

# USAG STUTTGART RETIREE BULLETIN

Summer 2024

USAG Stuttgart: Unit 30401, APO AE 09154-0401 This bulletin expires 1 year from date of publication.

#### **Your Local Garrison Retiree Council**

If there are any issues that you are facing, you can contact your local Retiree Council for assistance.

They are your voice to address any concerns or issues that are important to you as an Army Retiree.

The Retiree Council is made up of volunteers who meet throughout the year to discuss any issues addressed to the council. They also work hard to assist and host the annual Retiree Appreciation Day held in October.

If you are interested in becoming a member, contact your local Garrison Retirement Services Officer.



WE WANT YOU!

Next Meeting is July 11 at 1700 Patch Chapel Fellowship Hall

**SAVE THE DATE!** 2024 Retiree Appreciation Day 25 October 2024 USAG Stuttgart Firehouse 0900 - 1400

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# **USAG STUTTGART LEADERSHIP**



Colonel G. Kirk Alexander



Command Sergeant Major Denice Malave

#### USAG STUTTGART

YOUR SETURIEMENT SERVICE OFFICER: Ma. Rachel A. Doran Retriment Services Officer (ISO) Survivor Beenfils Trogram Counselor (BBP) USAO Statugat Millitary Personane Division (MPD) Bidg 2015, Room 122 - Pater Kaserne DBN: 31-4-59-600 Comm: +40 (0) 9614-170-058-2010 Stry -460 0713 5 2005



## **Estate Planning**

#### Ensuring Peace of Mind for Your Loved Ones

Estate planning is often a topic many avoid until later in life. However, being prepared is crucial to alleviate stress for your loved ones during times of grief. Unexpected events like accidents, illness, or incapacitation can happen at any moment, underscoring the importance of readiness.

No matter your age or asset level, having an estate plan is essential. Centralizing important documents in a designated location—whether a box or binder—ensures ease of access for trusted individuals in the event of your passing.

#### **Military Documents:**

- DD214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty)
- Funeral and burial instructions for Military Honors

#### Identification Documents:

- Passports
- Birth certificates
- Marriage certificates
- Divorce decrees
- Translated copies of any documents if they are in a language other than English

#### Financial and Legal Documents:

- Last Will and Testament
- Power of Attorney (both durable for finances and healthcare)
- Living Will or Advance Healthcare Directive
- Trust documents (if applicable)
- Life insurance policies (including Veterans life insurance policy)
- Retirement account information (401(k), IRA, pensions)
- Information on federal retirement from the US government (e.g., FERS or CSRS documents)
- Social Security documents
- Bank account information, including list of accounts and safe deposit boxes.
- Investment account information

#### **Tax Records:**

- Recent tax returns (last 3-5 years)
- Information on any unpaid taxes

#### Healthcare Information:

- Health insurance policies (Medicare, supplemental insurance)
- Long-term care insurance policies
- Medical records, including information on current medications and healthcare providers

#### **Contact Information:**

- List of key contacts (Family members, attorney, financial advisor, executor of the estate)
- Contact information for any services or subscriptions that need to be canceled

#### Miscellaneous:

- List of digital accounts and passwords (consider using a password manager)
- Membership information for any organizations or clubs
- Having these documents in a designated, easily accessible folder can greatly alleviate the burden on family members and ensure that all necessary arrangements can be handled efficiently and according to the retiree's wishes.

Having these documents in a designated, easily accessible folder can greatly alleviate the burden on Family members and ensure that all necessary arrangements can be handled efficiently and according to the retiree's wishes.

## Veterans Inquiry Branch at HRC

#### Mission

To provide timely service to Army Veterans, Retired Soldiers, their Family members, and Government Agencies in support of their efforts to receive or process entitlements and benefits.

Vision

Provide exceptional customer service to America's Army, past, present and future.

