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We know you're retired, but in this issue we are going to talk to you about the hard work required to manage your military retirement pay.

Once you've retired from military service, it's natural to think that everything is settled and that your pay will always arrive on time, in the proper amount and deposited in your bank account. While you may feel it's time to kick back and relax, there's still the job of protecting your financial security and the financial well-being of your loved ones.

The bottom line is you have to take an active role in managing your pay account; and now is the best time to set up your routines to make that job easier.

In this issue, we're including articles on how to perform an annual audit of your retirement pay account and how to educate your beneficiaries to play their role when the time comes. But first we've got some news about updates to the myPay system; how they will affect you and what new features will help you manage your military retirement pay.

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### Key to Managing Your Retirement Pay: Maintaining Your myPay Account

The key to effective day-to-day management of your retirement pay is creating and maintaining a **myPay** account. **myPay** is the most important tool for managing your pay. The email address you enter into **myPay** will also become our primary way of staying in touch with you and keeping you current. For retirees and annuitants, there is nothing more important than creating, using and maintaining the security of your **myPay** account.

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### myPay Simplifies Password Requirements

Each year, the myPay system is upgraded to meet technical and security requirements, as well as to add new and improved functions for its 6.6 million account holders. The Spring 2014 release, implemented on May 17, delivered password rules more in line with the online banking industry standards, while maintaining DFAS' commitment to system and personal security. A number of functional additions and enhancements for military retirees, service members and federal civilian employees have been designed to increase our customers' ability to easily manage their pay.

#### What changed for retirees on May 17th?

**Simplified passwords:** myPay password rules now allow for simpler, more memorable passwords while ensuring passwords remain strong and more secure. While still meeting the intent of DoD cyber security rules, passwords can be shorter and will last longer between changes.

Current users who access their account using a log-in password will be able to create a new password between 9 to 30 characters in length. Additionally, the new password will be valid for 150 days. About 10 days before expiration, users will be notified by SMARTDOCS to change their password.

"Balancing security with usability can be challenging with the state of cyber security today," said Dave McDermott, DFAS deputy director for Operations. "This update addresses our customers concerns for creating simpler, more memorable passwords while ensuring passwords remain strong and more secure."

Starting May 17th, passwords must:

- Be 9 to 30 characters in length
- Contain at least one UPPERCASE letter
- Contain at least one lowercase letter
- Contain at least one number (0-9)
- Contain at least one of the following special characters: # @ \$ ^ ! \* + \_ %

Passwords will remain valid for 150 days. About 10 days before expiration, users will be notified via SMARTDOCS to change their password.

The password reset security questions introduced in 2012 will be very important to allow users to reset passwords online and avoid calling the DFAS Care Center for assistance.

More information on the myPay Spring 2014 release and the new password requirements are available at the DFAS website <http://www.dfas.mil/mypayinfo.html>. Before you create your password, check out our Tips and Tricks page at <http://www.dfas.mil/mypayinfo/password.html>

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### Guidelines for Updating Your Password

When you update your password after 150 days, you must change at least four characters from your previous password. Your updated password cannot be one of your last 5 passwords.

About 10 days before your password expires, you will receive an email alert advising you to update your password. Please make sure your email address recorded on your myPay profile is current to ensure you receive these notices.

Make sure you're ready to create your new password! A video tutorial and detailed instructions on updating your password can be found at <http://www.dfas.mil/mypayinfo/password.html>

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**Keep in Touch, Make Sure We Have Your eMail Address on File!**

Once you have a myPay account, the single most important thing you can do to keep current with issues affecting your retirement pay is to keep a current email address on file.

You will be able to receive an email notification when your monthly eRAS becomes available. We will also use your email address as our primary method of contacting you or sharing any news that may affect your retired pay. Having an email address on file also makes it much easier to update your myPay password.

Take a minute right now and check to make sure your email addresses are current. At the bottom of your **myPay** account menu, select "Email Address" to view the email addresses you have on file with us. Make sure you indicate the primary email address you want us to use, and check the box to indicate if the address is still valid. Delete any old email addresses you no longer use.

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## Basics of Managing Your Retirement Pay: Keep Your Information Current!

You'd notice if your banking information was wrong, wouldn't you?

Probably, but there's a lot of other important information to keep updated to make sure you're getting all the retired pay you deserve. Keep your information current so that we can get in touch with you if there's a problem on your account. Don't let anything slip through the cracks!

Here's a list of things to check at least once a year.

### 1. Update your address

You might be surprised to learn that we get a lot of returned mail. If you've moved and haven't told us, we won't know how to reach you. From an audit of your account to a returned payment, lots of things come up that we need to contact our members about. Make sure we have a way of reaching you that is current and correct! Log in to your **myPay** account and view your correspondence address as part of your annual account check-up.

