - 1600.**

## **ID CARD RENEWALS FOR MILITARY RETIREES, SPOUSES & DEPENDENTS**

For ID card renewal there are several places you can use in our area, both on and off Buckley AFB. If your computer is compatible, you can use the following two web sites to locate ID card facilities near you and to make an appointment. The RAPIDS locator web site is at <https://rsl.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/> and the appointment site is at <https://rapids-appointments.dmdc.osd.mil> . If the links above won't work for you, info on the nearby ID card facilities is below. **A word of caution - on the day of your appointment I'd encourage you to call the location you're using to ensure DEERS is up - if DEERS is down they won't be able to process your ID card.**

Note: when you or spouse are approaching age 65 the FRONT of your ID card probably has INDEF listed, but on the back there is probably an actual expiration date, which should be the **month before your 65th birthday** - use this date to determine when you need to get a new card. You may schedule an ID card replacement appointment (up to 1 month before your ID card expires) using the process outlined above.

MPF at Buckley AFB (Bldg 606 on 18401 E A-Basin Ave) - they are really by appointment only. You can call them at 720-847-6990 to schedule an appointment.

ANG at Buckley AFB (18860 E Breckenridge Ave, Hangar 801, Rm N224) - You can call 720-847-9295, closed Monday.

NAVOPS Space Ctr at Buckley AFB (7 N Snowmass St, Bldg 1301) - you can call 720-847-7808, Closed Monday

CO HQ Army NG in Centennial (6848 South Revere Pkwy) - you can call 720-250-1315, Closed on Monday.

NOAA Facility in Boulder (Skaggs Bldg, Rm GB515 - 325 Broadway) - you can call 303-497-6119, open Mon-Wed-Fri by appointment only.

**GRAY AREA RESERVISTS:** We get quite a few calls in the RAO from Gray Area Reservists approaching 60 who have questions regarding the processing of their retirement orders, when they can anticipate their first pension check, what they need to do regarding Tricare, etc. Based on that, below is some POC information for Guard/Reserve members from the various services. In addition, we send a personal letter to Gray Area Reservists we know of in our AOR several months before their 60<sup>th</sup> birthday with additional information. We can also provide you with a copy of DoD Fm 2656 if you are having trouble downloading it.

*Air Force Guard/Reserve:*

Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC): <https://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/retirement/> or 1-800-525-0102. If you experience trouble reaching ARPC with this number please get in touch with us and we will use our back-channel contacts at ARPC to try and assist. ARPC encourages retirees to file retirement packages using a MyPers account. **In Nov 19 ARPC implemented a retirement application status bar in MyPers so applicants can now track the status of their submitted package. Instructions on how to use the application status bar can be found at:** <https://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/Portals/4/Documents/Retirement%20application%20status%20bar%20instructions.pdf?ver=2019-11-20-120624-723&timestamp=1574269784796>

*Army Guard/Reserve Personnel in CO*

88<sup>th</sup> Readiness Division Retirement Services Office (RSO) - 60 South O Street, Ft. McCoy, Wisconsin 54656  
608-388-7448/9321 or DSN 280-0596  
<http://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement/reserve-component-retirement-services>

*Navy Guard/Reserve Personnel*

PERS-912: 1-866-827-5672 or 1-833-330-6622  
[https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/retired\\_activities/Pages/default.aspx](https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/retired_activities/Pages/default.aspx)  
The Navy also has a MyNavy Career Center website at <https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/organization/npc/MNCC/Pages/default.aspx> or you can call 1-833-330-6622 for assistance.