#### What does the Veterans Inquiry Branch do?

- Processes Record Requests
- Processes Name, Date of Birth, Gender and SSN Change Requests
- Processes DD Form 214 and Statements of Service Requests
- Processes DD Form 215 Requests
- Processes Records Maintenance Requests
- Processes Non-Wartime Campaigns and Expeditions Requests (SF813)
- Processes Requests for Documents needed for VA Home Loans
- Processes Veteran's Claim Information for VA Requests
- Processes Statements of Retirement Points (DA Form 5016)
- Processes Homeless Veterans Requests for Information
- Processes Requests to Add Documents to Veterans OMPF
- Screens Gray Area Retirement Packets

#### Veterans Inquiry Branch is YOUR S1, for all Army Veterans Request



https://www.facebook.com/HRCVeteransS1

## **Updating Information on Your ID Card**

USID cards are issued to retired and reserve members, dependent Family members of uniformed Service members, and other eligible individuals in accordance with DoD policy to facilitate access to benefits, privileges, and DoD bases.

**Updating information on your card starts with updating information in DEERS.** Once you are registered in DEERS, you are responsible for keeping your DEERS records updated when your personal eligibility information changes. This includes changes in military career status, addresses, and family status (marriage, divorce, birth, and adoption).

To update DEERS information, you may call the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office (DSO) Telephone Center at 1-800-538-9552 or for the Deaf (TTY/TDD): 1-866-363-2883, Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Pacific Time, except federal holidays. You can also visit the Tricare website.

You may also need your birth certificate, marriage certificate, divorce decree, or other official document to make updates to your DEERS records.

## https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/



## **Staying Connected**

As we embrace the Soldier for Life ethos through the lens of technology, we discover a digital sanctuary where the bonds forged in service endure and thrive, reaffirming our commitment to honor, duty, and camaraderie.

Through platforms like YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and more, the Soldier for Life initiative bridges the gap between Soldiers and Civilians, offering a virtual gateway to a wealth of resources and opportunities.

We encourage you to explore the inspirational stories shared in Instagram reels to professional networking facilitated on LinkedIn, as the digital landscape amplifies the voices of veterans, weaving a tapestry of shared experiences and triumphs that transcend borders and time zones.



## The PACT Act and Your VA Benefits

The PACT Act is a law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans and their survivors—with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve. And starting March 5, 2024, we're expanding VA health care to millions of Veterans—years earlier than called for by the PACT Act.

- Veterans who served in the following locations and time periods can enroll in VA health care NOW:
- Republic of Vietnam (between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975)
- Thailand at any US or Royal Thai base (between January 9, 1962 and June 30, 1976)
- Laos (between December 1, 1965 and September 30, 1969)
- Certain Provinces in Cambodia (between April 16, 1969, and April 30, 1969)
- Guam or American Samoa or their territorial waters (between January 9, 1962 and July 31, 1980)
- Johnston Atoll, or a ship that called there (between January 1, 1972 and September 30, 1977)
- Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veterans



## VA Overseas Military Service Coordinator (OMSC)

For in-person Meeting or Phone Conference with a VA Overseas Military Service Coordinator (OMSC) here in Germany Please go to the following link: https://calendly.com/va-omsc-ktown

## What is the PACT Act?



## The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022

is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve.

#### The PACT Act :

- Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era.
- Expands eligibility for benefits for Veterans exposed to toxic substances.



## **VA Virtual Town Hall**

Here in Stuttgart, we conducted the first-ever VA Virtual Town Hall with the Veterans Benefits Administration Pittsburgh Regional Office, responsible for veterans overseas. The target audience included active duty service members, retirees, and veterans.

VA OIC BDD from LRMC, Ms. Barnes, led BDD Clinics on the 28th and 29th of April, with 53 transitioning active-duty service members attending over the two days. Over 130 active duty, veterans, and retirees visited for the VA Claims Clinic or information. From 0800 to 1700, 2 VA OMCS and 1 BDD OIC assisted 77 customers, including 31 scheduled appointments through the VA VERA system, 20 telephonic walk-in appointments, and 26 walk-ins.

The Town Hall event, held from 1400 to 1630, saw 66 veterans in attendance. This was a pioneering effort for Europe and it proved to be highly successful. The positive turnout and engagement demonstrated the community's need for such resources. Participants appreciated the direct access to VA representatives and the valuable information provided. This successful event sets a promising precedent for future initiatives.









