

May 2019

Retired Military Newsletter

Travel website. The launch of the first and only military travel booking engine has been announced. It is <http://www.americanforcestravel.com>.

American Forces Travel (AFT) is a new MWR program arising from a joint service initiative combining the efforts of the five branches of service. Because the Internet is now the most popular way to research and book travel, MWR chose to evolve their travel offering to bring this to the convenience to the patron base. DoD has contracted with a world leader in travel, Priceline, to deliver high value travel benefits to the U.S. military community. AFT provides online leisure services to our MWR patrons, empowering them to revitalize, reconnect, and most importantly, be mission- ready.

In addition to enhancing quality of life for the military community, AFT will return revenue to MWR programs by providing commissions from every reservation made. While there are many for-profit online leisure travel offerings marketing to the military today, AFT is the only official joint service owned online leisure travel program.

It is a full-service travel booking platform, including air fare, discounted prices for more than 70,000 hotels worldwide, major car rental brands, travel packages, and cruise vacations. AFT also features package booking options, a way for users to save even more when you travel. With this new MWR leisure travel website, you can be stationed anywhere in the world and still get the best available prices, no matter where you live and work. AFT offers a Best Price Guarantee, so if you find a lower price for the same product within 24 hours of making the reservation, they will refund 100% of the price difference.

First-time users will be asked to verify their eligibility with the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) database. The verification process is secure and the requested information is not retained.

AFT is offering a Cruise Sweepstakes as an incentive to visit the website. The sweepstakes will have one, five-thousand-dollar Grand Prize and five, two thousand five hundred dollar First Prizes to use toward booking your next cruise on AFT. The best vacation is a free vacation, and it is simple to register for a chance to win one of these six prizes. (Source: ALCGPSC 026/19 20 Mar 19)

Commissary pickup. The commissary's curbside grocery pickup program started its expansion to new locations Friday, while also announcing the closure of the three current locations — and adding a service fee. The program, known as Click2Go, has been available for free through a pilot program at three commissaries — at [Fort Lee](#), Virginia; [Offutt Air Force Base](#), Nebraska; and [Travis Air Force Base](#), California — since 2013. Now, the system has added its first new

location: [Fort Eustis](#), Virginia. But at the same time, officials announced that the Fort Lee, Offutt and Travis locations will be shuttering June 1. And although the service at Eustis will be free for a promotional period through the end of March, shoppers there will pay a \$4.95 service fee per order starting April 1, officials said in a release. (Source: Week of March 04, 2019 Military.com)

VA Appeals. Did you file a VA claim and disagree with the decision?

With the implementation of the VA Appeals Modernization Act on **February 19**, you have more choice in how you resolve a disagreement with a VA decision. You can also expect a more efficient, timely and transparent process. This new process is the result of years of collaboration between VA, Veterans and Veterans Service Organizations.

Under the new law, Veterans can choose one of three options to have a disagreement reviewed:

- **Option 1: Higher-Level Review Lane** Select this option if there is no additional evidence to submit, but you believe there may have been an error in the initial decision. A more experienced reviewer will take a fresh look at the previous decision and may overturn it.
- **Option 2: Supplemental Claim Lane** Choose this option if you have new and relevant evidence to support a claim. VA will also assist in gathering evidence.
- **Option 3: Appeal Lane** You can appeal directly to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

Visit [VA.gov](#) for more on the new appeals process and for information on all VA benefits. (Source: VA 1 March 2019)

VA Vision care. The VA is making screening for eye care much easier and more accessible for Veterans, especially Veterans living in rural areas.



The VA has developed an eye-screening program called Technology-based Eye Care Services (TECS). TECS found possible vision-threatening disease in nearly one in three patients. This is a valuable advancement because Veterans are at higher risk for eye disease than the average U.S. person. Access to eye care is challenging within the VA network of hospitals and clinics because it is VA's third busiest outpatient clinical service. TECS is being used at VA facilities across the country.

Rural veterans face many more barriers to accessing eye care because of distance, cost to travel, and difficulty finding care in the community as many live in medically underserved areas. And rural Veterans may be diagnosed in later stages of eye disease more often than their non-rural counterparts due to lack of access to specialty care. The most common eye problems Veterans get are cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration and damage to the eyes from diabetes.

After a Veteran makes an appointment, they go to their local Community-Based Outpatient Clinic where an eye technician performs the testing. With specially trained ophthalmology technicians at the Veterans primary care clinic, TECS uses state of the art eye equipment to perform a high-quality screening eye exam. The images are transmitted through the VA system to a doctor who reads images and prescribes the glasses which are mailed to the Veteran's home from the optical contractor.

