VICENZA MILITARY COMMUNITY
UNITED STATES ARMY GARRISON ITALY
RETIRED SOLDIER NEWSLETTER

Edition: Spring 2026

ONCE A SOLDIER ALWAYS A SOLDIER…A SOLDIER FOR LIFE!!!

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Once a Soldier, Always a Soldier… A Soldier For Life!!!

A message from the Retirement Services Officer:

Dear Retirees,

Greetings from Vicenza! It is my pleasure to provide you with the Spring 2026 Retired Soldier Newsletter which includes valuable information for you and your Family. We are happy to announce that the 2026 Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) will take place on Wednesday, 16 September 2026 at Caserma Ederle, Vicenza. More information on this year's RAD will be provided once closer to the date.

Have you met your Retirement Services Officer (RSO)?

Do you have questions regarding retirement benefits? Do you need general assitance? The United States Army Garrison (USAG) Italy RSO is Mr. Ariel Rivera and can be reached at Building 28, Office 12 (Military Personnel Division) in Caserma Ederle, Vicenza. You can also reach Mr. Rivera by phone at +39-0444-71-4831 and by email at: usarmy.usag-italy.id-europe.mbx.retiree-services@army.mil

Save the Date! 2026 Vicenza Military Community Retiree Appreciation Day

We are happy to announce that the 2026 Retiree Appreciation Day will take pace on Wednesday, 16 September 2026, 0900 - 1200 Hrs at The Golden Lion, Bldg 311, Caserma Ederle, Vicenza.

The Retiree Appreciation Day is an event dedicated to honoring our community Retirees, providing them with valuable information about their benefits, and fostering community connections. Many agencies will be present providing valuable information on benefits, entitlements and resources available in the local area.

More details as far as guest speakers, agencies participating and health services available will be provided once we get closer to the date and will be published in the next Retiree newsletter and through the Vicenza Military Community Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/VMCItaly/.

Army Emergency Relief *By Mr. Ariel Rivera, USAG Italy*

As an Army retiree, your connection to the military community and its support systems remains strong. One of the most vital resources available to you is Army Emergency Relief (AER), the Army's official nonprofit organization.

Since 1942, AER has been dedicated to providing financial assistance to Soldiers, their families, and retirees during times of unexpected financial hardship. This assistance can cover a wide range of needs, from emergency travel and vehicle repairs to utility bills and funeral expenses. Assistance is typically provided as zero-interest loans, grants, or a combination of both.

Retirees, including those retired for longevity, medical reasons, or those in the reserve component who have reached age 60, and their eligible dependents, are eligible to apply for AER assistance. The application process has been streamlined for your convenience. You can apply for financial aid online from anywhere in the world by visiting: https://www.armyemergencyrelief.org/. For local assistance you can contact the Army Emergency Relief Officer in Caserma Ederle, Vicenza at +39 0444-71-5800.

Army Emergency Relief Campaign

AER is a registered nonprofit 501(c)(3) charity, which means your donation is tax deductible. If you would like to donate to the AER campaign you can do so by scanning this QR code:

Preparing for the 2026 Tax Season *By DFAS*

The next tax season is here, and we want to make sure that you are prepared. Now is the best time to verify everything is correct in your myPay account so you can retrieve your tax documents when you need to file.

Start with myPay

The best tool DFAS offers to ensure a smooth tax season is myPay (https://mypay.dfas.mil). The most important step to take is to log in to your myPay account and ensure your mailing address is correct.

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An easy, online stop for your tax season needs, myPay offers printing or downloading of your tax statements for your retired pay. You can download and print your current year tax statement, as well as prior year 1099-Rs (up to four prior years for retirees). If you need it, you can also download and print IRS Form 1095-B.

You will have earlier access to your tax documents through myPay; 1099-Rs are generally available in myPay in late December, while paper copies are mailed in mid-to-late January. If you haven't logged in to myPay recently, this is a good time to log in and update your password before the busy tax season.

Changing Federal Tax Withholding

It's easy to review your current federal withholding status in myPay. If needed, you may adjust it through the corresponding menu option or view withholding amounts on your latest Retiree Account Statement (RAS). If you prefer, you may also update your withholding by filling out the IRS Form W-4 by filling out the IRS Form W-4, accessible at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) website (https://www.irs.gov) or our forms Library at https://www.dfas.mil/raforms.