### U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Benefits Administration Pittsburgh Regional Office USAG Stuttgart Town Hall April 30, 2024

😵 Choose 🗸

VA WS. Department of Veterans Affairs

## Shopping Assistance for Retirees, Veterans, and Widow(ers)

Navigating daily tasks like grocery shopping can sometimes pose challenges, especially for retirees, and widow(ers). That's why our office and U.S. Army Customs Agency-Europe, Stuttgart Field Office is committed to facilitating access to shopping assistants, ensuring convenience and support for those who need it most.

To avail of a shopping assistant, individuals are required to follow a straightforward process outlined below:

#### 1. Verification and Authorization:

- Contact U.S. Army Customs Agency-Europe, Stuttgart Field Office to determine eligibility for either becoming a shopping assistant or receiving assistance.
- Upon verification, applicants must provide medical verification from a doctor or possess a German handicap permit (Behinderausweiss).
- Complete a letter authorizing our office to issue the AE Form 550-175K, specifying the shopping assistant for retirees and widow(ers).
- Present valid identification documents including ID card, passport, and residency permit.

#### 2. IACS Office Assistance:

- **3.** Following initial contact, promptly reach out to the IACS Office for assistance with obtaining a DBIDS ID Card, allowing access to installations.
- **4.** Anticipate a few weeks processing time and provide necessary paperwork, including a police report from the German Police if required.

#### 5. Issuance of Authorization:

- On the designated date set by the IACS Office, visit our office with all required documentation.
- Receive the AE Form 550-175K, with three copies issued—one for German Customs, one for the IACS Office, and one for personal reference.

#### 6. DBIDS ID Card Acquisition:

- With the AE Form 550-175K in hand, proceed to the IACS Office to finalize the DBIDS ID Card issuance process.
- Coordinate with the IACS Office for initial access to installations.

By following these steps diligently, individuals can smoothly navigate the process of obtaining shopping assistance, ensuring seamless access to essential services.

For any inquiries regarding installation access or assistance with the DBIDS ID Card process, please contact the IACS Office at USARMY Stuttgart ID-Europe List PMO IACS usarmy.stuttgart.id-europe.list.pmo-iacs@army.mil

Your Retirement Service Officer is here to support you every step of the way. Don't hesitate to reach out to our office for guidance and assistance.

## ID.me: Accessing Government Services

In today's tech-savvy world, accessing vital services like Social Security Administration (SSA), Veterans Affairs (VA), and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has become easier thanks to the introduction of ID.me. This innovative platform provides retirees with a secure and convenient way to verify their identities on-line. Gone are the days of lengthy paperwork and frustrating phone calls; now, retirees can simply log in to their ID.me accounts and gain instant access to their benefits and tax information.

With ID.me's advanced security features, such as biometric recognition and two-factor authentication, retirees can rest assured that their personal information is safe from unauthorized access. Moreover, the user-friendly interface makes navigating these government portals a breeze, even for those who may not be as tech-savvy.

Whether it's checking Social Security benefits, accessing VA healthcare services, or filing taxes with the IRS, ID.me streamlines the process, saving retirees valuable time and energy. Additionally, ID.me offers personalized support, ensuring that retirees receive the assistance they need every step of the way.

Embracing this digital solution not only enhances efficiency but also empowers retirees to manage their affairs independently. So, if you haven't already, sign up for ID.me today and experience the convenience of accessing essential services with just a few clicks.

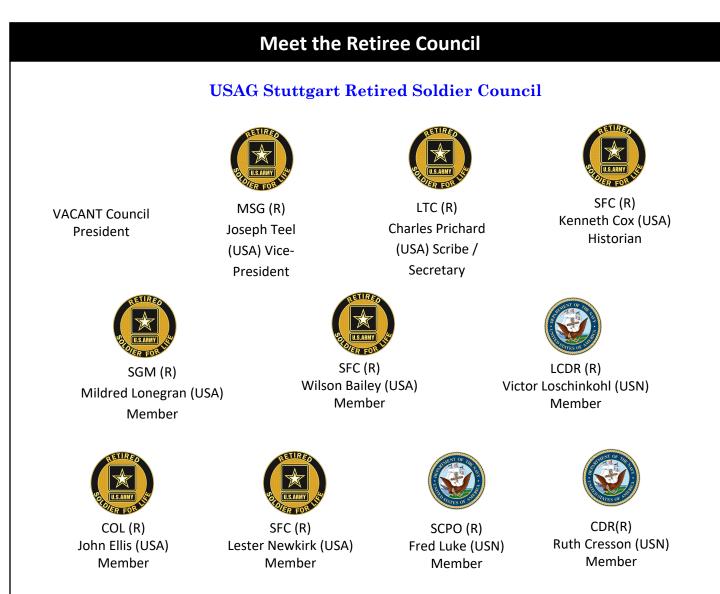
For retirees seeking assistance with setting up their ID.me account, contacting their Retirement Service Office for an appointment is the first step.

