

Buckley AFB, CO - RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) NEWSLETTER - May 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: **Physical RAO Office Space Closed as of 18 Mar**

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!

CHANGES TO RAO OPERATIONS: On 18 Mar the RAO was directed to close the office due to the COVID-19 virus concerns as we are **not** deemed "service essential." As you know, all of our staff are volunteers and their health is my primary concern. While the hours on our website have not been updated, there will be **no one** in the office (Bldg 606, Rm 104) until further notice. **You should know this will have *minimal* impact on the support we routinely provide military retirees/surviving spouses.** While we won't be able to see or respond to any e-mails sent to our 460sw.rao.org@us.af.mil address, every weekday we will be routinely checking Voice Mails left at our office number, 720-847-6693, just as we always do, and contacting you from home to assist you. My cell phone is a 703-xxx-xxxx number and that is what I will use to contact you. Our objective is to make the actual office closure as transparent as possible to you, the customer.

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON BUCKLEY AFB: There have been significant changes to Buckley AFB operations due to COVID-19 - some directly impact military retirees/surviving spouses. As I write this some of the major ones are below. **Check the Buckley AFB FaceBook (FB) page and website for the most current info - links below:**

<https://www.facebook.com/BuckleyAirForceBase/> Col Pepper is doing FB Live broadcasts each Wed at 1800
<https://www.buckley.af.mil/> Click on the COVID-19 block in the upper right and review ALL data on that page

Closed Facilities

6th Avenue Gate, and Visitor Control Center there, closed until further notice - must use the Mississippi Gate
Base Gym
Barber Shop
Outdoor Rec
Ent Credit Union
Panther Den/Community Center
Optometry Shop
Chapel

Facilities with Changes to Hours & Service

Mission Essential DoD civilians/contractors working on base are authorized to use the commissary & exchange
Exchange Hours are 0900-1900 Mon-Sun - maximum of 75 in store at one time, masks and ID card required

ONLY Active Duty/Guard/Reserve & their dependents from 0900-1000 Mon-Sun

Commissary Hours are 0900-1900 Tues-Sun - maximum of 75 in store at one time, masks and ID card required

ONLY Active Duty/Guard/Reserve & their dependents from 0900-1000 Tues-Sun

Pharmacy Hours are 0900-1600 Tues-Fri - **no walk-in customers**, only two drive thru lines

ONLY Active Duty/Guard/Reserve & their dependents from 0900-1000 Tues-Fri

Base Legal Office is appointment only and partial service - call first 720-847-6444

MPF Pass & ID section is appointment only, partial service, open 0800-1200 - call first 720-847-6990/4357

Airmen & Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) is appointment only and partial service - call first 720-847-6681

TRUSTED TRAVELER PROGRAM (TTP) SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE: As of 16 Apr the Trusted Traveler Program (TTP) on base was suspended. What does this mean to you? The TTP allows you to drive on base and “escort” passengers in your car that don’t have a military ID (friend, relative, etc). When the TTP is operational the Security person just ensures you have a valid military ID and if you have “guests” in your car you just proceed onto base.

When the TTP is suspended, you **cannot** just proceed onto base, the Security people will run a background check on each of your passengers (over 16) without an ID and then issue them a base pass for the day. Normally, when the 6th Ave gate, and Visitor Control Center (VCC) at that gate, are open, you would be directed to the VCC parking lot and go inside with your guests to have the checks done on the guests and the base passes issued.

As you know, the 6th Ave gate, and VCC, have been closed for weeks now so you **have** to use the Mississippi Gate, where there is **no** VCC and no convenient place for you to get out of traffic while the visitor checks are made and base passes issued. So, what this means is you can still bring guests on base but you should also expect a delay if you do.

DON'T BE A SCAM VICTIM: Please be especially vigilant for scams during the pandemic. Be skeptical of phone calls, e-mails, social media (Facebook, etc) and any other requests you receive for money to help military members or any other agencies soliciting funds during this time - use due diligence to verify any agency you are considering for a donation is legitimate. It is not unusual to see the elderly targeted, as they have been in the past, to “help the military” in their time of need. Base Legal is not aware of any organization conducting any type of legitimate pandemic fundraising for military members at this time and they wouldn’t expect that to happen. Military members are being cared for and will continue to be paid. In general, nothing on Facebook or any other form of social media should be implicitly trusted as a legitimate source. In the past, as you may know, Facebook and others have been manipulated and people have fallen prey to those claiming to be military members in need. The elderly have sent thousands of dollars to Western Union addresses in Africa as a result, thereby unknowingly contributing to terrorist activities and scammers in those countries. Be very skeptical of anyone asking you to wire or make any other transfer of funds to somebody on Facebook or other social media. Military members would **not** solicit financial assistance through social media or any other similar means as that would be a violation of the Joint Ethics Regulation.

VIRTUAL NETWORKING EVENT FOR VETERANS & SPOUSES: On Wednesday, **6 May**, from 0930-1230 there will be a virtual networking event for veterans and spouses using ZOOM. For mor information and to register use the following link, which will also have instructions on using Zoom: <http://bit.ly/ADW-VETS> Please sign in 15 minutes early.

ASKDFAS WEBSITE AVAILABLE: DFAS has the askDFAS website available with a specific category for “Retirees and Annuitants.” When you click on that category you will find general categories related to MyPay, mailing address, tax statements, reporting a retirees death, arrears of pay, etc. This site allows you to submit questions to DFAS via e-mail instead of using the customer service number so some may find it more convenient. You can check it out at <https://www.dfas.mil/dfas/AskDFAS/>

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.

RAO VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: We currently have **only 7 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.**

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.

COAST GUARD NATIONAL RETIREE HELP DESK (NRHD) HOTLINE: For any questions a retiree or retiree spouse has regarding benefits (other than those related to pay) such as health care issues, assistance obtaining important forms and/or papers, etc. call 1-888-224-6743 or e-mail nrhdesk@gmail.com. For questions concerning pay call 1-866-772-8724 or e-mail ppc-dg-customer-care@uscg.mil.

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>).

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 460th 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.

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, 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: **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.**

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/ 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

(Due to COVID-19, hours/times/processes for locations below may have changed - call first! Also, if your ID card expires between Jan and Sep 2020 you **don't** need to renew it by the expiration date unless you are turning 65 and qualifying for Medicare. It will still be good to get on base, use the commissary, Exchange, Pharmacy, etc) For ID card renewal there are several places you can go, 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 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 60th 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×tamp=1574269784796>

Army Guard/Reserve Personnel in CO

88th 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

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, effective date for the new address, 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 the primary goal at DFAS. To do this, they need your help to keep your account up to date. *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 them, be sure to include supporting documents, such as birth or marriage certificates. Keeping your contact information updated is also key to staying informed. DFAS occasionally sends 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, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage, certain allotments and your tax withholding status. You can create a myPay account at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/>**

Reporting the Death of a Retiree

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. **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.**

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

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

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!**

AFTERBURNER: Air Force Retiree Services (AFRS) at Randolph AFB, TX publishes the Afterburner twice a year. You can find copies of the Afterburner at the following link: <https://www.retirees.af.mil/library/afterburner/>

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 E!itch 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.**