



# U.S. PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE MILITARY ASSOCIATION



Fall 2023

## Gearing up for a new season

This is our first new issue of the *Scuttlebutt* since 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic had far-reaching effects for the world, and many of us feel as though we are finally waking up. Large gatherings and activities have restarted and our agency Voluntary Employee Organizations (VEOs) are enjoying getting back together, both in-person and virtually. At the UMA, we've always enjoyed getting together in-person to swap stories, wisdom, and advice. During the pandemic, we learned that we can still enjoy connection with fellow veterans and military advocates through, for example, virtual coffee breaks (see *upcoming schedule on the right*).



Alford Kindred, UMA Pres.

In May, we held the annual Memorial Day Tribute and Walk of Remembrance from the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) Madison atrium to the Alexandria National Cemetery (*see page 5*). Matthew Seelinger of the Army Historical Foundation spoke on honoring our nation's fallen heroes.

At this summer's VEO Bash (*next page*), we worked with the Patent & Trademark Office Society and the Asian Pacific American Network to put together a delicious menu and a red carpet-worthy 360-degree camera experience for our attendees. USPTO Deputy Director Derrick Brent spoke about the importance of VEOs.

Our weekly virtual Coffee Break offers us the opportunity to learn about each other's experiences, hear about local veteran businesses, and reconnect to our military roots.

I'd like to highlight some upcoming events to become more connected as a community:  
Nov. 9: Veterans Day (Special Speaker: USPTO Director of Communications Eric Atkisson)  
Monthly Happy Hour at Foster's Grille  
Membership quarterly meeting

Whether you've been with the USPTO for years or just joining us, we're glad you're here. If you haven't joined the UMA yet, I'd like to personally invite you. You don't have to be a military veteran to participate. Membership dues are just \$2/pay period--less than a single cup of fancy coffee. See below for more information.

## Who We Are

The USPTO Military Association (UMA) is a USPTO affinity group and 501(c)(3) non-profit charity with a mission to provide **fellowship, mentorship, and support** for military veterans working at the USPTO and to help educate others on the important contributions that veterans have made—and continue to make—to the workforce and our nation. Membership is open to everyone and prior military service is not required. Contact the UMA for more information or to join (it only takes one short form) at [uma@uspto.gov](mailto:uma@uspto.gov).

CONTINUING TO SERVE

## UMA COFFEE BREAK PAST & FUTURE

**AUG 15:** Ivana Miranda of Federally Employed Women shared experiences

**AUG 23:** Dean Dominique offered advice for applying for VA disability

**AUG 29:** Liz Caraway on UMA Communications

**SEP 5:** Paul Sotoudeh on Office of the Ombudsman

**SEP 12:** Roman Gray on 9/11

**SEP 19:** Mock Interview plans

**SEP 26:** Julianne Taylor shares career story

**OCT 4:** Keith Delahoussaye shares experiences



The weekly UMA Coffee Break is a virtual gathering that offers UMA members the chance to tell their story, hear about veteran organizations, and ask questions. Coffee Breaks are every Tuesday morning at 9:30 a.m. and the Teams meeting link is distributed via UMA member email distribution list. Contact [uma@uspto.gov](mailto:uma@uspto.gov) if you are a member who is not receiving the invites.

## CONNECT WITH US

[UMA website](#)  
[UMA SharePoint](#)  
[UMA Facebook Group](#)  
[UMA Facebook page](#)  
[UMA Twitter](#)





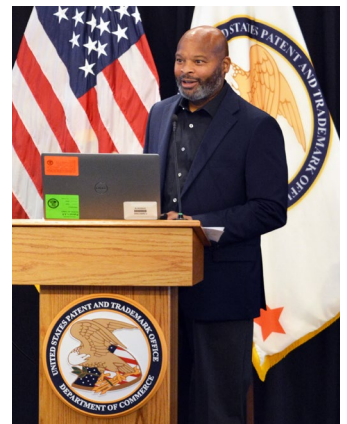
## UMA rocks the VEO Summer Bash

USPTO team members gathered in the Clara Barton Auditorium to celebrate summer during the annual Voluntary Employee Organization (VEO) Summer Bash, July 7, 2023. Sponsored by the UMA, the Patent & Trademark Office Society, and the Asian Pacific American Network, the gathering encouraged conversation, friendship, and mentoring.