During the appointment, it's essential to bring along specific items and documents to facilitate the process smoothly. These include your laptop equipped with a camera and microphone, ensuring seamless verification through ID.me's on-line platform.

Additionally, veterans should have their DD214 form readily available, serving as crucial proof of social security number. A valid passport, not expired, is also necessary to verify identity securely. And retirees should bring their vehicle registration displaying their current address and full name, aligning with the verification requirements.

Lastly, ensuring access to an email address, such as Yahoo, iCloud, or Gmail, is vital for correspondence and account setup. With these items in hand, retirees can embark on the journey of setting up their ID.me account with confidence, knowing they have all they need to streamline access to essential services.





As part of our ongoing commitment to serving our retired community, as outlined in Army Regulation 600-8-7, Retirement Services Program, dated 20 September 2022.

#### Purpose:

The primary purpose of the Retiree Council is to fulfill duties established in the Retiree Council Charter. Through this council, we aim to address and resolve vital issues and concerns affecting our retired community. Working closely with the USAG-S Retiree Council President, we seek to provide leadership with insight into the needs and priorities of our retired personnel.

#### Term of Service:

The term to be served on the Retiree Council is two years, with the possibility of extension at the discretion of the USAG-S Garrison Commander, not exceeding eight years in total. All appointments will be reviewed annually by the Garrison Commander, ensuring that council members continue to be committed and willing to serve the retired community effectively.

#### Superseding Memorandum:

Please note that this announcement supersedes the memorandum dated 2 October 2011, which addressed the same subject matter. The information provided here serves as appointment orders for each member of the Retiree Council.

## **Retiree Council Mission**

The USAG Stuttgart Retired Soldier Council is a dedicated group comprising retirees from across the Baden-Wurttemberg area, spanning all branches of service. Our mission is simple yet profound: to serve and support our fellow retired service members as they navigate the journey of retirement.

#### Stay Connected:

Living within the USAG Stuttgart footprint? Interested in staying informed about retiree-related matters or perhaps becoming a member of our esteemed council? We encourage you to reach out to us via email at usarmy.stuttgart-ret.svs@army.mil. Your participation and input are invaluable to us!

#### What We Do:

Throughout the year, the council convenes periodically to delve into topics that directly impact you, our retirees and their surviving spouses. From healthcare updates to financial planning seminars, we strive to provide information and resources that enhance your retirement experience.

#### **Retiree Appreciation Day:**

One of the highlights on our calendar is the annual Retiree Appreciation Day, a special occasion where we come together to honor and celebrate the contributions of our retired service members. The council plays an integral role in planning this event alongside the USAG Stuttgart Retirement Services Officer.

#### Join Us:

Are you passionate about serving your fellow retirees? Do you have ideas and insights to share? We're actively seeking volunteers to join our council and contribute to our mission. If you're interested in becoming a member, please don't hesitate to email us at usarmy.stuttgart-ret.svs@army.mil. Your dedication is what makes our community strong!

Thank you for your continued support and participation in the USAG Stuttgart Retired Soldier Council. Together, let's make the journey of retirement fulfilling and rewarding for all.



## Annual Report of the Chief of Staff, Army Retired Soldier Council



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY RETIRED SOLDIER COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF G-1 300 ARMY PENTAGON WASHINGTON, DC 20310-0300

DAPE-MPR (600-8-7)

19 April 2024

#### MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Chief of Staff, Army Retired Soldier Council

1. The sixty-fourth meeting of the Chief of Staff, Army Retired Soldier Council (CSARSC) was hosted at the Pentagon from 14-19 April 2024. The Council is established in accordance with Army Regulation 600-8-7, *Retirement Services Program* and is administered in accordance with its charter, which is approved by the Secretary of the Army. The Council is your voice of 1.25 million Retired Soldiers and surviving spouses, and as such, reviewed twelve issues nominated by Installation Retired Soldier Councils. Those issues are discussed in detail in Enclosure 3 (CSA Retired Soldier Council Installation Report).