For more ways to update your contact information, consult our website at <http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/manage/changeofaddress.html>

### 2. Update your email address

Make sure we have an email address on file for you and that it is current. Email is our easiest and fastest way to communicate with our members. If we have your email address on file, you will hear news faster and get more details when it arrives. So go paperless and stay in the know!

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Take a minute right now and check to make sure your addresses are current. At the bottom of your **myPay** account menu, select "Email Address" to view the email addresses you have on file with us. Make sure you indicate the primary email address you want us to use, and check the box to indicate if the address is still valid. Delete any old email addresses you no longer use.

### 3. Check your state and federal income tax withholding

If your income changes or if you move to another state, you should look at any federal or state income tax withholding information we have in your account. Don't wait until April 15 to discover we've been deducting taxes for a state you no longer have to file in!

You can verify and update your tax withholding information yourself in **myPay**. Click on your **Federal Withholding** to see if your marital status and number of exemptions are correct. Then click on your **State Withholding** to make sure both the state and the amount are what you want.

### 4. Review your allotments

Review your allotments at least once a year. Check each allotment and your allotment amounts. Make sure each allotment is current and the amount is correct. If you need to stop, start, or change an allotment, see our instructions in this issue on how to update allotments using **myPay**

<http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/manage/allotments.html>

Finally, please keep in mind that not all allotments are listed in **myPay**. Some common allotments that are **not** shown on **myPay** include Delta Dental, Tricare and NSGLI, all of which are listed in your latest eRAS. As part of your yearly audit, you should review your monthly eRAS and verify any allotments that you can't change on **myPay** by contacting that company or organization directly.

### 5. Have there been changes in your family?

When you get married, lose a spouse or have children, the change can affect a lot on your account. From federal income tax withholding to Survivor Benefit Plan costs, the amount of retired pay you receive each month can change.

If there have been any changes in your family, please send us a copy of the official documentation (marriage license, divorce decree, death certificate or birth certificate), as well as a request for how you want us to update your account and we'll get things the way they need to be.

Always notify DFAS as soon as possible about a major life change. You can fax your documents to 1-800-469-6559 or mail them to DFAS, PO Box 7130,

London, KY 40742-7130. Always make sure your Social Security Number is clearly visible on the document so we will know whose account to update.

## 6. Check your beneficiary designations

Lastly, who have you chosen as a beneficiary for any arrears of retired pay when you die? Make sure you're still satisfied with your designation and check your address book to confirm that *their* addresses are up to date. If you have any questions about what this benefit may be, please see the "Educate Your Beneficiaries" article in this newsletter.

You can check this information by clicking on the **Beneficiary for Arrears** link in **myPay**. Now you can even make changes to your designations and update their address information through **myPay**.

So pick a date! It doesn't matter if it's your retirement date, birthday or the first of the year. Set a yearly reminder to look over your account to make sure you're playing it safe!

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## Managing Your Retirement Pay: Educate Your Beneficiaries

Sometimes the most difficult conversations to have are the most important, like helping your loved ones be prepared for when you die. Talking to your family about this topic beforehand is a way to show that you care, and it will help to ease the financial burdens they may face.

Military retirees can have beneficiaries for their arrears of pay (AOP), and if they have elected coverage under the Survivor Benefit Plan, they will have an SBP beneficiary as well. This article is intended to help you prepare your AOP beneficiary to file a claim when the time comes.

**First**, make sure you understand what an Arrears of Pay beneficiary is and the nature of the benefit to which they are entitled. Find more information on this benefit here.

<http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/provide/aop.html>

**Second**, tell your beneficiaries who they are. Hopefully, you've designated your beneficiaries for any arrears of pay that may be due. When no beneficiary is named, the payment is made to the highest person in what is known as the "Order of Precedence." The Order or Precedence is the federally mandated order of inheritance that applies to legacies without a designated beneficiary.

Find more information on "Order of Precedence" here.

<http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/provide/aop/aop-order.html>

Please keep in mind that it can take many months to locate your survivors, identify who comes highest in the Order of Precedence and then make the payment. That's why

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having a current, correct, and complete beneficiary designation on file is important to prevent delays or errors in your arrears payments.

Designating a sole beneficiary in your will does not automatically make that person your AOP beneficiary. AOP determination is based exclusively on the AOP beneficiary election in your retired pay account. To review your current arrears of pay beneficiaries and to make changes, visit the **Beneficiaries for Arrears** link once you've signed in to your **myPay** account.

For more detailed instructions on designating an Arrears of Pay beneficiary on **myPay**, you can review the article on our website

<http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/provide/aop/aop-beneficiary.html> .

**Third**, let your beneficiary know that sometimes money that has already been deposited into your checking account needs to be returned to us. Military retired pay is only payable for as long as you are alive. Entitlement to your military retirement ends when you die. Most banks will automatically deduct any overpaid funds without warning, which can be troublesome, especially if you share a joint account.