*USMC Reserve Personnel*

MMSR-5 Reserve Retirement & Separation Section: 703-784-9306/9307

*Coast Guard Reserve Personnel*

National Retiree Help Desk Hotline (unless it is a pay related issue): 1-833-224-6743 -  
For pay related issues call 1-800-772-8724 or 785-339-3415  
<https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Retiree-Services-Program/>

*Colorado Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA)*

This office assists Service members in accessing Dept of VA health care services & benefits. The TAA initiative was started in May 2005 when the National Guard Bureau (NGB) signed a MoA with the VA.  
Amy Eagen - 720-250-1173 (works Tues-Fri)

**MyPay ADDRESS CHANGE:** The simplest and quickest solution for changing your mailing address is through myPay, using the online account management system. For any questions or concerns regarding myPay, call 888-332-7411 (option 5) for a customer service representative. Both retirees and annuitants may call DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay at 800-321-1080. If you call MyPay have your banking information available - you may need **routing and account information** before they will talk with you.

**MAIL OPTION:** Please include both your old and new mailing address, along with the effective date for the new address. In addition, please include your name, social security number and signature with date on your request. For retirees, use the address below:

DFAS U.S. Military Retired Pay  
8899 E 56th Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46249-1200  
Or FAX DFAS Retired Pay at 800-469-6559

If you are an annuitant please mail your request to:

DFAS U.S. Military Annuitant Pay  
8899 E 56th Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46249-1300  
Or FAX DFAS Annuitant Pay at 800-982-8459

**LIFE CHANGING EVENT? KEEP DFAS INFORMED:** Ensuring your retired pay comes to you accurately and on time is our primary goal at DFAS. To do this, we need your help to keep your account up to date. As a retiree, the sooner you alert us to any change that might affect your pay, the more timely and accurate your pay will be. Keeping your account up to date includes making sure your mailing address, banking information, allotments, tax withholding status, and your beneficiary choices are current. Be sure to report any change of life events as soon as they happen. These life-changing events include:

- Marriage
- Divorce
- Death of a spouse or child
- Birth or adoption of a child

Some changes, especially those regarding SBP, have a one-year time limit, so it is very important that DFAS is notified of life-changing events when they happen. When you notify us, be sure to include supporting documents, such as birth or marriage certificates. Keeping your contact information updated is also key to staying informed. We occasionally send out correspondence regarding changes in the law that affect your pay, and a new Retired Account Statement (RAS) is sent when your net pay changes (unless you are on **myPay** where the new RAS is available online). **If your mailing address is not correct and you are not on myPay, they have no way of notifying you about changes. The easiest way to stay up to date is to use myPay. You can use myPay to change your mailing address, your direct deposit information, certain allotments and your tax withholding status. You can also use myPay to verify payment information, including allotment amounts, or tax withholding, or check your Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage on your RAS. You can create a myPay account at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/>**

## **SURVIVOR BENEFITS:**

### **Reporting the Death of a Retiree**

Please report the death of a retired service member as soon as possible to avoid delay and possible financial hardship to surviving beneficiaries. You can contact the Buckley AFB Casualty Office at (720) 847-6946 for assistance with this claim as well as other applicable claims, for example Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Claim, Civil Service Claim, VA Claim, other insurance claims, etc. Our goal is to provide our survivors with “one stop” assistance with the necessary paperwork that comes with the death of your retired loved one. **If you are not sure who your Casualty Assistance Representative (CAR) is, you can call 877-353-6807, enter your zip code, and you will be automatically transferred to the base CAR responsible for your area.**

## Reporting the Death of Annuitant

When you pass, your eligibility for Survivor Benefit Plan ends. Prompt reporting of a deceased military annuitant's death can help avoid delay and possible financial hardship to surviving family members or executors, who will be required to return any unearned payments of the decedent's annuity pay. Be sure to let your survivors know that your (SBP Annuitant) death will need to be reported to DFAS or you can contact our Casualty Assistance Representative Loretta Lopez at 720-847-6946.

## Retirees

Do your loved ones know who to contact in the event of your death? **Casualty Assistance Representatives (CARs)** stand ready to lend a hand with your casualty assistance needs. Call them for an appointment to talk about what you should have ready for your loved ones in the event of your passing.