2. Our Retired Soldiers have become a better utilized resource for the Army. Given the Army's current recruiting challenges, our Retired Soldiers and their Families can continue to help the Army recruit the next generation of Soldiers within their communities as well as minimize the civilian-military divide. Through our experiences, we can share the unique opportunities and benefits the Army provided us and how our experiences positively shaped our lives. Recommend the Army continue to explore ways to recognize and formalize a partnership between our Retired Soldiers and Families, and U.S. Army Recruiting Command. Formalizing programs such as Retired Soldier Recruiting Ambassadors would be one way to do this. These Ambassadors could potentially help recruiters gain access to local schools and foster community relations.

3. We are pleased to report three issues from last year's council have seen positive results. First, the Soldier for Life (SFL) logo was approved for apparel branding, but a complimentary marketing campaign was not launched to support it. Second, the Retiring Soldier Commendation Program is now funded although the full implementation is still working through the supply system with the benefits not being fully realized. Last, the Gray Area retirement processing backlog issue was resolved with Active Duty Operational Support (ADOS) funding. We appreciate the Army G1, OCAR, and NGB's efforts to quickly address this critical issue.

#### 4. Key Recommendations:

a. Medical: The number one issue for all Retired Soldiers is availability and access to military healthcare because they value the quality of care they receive at Medical Treatment Facilities (MTFs). Forty-three percent of the 605 issues addressed by the CSARSC since 2000 have revolved around healthcare. This ends up being a readiness, quality of life, and fulfillment of the Army's obligation for their service issue. We recommend the Army continue to engage with the

## Annual Report of the Chief of Staff, Army Retired Soldier Council

#### DAPE-MPR

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Chief of Staff, Army Retired Soldier Council

Defense Health Agency (DHA) to ensure MTF care for Retired Soldiers and their Families remains a priority.

b. Federal Benefit Units (FBUs): FBUs are not providing adequate support for our overseas Retired Soldiers. Areas where they are not performing services range from benefit claims to processing Medicare enrollment applications. FBUs fall under Consular Services within the Department of State (DOS). Recommend adding a DOS fellow, much like our current Department of Labor and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) fellows, to facilitate communication and resolution of issues.

c. SFL Network: The request for proposal (RFP) last year did not result in a vendor being selected to provide the service. The RFP failed to attract a viable contractor based on it being solicited as a no cost proposal. The requirement remains unchanged that we need a network to keep our Retired Soldiers, Veterans, surviving spouses and Families connected. We recommend that the Army fully fund the SFL Network.

5. We extend our sincere appreciation for the continued support provided by Mr. Mark Overberg, Ms. Maria Bentinck and the Army Retirement Services staff. Of special note and upon his retirement, we wish to recognize Mr. Overberg for his 15 years of invaluable service to the Army's Retired Soldier community that will continue to positively impact for many years to come. Lastly, we also appreciate the group of distinguished speakers at Enclosure 1 for the valuable information and insights that they provided.

6. Thank you for recognizing the value of a continuing mission for those who no longer wear the uniform, but still have the heart, skills, and capacity to contribute to the Army Total Force. The Council extends its gratitude to you and Sergeant Major of the Army Weimer for your demonstrated support of the Retired Soldier Council and those we represent.

STILL SERVING ... SOLDIERS FOR LIFE!

DANIEL A. DAILEY Sergeant Major of the Army U.S. Army, Retired Co-Chairman

JÖSEPH ANDERSON Lieutenant General U.S. Army, Retired Co-Chairman

Enclosures 1. Guest Speakers 2. Council Members 3. CSA Retired Soldier Council Installation Report

## **Continued Support for ALL Military Retirees: A Lifelong Commitment**

As we honor the brave men and women who have dedicated their lives to serving our country, it is essential to recognize that our commitment to them does not end with their retirement. The post-retirement phase is just as crucial, and our community is dedicated to providing comprehensive support to all military retirees, including their surviving spouses, and dependent children.