**Fourth**, tell your beneficiaries what documents they will need to send in to make their claim. One copy of the death certificate that includes the manner of death needs to be sent to us. Also, each beneficiary should complete a Claim for Unpaid Compensation (SF 1174). It's a great idea to go over this claim form with them to make sure they will have all of the information they need to fill it out. If you want a more detailed explanation of this process, check out the instructions on our website

<http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/survivors/Retiree-death.html>

**Fifth**, let your beneficiaries know that sometimes there is no money due. Each situation is different. It just depends how up to date the account was kept. You can make sure your account is in good standing by [performing a yearly audit](#).

**Sixth**, when an arrears payment is made, there is a statement on the check that reads, "Retired Pay Payable only during life of Payee." Please do not let this statement alarm your beneficiaries. As long as the beneficiary's name is accurate on the check, the check can be cashed.

We want to take the best care of your loved ones when you die, you can help us by having a conversation with them to prepare them so they can know what to expect. We know talking about it might be difficult, but hopefully this checklist gives you an idea of the things to say. Don't put it off. Have a conversation about it with your loved ones today.

Look for an article in our next issue giving you tips for preparing your SBP beneficiary to file a claim.

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### Debit Card Program Now Available for Retirees

A Treasury mandate requires us to pay our military, civilian and retired customers by electronic funds transfer (EFT).

Beginning March 1, 2013, most of you who received a paper check began receiving notifications that you must deposit your pay directly to your savings or checking account.

You will continue to receive these notifications until you sign up for EFT, sign up for the debit card solution the Department of the Treasury has made available, or receive a waiver from the Department of the Treasury mandate.

With direct deposit, we send your payment straight to your bank account. It gives you immediate access to your money the day your payment is due. It also eliminates the risk of lost or stolen checks, forged signatures and identity theft.

About 99 percent of DFAS customers already receive their pay by direct deposit. They're enjoying being paid on time without the risks of lost or misrouted mail. Direct deposit gives them the control they want over their personal finances while increasing their financial security.

#### Related Links

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- [Info for Former Spouses of Retirees](#)
- [myPay Login Tips for Retirees](#)
- [Debit Card Solution](#)
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#### How to Start Direct Deposit

For those customers with a **myPay** account, simply log into **myPay** at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx> and enter your bank routing and account numbers. DFAS will require about a week before pay is deposited in your checking or savings account.

**Military retirees and annuitants** without a **myPay** account can find the Fast Start Direct Deposit form here <http://www.dfas.mil/dfas/retiredmilitary/forms.html>. They can then complete it and send it to DFAS, U.S. Military Retired Pay, P.O. Box 7130, London, KY 40742-7130.

**Former spouses of military retirees** can find more information about setting up direct deposit here <http://www.dfas.mil/garnishment/payinformation.html>.

**Military members** or **civilian employees** paid by DFAS should contact their base finance office, employer's customer service representative (payroll liaison) or human resources office to start direct deposit if they're unable to access **myPay**.

Those needing additional assistance can call DFAS customer service at 1-800-321-1080 (for retirees and annuitants) or 1-888-332-7411 (for military and civilian employees)

#### **Advantages of Direct Deposit**

- 1. On time:** Checks sent through the mail take time to reach you. Foul weather, misrouted mail and other events can make your wait even longer. If your check becomes lost or stolen, that time increases as you wait for a replacement check and your bills go unpaid. Direct deposit eliminates the wait. Your money is in your bank account on pay day.
- 2. More secure:** Your mailed check goes through a lot of hands before it reaches you. From printing to transport to your mail box, the more stops it makes, the more opportunities there are for it to get lost or stolen. Even when you visit your bank to deposit it, your check can be handled by up to nine people before it is processed. Eliminate the risk and take control of your money. Direct deposit is a sure and easy way to do this.
- 3. More convenient:** No need to drive to the bank to deposit your check means less gas and time. You'll have more time to enjoy the things you really like to do. And if you cash your check at a grocery or retail store, or if you use a check cashing service, direct deposit saves on fees you might otherwise pay.
- 4. Easy:** Don't have a bank account? Find a bank or credit union in your area that is reputable and provides the services you need at little or no cost. And make sure they offer FDIC coverage of your account and accept direct deposit. It's the best way you can take control of your finances and protect yourself at the same time.

#### **Debit Card Option Now Available**

We understand that a small number of benefit recipients might not be able to open bank accounts, so we have worked with the Department of the Treasury to provide you with a debit card option similar to the one the Treasury is offering for Department of Veterans Affairs and Social Security payment recipients. You can find out more details about this option in the link provided in the box above.

If you want to continue receiving paper checks, you must apply for a waiver. We will post information on the waiver application process as it becomes available.

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