**Buckley AFB Casualty Assistance Office (Loretta Lopez) - CAR/SBP Rep .... 720-847-6946**

Retired Air Force.....1-877-353-6807  
Retired Army.....1-800-626-3317  
Retired Coast Guard.....1-800-772-8724  
Retired Marines.....1-800-847-1597  
Retired Navy.....1-800-368-3202  
Retired Civil Service.....1-888-767-6738  
Receiving VA Compensation.....1-800-827-1000  
Social Security Administration.....1-800-772-1213

**FREE MOVIES:** Buckley AFB shows a family movie at the Leadership Development Center (LDC - Bldg 1032) on the 3rd Friday of every month. Doors open at 1800 and the movie starts at 1830. MWR determines movies shown based on the most popular and rating appropriate movie sent to them through their movie program. You can check the schedule at the following link: <https://www.460fss.com/> The movie for 21 Feb is **Frozen II**. You can find other info on the **460FSS FaceBook page** at <https://www.facebook.com/460FSS/>.

Groups can schedule a movie showing at the Panther Den on base by contacting Justin Lentz (720-847-7197). Justin can provide the most current list of available movies when you contact him.

**BUCKLEY AFB PUBLIC AFFAIRS:** A good way to find out what is happening on Buckley AFB - the Public Affairs staff has information available on the Buckley AFB web site (<http://www.buckley.af.mil/>) as well as the Buckley AFB Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/BuckleyAirForceBase/?rf=106189116104357>)

**BUCKLEY AFB COMMISSARY HOURS & HOLIDAYS FOR 2019:** Commissary hours are shown below.

Sundays 0800-1900  
Tuesday - Saturday 0800-1900  
Early Bird Hours 0800-0900 This time is *supposed* to be for customers with 20 items or less  
**CLOSED** All Mondays (starting February 4<sup>th</sup>)  
**CLOSED** November 28 Thanksgiving  
**CLOSED** December 25 Christmas Day  
**CLOSED** January 1 New Year's Day

**AIR FORCE RETIREE AFTERBURNER:** Here is the link to the Afterburner for latest retiree news:  
<http://www.retirees.af.mil/Library/Afterburner/>

**VETERAN OWNED BUSINESS DIRECTORY:** One of your fellow retirees sent me the link below so I am passing it on to you. The web site allows you to search for veteran owned businesses by type of business, by state, etc. <https://www.veteranownedbusiness.com>

**BUCKLEY AFB WEB SITE - RETIREE PAGE:** Check our Retiree page on the Buckley AFB website at <http://www.buckley.af.mil/Units/Retiree-Activities-Office/> There are links to informative websites related to ID cards, military/retiree support organizations and online news, reporting the death of a service member/spouse, retiree information/resources, veteran's records, survivor assistance, travel & lodging, etc. The last three issues of our newsletter are posted here. **We welcome your feedback on the site!**

**BUCKLEY AFB OUTDOOR REC & ITT:** Buckley AFB Outdoor Rec and Information Tickets & Travel (ITT) (Bldg 1022) provides many programs and services to the Buckley community, as well as the worldwide US Department of Defense community. Stop by and check out ITT where they sell many in-state and out-of-state tickets to theme parks including Elych Gardens, Disney and Universal Studios, plus local professional sports games such as the Nuggets and Rockies. For skiers and snowboarders, they sell lift tickets and season passes to most Colorado ski areas. For their ticket list, stop by ITT or give them a call at 720-847-6100.

Other services provided by Outdoor Rec include an RV storage lot, Williams FamCamp RV Park, guided trips, outdoor adventures, ski and snowboard tuning services and retail sales of outdoor apparel and equipment. They also offer a wide variety of equipment for rent at very reasonable prices (camping gear, home & garden equipment, picnic needs, sports equipment & games, campers & trailers, party equipment, etc). See their website for additional information: <https://www.460fss.com/outdoor-rec-itt/>

**This newsletter is a RAO publication for retirees, annuitants and surviving spouses. Content is **not** to be construed as the official view of, or endorsement by, the RAO, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Air Force.**