#### Annual Retiree Appreciation Days:

One of the ways we show our gratitude is through the Annual Retiree Appreciation Days. These events are not just about honoring your service but also about ensuring you stay informed about the benefits and services available to you. These days offer a valuable opportunity to reconnect with fellow retirees, receive updates on military and veteran benefits, and engage in various health and wellness activities. Your participation helps strengthen our retiree community and ensures that you continue to receive the recognition and support you deserve.

#### Support Installation Retired Soldier Councils:

Our Support Installation Retired Soldier Councils play a pivotal role in advocating for the needs and interests of our retirees. These councils work tirelessly to address your concerns and provide a direct link between the retired community and active-duty leadership. By participating in these councils, you can help shape the policies and programs that affect your post-retirement life.

#### Post-Retirement Services:

We offer a wide range of post-retirement services designed to assist you in navigating the various aspects of retired life.

**Benefits Application Assistance:** We provide guidance and support to help you and your spouses apply for the benefits you have earned. This includes assistance with retirement pay, healthcare, and other entitlements.

**Document Recovery:** If you have lost important documents such as your DD Form 214, DD Form 220, retirement orders, or medical records, we can help you obtain copies. We also assist in reissuing military awards and military identification cards.

*Information and Referrals:* Our team is here to provide you with information and referrals for benefits and entitlements from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), TRICARE, Social Security, Medicare, and other providers.

**Pay and Personal Information Updates:** Using the Defense Retiree and Annuitant Pay System (DRAS), we resolve pay matters and update personal information for Retired Soldiers, Family members, and Survivors.

*Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) and Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan (RCSBP):* We advise and assist retirees in maintaining their SBP and RCSBP elections. Our counseling services extend to survivors of Retired Soldiers and those who die on active duty, helping them understand their SBP options and entitlements, as well as the proper processing of their SBP applications. We also provide counseling about VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation and its relationship to SBP.

#### **Staying Connected and Informed**

We encourage all retirees to stay connected with our community and take advantage of the resources available. Whether you need assistance with benefits, document recovery, or simply want to stay informed about upcoming events and policy changes, we are here to help.

Your service to our nation has been invaluable, and our continued support is a testament to our gratitude and commitment to your well-being. Together, we can ensure that every military retiree receives the care, respect, and recognition they deserve.

Thank you for your service, and we look forward to continuing to serve you in your retirement.

## Serving Our Military Retirees: A Lifelong Commitment

The USMC Retired Services and Pay office, Separation and Retirement Branch, Manpower Management Division, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, assists Retired Marines, to include those transitioning into retirement, and their dependents, as well as surviving beneficiaries, with a broad array of services and support. Among other things, we manage the establishment of your Retired Pay account at DFAS Cleveland, the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), assist retirees and dependents with ID card matters/DEERS, publish the Semper Fidelis newsletter, administer the Secretary of the Navy Retiree Council, and publish the Retirement Guide.

Mailing Address: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps (MMSR-6) 3280 Russell Rd. Quantico, VA 22134-5103

Telephone: (703) 784-9310/9311 Toll Free: 1-800-336-4649 Fax: (703) 784-9834 Organizational Mailbox: smb.manpower.mmsr6@usmc.mil



**The Air Force Retiree Activities Program** serves as the interface between active-duty and retired communities. Each installation has a Retiree Activities Office (RAO) that is available to provide retirees (all ranks) and surviving spouses with information on matters related to TRICARE, Military ID Cards. For Survivor Benefits and Death Reporting information, please go to the Casualty Matters *https://www.afpc.af.mil/Casualty-Matters/* 

Air Force Retiree Services AFPC/DPFFF 550 C Street W BSA-Randolph TX 78150 ------Toll free: 800-525-0102 (Total Force Service Center) DSN: 665-5000 Email: afpc.retiree@us.af.mil



**U.S. AIR FORCE** 

**The mission of Navy Retired Activities Branch** under as directed by OPNAVINST 1720.3G is to ensure the retired community is kept apprised of their benefits, entitlements, rights, privileges, changes in retirement law, and provide customer services to our retirees, families, annuitants and survivors. The Retired Activities Branch is dedicated to supporting more than 650,000 Navy retirees (active component and reserve component), families, annuitants, and survivors worldwide. The Branch hours of operation are 0800-1600 (Central Time) Monday through Friday - 1-833-330-6622.