Use the IRS Tax Withholding Estimator

The (IRS) has an online Tax Withholding Estimator to help you determine how much tax you need to have withheld. The calculator helps taxpayers estimate if the right amount is withheld from their income to cover their tax liability. The estimator uses a simple, six-step question-and-answer format using information like marital or filing status, income, withholding, adjustments, deductions, and credits. You may access the Tax Withholding Estimator here: https://www.irs.gov/individuals/tax-withholding-estimator. DFAS cannot provide tax advice. Please consult a tax professional or the IRS.

State Taxes for Retirees

Retirees can start, stop, or change their State Income Tax Withholding (SITW), but only if that state has an agreement in place allowing DFAS to withhold state tax. In some states, portions of your retired pay may be tax exempt.

Because tax obligations vary from state to state, contact your state's department of revenue regarding taxability of your military retired pay.

Any changes to SITW must be made in writing, by submitting a DD 2866 form or by using myPay. DFAS can only withhold income tax for one state at a time, and the designated state must have signed the standard written SITW agreement with the Department of War (DOW). Additional details on changing SITW are available on the DFAS website at https://www.dfas.mil/retstatetax.

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Federal Taxability of Retired Pay

Military retired pay is paid for many different reasons under many different laws. There are differences in the types of pay a military retiree might receive and the tax laws that apply to them. Whether a portion or all of an individual's military retired pay is subject to federal income taxes depends on his/her individual circumstances.

A military retiree can either use myPay or send an IRS Form W-4 to alter the amount DFAS withholds for federal income taxes from their military retired pay. An individual's choice to have no withholding for federal taxes does not impact whether the individual's military retired pay is actually subject to federal income taxes. Ultimately, the IRS will determine the amount of taxes owed on military retired pay.

Please note: the IRS requires any individual claiming exemption from federal withholding to provide a new IRS Form W-4 at the beginning of each tax year certifying their exemption from withholding. Please see our webpage regarding taxation of retired pay: https://www.dfas.mil/retpaytax.

Retirees and SBP Annuitants: 2025 Tax Year Statements

Tax statements sent through the U.S. Postal Service will be in the mail prior to January 31, 2026. In many cases, the electronic online forms are available through myPay (https://mypay.dfas.mil) much earlier and more securely than those sent to customers electing delivery by mail.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) 1095-B and 1095-C statements are available in myPay as of January 31, 2026. The 1095-B and 1095-C.

Tax Statements for tax year 2025 are available for reissue via askDFAS https://corpweb1.dfas.mil/askDFAS/custCategories.action?pgModId=5060

Travel Advisories *by U.S. Department of State*

A Travel Advisory is a report from the U.S. Department of State that describes the risks and recommended precautions for U.S. citizens—not foreign nationals—in a foreign destination. The Department of State has no higher priority than the safety and security of U.S. citizens abroad. Information contained in these advisories reflects an assessment of threats only insofar as they may impact U.S. citizens, nationals, and legal residents.

We review many factors to determine the Travel Advisory level for each destination. These include the risk indicators as described in this section. Each destination Travel Advisory identifies any specific risks that are present.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

If you are traveling outside the United States, you should enroll in our Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). It is a free service that sends you email updates and alerts from U.S. embassies and consulates abroad.

You'll receive messages for emergency situations with instructions on what to do, so you can make informed travel decisions. STEP messages include:

-Security alerts
-Demonstration alerts
-Health alerts
-Weather or natural disaster alerts
-Travel Advisory updates
-Routine messages about U.S. embassy and consulate services

To register in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program please visit: https://mytravel.state.gov/s/step

Retiree Account Statement: What is it and why it matters

By Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS)

One of the most useful tools for managing your retirement pay is the Retiree Account Statement (RAS). Issued by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), the RAS provides an overview of your pay, benefits, and deductions. Think of it as a preview of what you can expect to see on your next pay date. Understanding your RAS is a vital step to ensuring your financial well-being.

Where can you find your RAS?

The most convenient and reliable way to access your RAS is through myPay, the official online account management system for current and retired military members. You can access your RAS on myPay 24/7.