DFAS says. Many military retirees who are eligible for DoD retired pay are also eligible for VA disability pay. The laws and regulations that apply when a retiree is eligible for both types of pay are complex and can be confusing, so we created a new webpage that explains the basics of the VA waiver, and the relationship between VA disability pay, retired pay, Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP) and Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC).

The law requires that a military retiree waive a portion of their gross DoD retired pay, dollar for dollar, by the amount of their Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation pay; this is known as the VA waiver (or VA offset). The new webpage provides an overview of how the VA waiver works. It also summarizes the two programs created by Congress to allow eligible military retirees to recover some or all of the retired pay that retirees waive for VA disability pay: CRDP and CRSC.

In addition, the webpage also explains the impact on retired pay, CRDP and CRSC when a VA disability rating changes, as well as how retroactive disability rating changes might result in a retired pay or CRDP/CRSC Processing (CCP) debt.

We hope this webpage will help retirees better understand how these programs interact.

The webpage is under the "Disability Entitlements" section of the Retired Military & Annuitants area of the DFAS.mil website at: <https://go.usa.gov/xEMry> (Source: DFAS newsletter March 2019)

Withdrawing from SBP. Early in April, DFAS is implementing a new, simpler process for withdrawing from Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage due to a qualifying VA disability. With this new process, the withdrawal form and required fact sheet will be available to download in a PDF packet from the Forms page on DFAS website instead of contacting DFAS to request the form. Also, retirees will no longer need to obtain separate VA eligibility information. DFAS worked with VA to obtain the information electronically on the retiree's behalf.

With the new process, eligible retirees can download the PDF withdrawal packet, read the fact sheet, fill out the form and send it to DFAS. DFAS will then verify eligibility and process the withdrawal, if qualified. It's simpler and faster. DFAS also has a new webpage with information about the new withdrawal process and additional information about factors to consider in withdrawing from SBP coverage at: <https://go.usa.gov/xEMrw>. (Source: DFAS newsletter March 2019).

The **Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH)** – which offers affordable independent living to eligible veterans in its Washington, D.C., and Gulfport, Miss. locations, is now accepting applications for immediate residency.

The 2019 rate for independent living is 46.7% of the resident's gross monthly income or \$1,990.00, whichever is less.

Veterans must be able to live independently upon admission to the AFRH. This means being able to care for personal needs, attend a dining facility for meals, and keep all medical appointments.

For those accepted into independent living, we also offer higher levels of care – including assisted living, long-term care, and memory support.

In Washington, DC, AFRH offers residents a scenic, wooded campus just minutes from downtown - home to museums, monuments, and a host of entertainment, sports and other cultural options.

Amenities include a nine-hole golf course and driving range, walking paths, stocked fishing ponds, and modern recreation facilities.

Many veterans choose to live at AFRH for the superior medical, dental and vision care offered, with amenities that include: private rooms with a shower, cable TV, three delicious daily meals prepared by licensed nutritionists in our modern dining facility, a wellness program and deluxe fitness center, movie theater, bowling center and hobby shops.

Services include recreational activities and resident day trips, a full-service library, barber shop, 24 / 7 security, beauty salon, computer center, mailboxes, ATM, campus PX/BX and off-campus shuttle and public transportation. (Source: DFAS newsletter March 2019)

Survivor's checklist. We should all have a checklist to help our surviving family members settle our affairs when we die. If you don't have a checklist to assist family members settle your affairs, we have compiled one which relates to retirees. If you are interested in obtaining the checklist, contact this RAO. Our contact information is located at the end of this letter.

Job search. If you are interested, this look like a good way to search for employment with organizations interested in hiring veterans.
http://oasnx.monster.com/RealMedia/ads/click_nx.ads/us.milnewsletters.en/discounts@x40.x41.x42.x43.x36.x50.x51.x20.x21.x22.x23.x90.x91.x92.x93!x90? RM NX ID =20190404

Seminar. our annual Retiree Seminar is scheduled for the Los Angeles Air Force Base on Saturday, 1 June 2019.



We serve all the men and women of the
Armed Forces of the United States of America

The Retired Activities Office, Naval Weapons Station, Seal Beach, California is located at 800 Seal Beach Blvd in Bldg. 22, Rm 2, Seal Beach, CA 90740-5000. We are here to serve all Armed Forces retirees and are open M-Th 0900 to 1500; Fri 0900 to 1200. You may contact us at (562)-626-7152 or by emailing us at rao-nwssb@navy.mil



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[Retired Activities Website](#)