



# 131<sup>st</sup> BW RAO Newsletter



*Serving all branches*

## October - December 2020, 4th Quarter Issue

The O’Fallon Veterans Office/131<sup>st</sup> BW Retirees Activities Office, MOANG, has moved to a new location in O’Fallon City Hall. Our room number is 131A on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. The office is staffed with former members of the Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines. We have been lucky in having these veterans and retirees volunteer to provide this support. The RAO has an on-going need for volunteers to assist and inform the retiree. We currently offer service five days a week from 9 AM to 3:30 PM Monday thru Friday per O’Fallon City Hall operating hours. Our clients, veterans can enter city hall through the east entrance and will need to check in with the receptionists.

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## Upcoming Events

### 2020 Christmas Air Guard/Reunion Gathering

This year’s Christmas function is scheduled for 09 Dec 2020 from 11 AM – 3 PM at O’Fallon Elks Lodge, 1163 Tom Ginnever Road, O’Fallon, MO.63366, (636) 240-7736.

We may not have email addresses or phone numbers for everyone, if you know someone that isn’t receiving an invitation that might be interested in coming, please ensure we get their contact information. Preferred method of contact is email & Facebook when we send out announcements; however, we know not all have the internet or computers. So, again, if you know of anyone not being notified have them/you shoot us an email to:

[131christmas@gmail.com](mailto:131christmas@gmail.com)

Also, please keep us updated on your contact information.

If you would be interested in helping, let us know.

Any Christmas Party emails: [131christmas@gmail.com](mailto:131christmas@gmail.com)

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## Military Retirees and Families Are Getting an Extension on ID Card Renewals

21 Sep 2020

Military dependents and retirees now have through the end of June 2021 to access benefits using ID cards that expired this year, thanks to an extension of temporary ID card rules issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Typically, cards must be applied for, issued and updated in person up to 30 days before the expiration date at one of the more than 1,600 ID card offices on military facilities worldwide. Cards that do not expire, such as those held by retirees over 65, do not need to be renewed. New guidelines issued this month bump that expiration extension into next year. Now, holders of those cards will be able to use them for benefits such as medical care through June 30, 2021, and for base access through March 2021.

The pandemic allowances put in place a temporary system for remote ID card renewals, updates and reissuances. That system has also been extended indefinitely under the updated Pentagon order. Cards changed remotely will be given an expiration date of one year from the time they are issued, the new guidance states.

The extension, however, applies only to the cards held by retirees and dependents, known as the Uniformed Services ID (USID). Expired Common Access Cards (CAC) and Volunteer Logical Access Credentials (VoLAC) had previously also been allowed through September. That change will end Sept. 30 as planned.

{Source: Military.com}

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## **Application now online for Air Guard Retirement**

The Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC) at Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado, has released an online application it says will help Guard and Reserve airmen more easily apply for retirement pay and benefits.

Retirees approaching age 60, or those that qualify for reduced retired pay age will no longer need their DD Form 2656 and ARPC Form 83 for their retirement pay and benefits.

Officials say the online application will guide applicants through the process, allowing them to only input relevant information, and reducing the number of incomplete or inaccurate applications submitted to ARPC.

The command also released a how-to video to help retirees better understand the new process.

The application and video are available at [www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/retirement](http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/retirement).

The new web-based application followed a report by NBC News of retired Air Guardsmen and Air Force Reservists waiting months beyond their 60th birthday for retirement pay.

ARPC officials told NBC News that they had added staff to close the gap, but said delays were inevitable because of the outdated system.

Part-time Guardsmen and Reservists with 20 years of service are entitled to a military pension based upon their highest rank and accumulated days of service. But it is up to each retiree to apply in writing for the payments to begin.

(Source: WWW.NGAUS.ORG May 2019)

### **APPLYING FOR RETIREMENT PAY**

Applying for retirement pay begins by submitting an application through the Virtual Personnel Center, vPC. Individuals approaching their Retirement pay effective date (60th birthday or reduced retirement pay age) should submit an application four months prior to this date.

Applicants will be notified when a technician receives their application and will receive their retirement order two weeks prior to their effective date in most cases. Some exceptions are members who work up to their retired pay effective date and members who file late. Applicants who do not receive their order two weeks prior to their effective date are advised to submit a

message to the retirement section via myPers, followed up by a phone call to the Total Force Service Center 1-800-525-0102.

With the retirement order, retirees are able to receive their retiree ID Card from their local military personnel service office and apply for healthcare through Tricare. HQ ARPC submits retirement orders to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, DFAS, where they are processed to initiate the retirement payments. DFAS typically processes retirement pay 30-45 days after receipt of the retirement order, or retirement pay effective date, whichever is later. Once you have received your retirement order please direct questions or concerns to DFAS at 1-800-321-1080. IMPORTANT NOTE: HQ ARPC DOES NOT PROCESS RETIREMENT PAY APPLICATION

The DD Form 2656 must filled out and submitted no earlier than 4 months and no later than 30 days before your 60th birthday.

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## **VA publishes final regulation for its Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers**

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today published its final regulation to improve and expand the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) with the final regulation going into effect on Oct. 1.

Under the final regulation, PCAFC will include eligible Veterans that have a single or combined service-connected disability rating by VA of 70% or higher, regardless of whether it resulted from an injury, illness or disease.

This is a notable change to the definition of serious injury from the current regulations, among other improvements aimed at standardizing the PCAFC and improving transparency in the program.