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Monthly access: An electronic RAS is available by the first of each month; giving you access to the past 12 months' statements. Account changes: You'll also receive a RAS whenever you make changes to your account.

Tip: To ensure you never miss an update, register your email address in your myPay account. You'll receive an email reminder each month when your RAS is available. To register your email in mypay,
visit: https://mypay.dfas.mil.

Why the RAS is important?

Having access to your RAS is essential and is a great tool for:

- Managing your retirement Income: Gain an understanding of where your money is going and how it's being allocated.
- Ensuring Accuracy: Verify the accuracy of your pay, benefits, and deductions. Catching discrepancies early will help you down the road.
- Tax Preparation: The RAS is essential for tax preparation. The figures on your year-end RAS should match those on your IRS Form 1099-R. Keep both handy when filing your taxes.
- Stay Informed: Be aware of any changes affecting your retirement pay, such as cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) or changes to your benefits.
- Planning for the Future: By understanding your current financial situation, you can better plan for your future financial needs.

Understanding your year-end RAS package

Each year, DFAS mails a year-end RAS package to retirees who haven't opted for electronic delivery. This package contains several important documents. Take the time to review these documents carefully. They provide a valuable overview of your retirement benefits and are crucial for tax filing.

Need help understanding your RAS? Contact the Customer Care Center at +1 800-321-1080 or visit the RAS page (https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/manage/ras/). Please note: DFAS cannot offer tax advice. For tax-related questions, consult with the IRS or a qualified tax advisor.

Veterans Affairs Online Foreign Medical Program (FMP) claims

By U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Attention Veterans! Foreign Medical Program (FMP) Veterans can now submit claims online through our secure portal. To access the portal, you'll need to log in using either ID.me or Login.gov credentials. This new option makes submitting claims faster, easier, and more secure.

*Please note: This is not for providers this is for Veterans only.

In July 2026, FMP will move to a new claims processing system that requires direct deposit payments to providers, also known as Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). As part of this change, all FMP providers must now obtain a foreign tax identification number (FTIN) and submit it to VA's Foreign Medical Program (FMP) office via https://veteransaffairs.ent.box.com/sign/ready-sign-link/cacfd0fb-53e1-4460-a2ad-2e5e981ab4af

Veterans, please note, if your provider does not complete this step, you will need to pay for covered medical costs up front and request reimbursement from FMP.

If you or your provider has any questions or needs assistance completing the necessary requirements for EFT, please email VHA16IVCIENSpecialtyEscalations@va.gov

Did you know Foreign Medical Registrations can be submitted online via https://www.va.gov/health-care/foreign-medical-program/

We are currently opening mail received on 2/18/2026 oldest claim waiting for processing was received on 10/8/2025, uploading email claims received 2/12/2026, uploading faxed claimed received on 2/19/2026 and processing registrations received on 1/5/2026. This is confirmation your email has been received. If you submitted a claim or registration, please allow 30 - 45 days for the documents to be scanned into the system. If you submitted an inquiry, please allow 30 days for a more personalized response.

To enroll in the VA FMP please visit: https://www.va.gov/health-care/foreign-medical-program/.

Reduced Age Retirement (National Guard & Army Reserve)

by Mr. Ariel Rivera, USAG Italy

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2008 authorized the reduction of retirement age eligibility for reserve component Soldiers from 60 to a lesser age (may not be reduced below 50 years of age). The reduced retired pay age is calculated using qualifying periods of service on or after Jan. 29, 2008.

Eligibility age reduced below age 60 is calculated in 90-day increments for qualifying period of active duty (AD) service within a fiscal year on or after 29 January 2008. On or after 1 October 2014, 90-day increments may be performed in any two consecutive fiscal years (not retroactive).

Full-time National Guard when under a call to active service by a governor and authorized by the President or the Secretary of Defense under section 502(f) of Title 32 USC for purposes of responding to either a national emergency declared by the President, or a national emergency supported by Federal funds, may count towards reduced age.

If a Soldier is wounded or otherwise injured or becomes ill while serving under a provision of law mentioned above, and the member is then ordered to AD under section 12301(h)(1) to receive medical care for the wound, injury, or illness, each day of active duty under that order for medical care shall be treated as a continuation of the original call or order to active duty for purposes of reducing the eligibility age of the member.

For an estimate of your Retired Pay Eligibility Date based on qualifying active duty periods and assistance applying please consult the USAG Italy Retirement Services Officer (RSO) at: +39 0444-71-4831 or usarmy.usag-italy.id-europe.mbx.retiree-services@army.mil.

Veterans Affairs Overseas Military Services Coordinator (OMSC)

By Mr. Ariel Rivera, USAG Italy

We are happy to announce that the VA OMSC will be returning to Caserma Ederle, Vicenza. The VA OMSC assists in-person or by phone Service Members, Retirees, Veterans and Family members with information, claims, appeals, and general information regarding programs and benefits available through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

It is expected the VA OMSC will be in Vicenza and ready to assist by May 2026. Once the VA OMSC has arrived and is ready to assist the Retirement Services Office will provide contact information by email to the Vicenza Military Community.

Army chaplain helps rescue Austrian motorist from truck fire

By Mr. Rick Scavetta, USAG Italy

VICENZA, Italy — When Chaplain (Maj.) Brian Bailey pulled into an Austrian rest stop, plumes of black smoke billowed from a tractor-trailer cab engulfed by flames.

Nearby were two people on the ground, dangerously close to the fire. Adrenaline raced through Bailey's body as he ran toward the blaze. A woman screamed "Help my husband!"

Bailey, a chaplain at U.S. Army Garrison Italy, was returning to Vicenza from a course in Grafenwöhr, Germany, on March 8 when he pulled into to rest area in Angath, about 40 miles northeast of Innsbruck.

One victim, the truck's driver, was severely burned and unresponsive. The second man, a Lithuanian passerby, had pulled the driver out but fell five feet during the rescue, shattering his leg. His wife had been calling for help.

Bailey, a Tennessee native and Iraq veteran, had been in tense situations before. Soldier training, to include the Combat Lifesaver Course and Combat Medical Ministry training kicked in.

"Those courses prepared me to be a first responder for physical and spiritual injuries and when faced with the reality of the situation," Bailey said. "The skills I had been taught allowed me to act."

The trucker, a man from Uzbekistan, was severely burned and bloodied. Bailey and another bystander – a Polish man named Bongo – carefully moved the trucker away from the flames. They gently placed him beside the Lithuanian – Bailey called him Otto – who was on a trip with his wife and nephew.

Bailey helped cut away the trucker's burned clothes and assessed his injuries. He had shallow breathing and a fast, weak pulse. He and Bongo prepared to conduct CPR, clearing his airway, tilting his head back and elevating his feet. Worried that his heart may stop, Bailey ran into the rest stop and, using his high school-level German, convinced staff to get an automated external defibrillator.

Back outside, they continued to monitor the victims' vital signs. Bailey told other people to call for help and spoke to the emergency dispatcher through a bystander's phone, sharing information while continuing to provide care.

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Several loud explosions erupted from the burning cab. Other truckers, using handheld extinguishers, attempted to put the fire out, but their efforts were in vain.

The first Austrian paramedics to arrive didn't have gear to move the injured. Then Austrian police and ambulances arrived. Bailey helped them move the injured to a safer spot for further care.

"We first placed the burn victim on a litter and moved him to a grassy area away from the fire," Bailey said. "We then returned for the second man with the broken leg, and I assisted a paramedic in stabilizing his leg with an air splint."

As the medics worked, Bailey spoke to Otto, offering encouragement. Bailey helped lift Otto into an ambulance, that transported him to the nearby Kufstein District Hospital, according to Austrian news outlets. The driver was airlifted by helicopter to the Murnau am Staffelsee Hospital in Bavaria with severe burns.

During the Initial investigations, police said a technical defect in the driver's cab caused the fire, according to Austrian news reports.

Reflecting afterward, Bailey thought of his training as an Army chaplain and passages from the Bible – things that helped him process the stressful event. Bailey's religious beliefs have been at the forefront of his mind since the incident. He believes that his involvement was not by chance. He speaks humbly of the steps he took that afternoon, from the first aid to the comforting words of encouragement that he offered.

"My deepest wish was for my actions to point not to myself, but to the profound hope and compassion that Jesus speaks of," Bailey said. "I am humbled to have been a small part of the care for the wounded, and I pray that my service brought a glimmer of that divine hope to a very dark situation."