Expansion of VA's PCAFC to eligible Veterans of earlier eras will occur in two phases. The first phase will begin October 2020 and will include eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty in the active, military, naval or air service on or before May 7, 1975. Phase two will go into effect two years later and include eligible Veterans of all eras.

“The expanded regulation addresses the complexity and expense of keeping Veterans at home with their families who provide personalized care,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “This will allow our most vulnerable Veterans to stay with their loved ones for as long as possible.

Expanding the program and eligibility for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers ensures we can continue to meet the changing needs of America's Veterans and their caregivers.”

Additionally, the new regulation will change the PCAFC stipend payment methodology, define new procedures for revocation and discharge, and include certain advance notice requirements

aimed at improving communication between VA and PCAFC participants as well as include information for current program participants. VA is also standardizing operating procedures for the Caregiver Support Program, providing new training for staff and caregivers, and boosting operational capacity by hiring additional staff. With this expansion, Primary Family Caregivers in PCAFC will also have access to financial planning and legal services. VA is also working to fully implement the new information technology system required by the VA MISSION Act of 2018 by October 2020.

VA's Caregiver Support Program offers support services for caregivers including training, peer mentoring, respite care, a telephone support line, and self-care courses for caregivers of covered Veterans enrolled in VA health care who need personal care services.

Caregivers can visit VA Caregiver support website or call the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274 for questions.

The final regulation can be found here. If necessary, search for RIN 2900-AQ48, Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Improvements and Amendments under the VA MISSION Act of 2018.

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## **More Dental and Vision Insurance Options for Federal Employees in 2021**

August 17, 2020 - By Scott Thompson

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announced last week that it has selected insurance carriers to provide comprehensive, accessible and competitively priced dental and vision coverage through the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Program (FEDVIP), effective January 1, 2021. The contract term is seven (7) years.

“The competitive application process allowed OPM to strengthen the FEDVIP program through increased focus on wellness and education,” OPM said in a press statement. “OPM improved quality assurance, financial reporting processes, and enhanced fraud waste and abuse (FWA) requirements.”

In the 2021 plan year, the number of FEDVIP dental carriers will increase from 10 to 12. The number of vision carriers will increase from 4 to 5. OPM anticipates no disruption of enrollee's continuity of services.

Eligible individuals may enroll, cancel, or change their enrollment during the Federal Benefits Open Season this year, November 9 to December 14, 2020.

OPM provided the following information about the dental and vision insurance carriers for 2021.

## 2021 Dental Carriers

### **Nationwide/International**

- Aetna Dental PPO
- Delta Dental PPO
- BCBS FEP Blue Dental
- GEHA Dental PPO
- MetLife Dental PPO
- United Concordia PPO
- UnitedHealthcare Dental PPO (New)

### **Regional**

- Dominion Dental EPO (New)
- Emblem Health
- HealthPartners (New)
- Humana EPO/PPO
- Triple S Salud

## 2021 Vision Carriers

### Nationwide/International

- Aetna Vision
- BCBS FEP Vision
- MetLife Vision (New)
- UnitedHealthcare Vision
- VSP

FEDVIP has 3.3 million unique enrollees including 1.7 million enrollees enrolled in both programs. In total, the program provides dental and vision benefits to a total of 6.9 million federal employees, uniformed service members, retirees and their family members.

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## **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. [Source: Buckley AFB RAO Newsletter June 2020]

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## **CHANGES TO TRICARE SELECT IN 2021**

: Starting on Jan. 1, 2021, TRICARE Select Group A retired beneficiaries must pay monthly enrollment fees in order to maintain their TRICARE health coverage. If you or your sponsor's initial enlistment or appointment occurred before January 1, 2018, you are in Group A. This is a change, and the first time this beneficiary group will pay enrollment fees. This change was mandated by Congress in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year Oct 1 - Sept 30 2017. Congress granted the Defense Health Agency a delay in implementation to calendar year 2021.

You must set up a monthly allotment through your Department of Defense (DoD) pay center, where feasible, for your monthly payments to start on Jan. 1, 2021. For sponsors who don't receive funds through a DoD pay center, you can establish payments via electronic funds transfer, credit card, or debit card. The following enrollment fees will be collected via monthly installments from the sponsor's military pay system where retired pay is disbursed: Individual plan: \$12.50 per month; Family plan: \$25 per month. Deductibles: \$150 Individual/\$300 Family. For additional information: <https://health.mil/About-MHS/MHS-Toolkits/TRICARE-Select-Fees-for-Group-A-retirees-Toolkit?utm>

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## **CORRECTING & REQUESTING MILITARY RECORDS**

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form instructions advise mailing the package to the address listed on the form, which has addresses for each Service Branch, as well as website addresses for additional info. 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 **dpsonp.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. [Source: Buckley AFB RAO]

## **LINK TO RETIREE PUBLICATIONS**

**Army Echoes**

**<http://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement>**

**Navy Shift Colors:**

**[www.shiftcolors.navy.mil](http://www.shiftcolors.navy.mil)**

**Air Force Afterburner:**

**[www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner](http://www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner)**

**Marine Corps Semper Fidelis:**

**[www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M\\_RA\\_HOME/MM/SR/RET\\_ACT/](http://www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME/MM/SR/RET_ACT/) Semper Fidelis**

**Coast Guard Evening Colors:**

**<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/psc/ras>**

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**INPUT:** If you have any suggestions for any type of additional articles you may like to have included in the future newsletters please email us. We look forward for more input from you and other agencies.

We will publish this newsletter four times a year if the supply of information is available.

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