Maintaining your records and files

By Maj. Alisia Mahatoo, Army Reserve Retirement Services Office

Retiring from the military can feel exhilarating, overwhelming, and deeply relieving all at once. With this transition comes a wide range of benefits, and the responsibility to stay organized. It's essential to have a plan in place to maintain your records and important files.

As a retiree, you can obtain copies of your files from your Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) using your DS Logon account at: https://www.hrcapps.army.mil/portal. If you need to acquire your lost records, the repository for U.S. Army military personnel, health and medical records is located at the National Archives' National Personnel Records Center in St Louis, MO. For medical and dental records you will first determine where the record is located at the following website, https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/medical-records.html. Retiree's who have a current VA claim will contact the VA to determine the location of their medical records.

For correction of your military records, the retiree, surviving family members, or legal representative can request corrections using the Application for Correction of Military Records (DD Form 149) and submit to the Army Review Boards Agency (ARBA) at 251 18th Street South, Suite 385, Arlington VA 22202, or send to: https://www.army.mil/ arba#org-other-military-records-corrections.

All Retired Soldiers, Gray Area Retirees (GAR) (those in the Retired Reserve who are not yet receiving retired pay) and surviving spouses receiving a Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity must update both the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) and the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) whenever they move or change their email address.

Update your address using myPay at: https://mypay.dfas.mil/ or calling (800) 321-1080. Soldiers can complete a retiree change of address using the Retiree Change of Address Request/State Tax Withholding Authorization (DD Form 2866) and mail to: DFAS U.S. Military Retired Pay, 8899 E. 56th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46249 or online through askDFAS at: https://corpweb1.dfas.mil/askDFAS/custCategories.action?pgModId=12.

Retirees and surviving spouses receiving benefits from the VA should change their address by logging into the VA website at: https://www.va.gov/change-address/ or calling +1 800-827-1000.

For most, family is the most important aspect of an individual's life, so listing assets, important contacts, the locations of documents, and how to make updates, will ensure families can easily access their Soldier's earned benefits.

Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) & Vicenza Legal Services Office

From international law to tax centers and Legal Assistance Offices, the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate provides legal services to retirees and their families. Legal assistance attorneys serving in the Vicenza Legal
Assistance Office also have the additional dimension of hands-on experience in the laws of Italy. Visit the Caserma Ederle, Vicenza SJA office to learn about their services.

Location: Building 166, Caserma Ederle, Vicenza.
Phone: +39 0444-71-8496

Hours of Operation: Mon-Wed, Fri: 0900 – 1200, 1300 – 1600 hrs. Thu: 0900 – 1200 hrs. Closed on U.S. federal holidays and training holidays.

Additional Resources:

Aviano Air Force Base Military & Family Readiness (Retiree Services)
Phone: +39 0434-30-5407

Caserma Ederle Retiree Center (Volunteers)
Building 305, Caserma Ederle, Vicenza: Open Mon-Fri 1000 - 1500 Hrs
Phone: +39 0444-71-4342

Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS) Website: https://www.dfas.mil/
Phone (main line): +1-888-332-7411

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Website: https://www.va.gov/
Phone (main line): +1-800-827-1000

ID Cards/DEERS
Central Processing Facility (CPF), Bldg. 309 Caserma Ederle, Vicenza.
Appointments: https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/ Mon-Fri 0800 - 1530
Phone: +39 0444-71-5135/5136

Postal Services
Building 302, Caserma Ederle, Vicenza, Mon-Wed, Fri: 1030 -1730, Thu: 1330 -1730
Phone: +39 0444-71-4948

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USAG Italy Retirement Services Officer (RSO)
Building 28, Office 12, Caserma Ederle, Vicenza. Mon-Fri 0800 - 1200 & 1300 - 1700
Email: usarmy.usag-italy.id-europe.mbx.retiree-services@army.mil
Phone: +39-0444-71-4831

U.S. Army Health Clinic Vicenza
Appointment line phone number: +39 0444-61-9000

U.S. Consulate General in Milan
Website: https://it.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/milan/
Phone: +39 02 290351

U.S. Embassy in Rome
Website: https://it.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/rome/
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