“This is what it looks like when VEOs come together for the common cause of helping USPTO colleagues manage their work-life balance,” said UMA president Alford Kindred.

USPTO Deputy Director Derrick Brent also spoke about the importance of connection in a time of teleworking.

(Photos by Elizabeth Caraway/USPTO)



### Editorial Staff

Executive Sponsor: Fred Steckler  
UMA President: Alford Kindred  
Editor-in-Chief: Elizabeth Caraway  
Copy Editing: Dean Dominique, Nasir Ahmed, and Robin Hylton

*The Scuttlebutt is produced with volunteer hours and may include stories, links, and references not directly connected to the USPTO Military Association, but which may be of interest to our veteran community. If you have questions or comments about any of the newsletter content, please contact us at [uma@uspto.gov](mailto:uma@uspto.gov). We appreciate feedback as we strive to offer the best possible product to our members.*

## Why you should be an active UMA member

By Michael Argüello, UMA Vice President

The UMA knows how to make a statement with our Memorial Day and Veterans Day events, but you may not be aware of everything else our affinity group does.

We have discovered that in a post-pandemic world, the UMA can still thrive. We have been able to engage with more of our membership, as evidenced by the level of attendance we have for our weekly coffee breaks, but we are always looking for ways we can do more and engage our membership working remotely.

So why you should be a member of UMA?

Your membership dues go toward worthy causes like donations to wounded soldiers as well as the family of deceased veterans in our area. We have also donated to or held fundraisers organizations that support veterans like the Gary Sinise Foundation.

We promote awareness of other veteran organization volunteer opportunities.

The UMA had its first mentorship program that is wrapping up and it went so well that we will definitely pursue round two in 2024 incorporating the best of 2023's program.

The UMA also provides you with a network steeped in a wealth of diverse experiences all across the USPTO, and you are bound to make some great long-lasting friendships and possibly find your next mentor. Our members know that when we bring in a speaker, there's a great chance we will come away from it with a new perspective. The more we learn from each other's unique experiences, the more we see how much in common we have, and what we are truly capable of. Most of our battles are not fought while in uniform and are known only to the individual, and we have featured so many of these speakers.

If you aren't already, we hope you consider joining the UMA family as a member. Prior military service or any military affiliations are not a requirement for membership. In fact, because we are a charitable organization, anyone can become a member whether they work for USPTO or not.



### Meet your UMA Board members

**President:** Alford Kindred  
**Vice President:** Michael Argüello  
**Secretary:** Robin Hylton  
**Treasurer:** TBD

**Board Members at Large:**

Joseph Fischetti  
Jackie Webb  
Camelia Gibson  
Clifton Randolph  
Michael Cleveland  
Marvin Harris

**Regional Offices Board Members:**

Roman Gray - Dallas Regional Office  
Amber Ostrup - Silicon Valley Regional Office  
Abdhesh Jha - Denver Regional Office  
Collin Nole - Detroit Regional Office





## Meet a Teammate: Dorene Matheis

Reprinted with permission from [Federally Employed Women](#). Courtesy photos.

Dorene Matheis, Chief Learning Officer at the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), loves her life. She is the mother of two adult sons and a daughter-in-law who make her very proud, one-half of a dynamic Army veteran couple, an effective goal-setter, and an eternal optimist. As the current leader of a high-performing team, she set a standard of team norms while establishing and growing the USPTO Leadership Academy.

Dorene is a patriot in every sense of the word. She finds joy in watching the New England Patriots win games. When she's not engrossed in football, you might find her hiking, reading, riding her motorcycle, playing trivia games, knitting, or traveling. On the one hand, she knows how to have a great time. On the other hand, she is serious about getting work done.



Dorene's focus was evident when she joined the United States Army. She resolved to become a legal specialist and calculated the entrance exam score needed to achieve that goal. She studied hard for the Armed

Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test. "I was a recruiter's dream!" she says. Her preparation paid off, and she was soon signing the paperwork to join. Dorene's dedication continued to be an asset during her military service.

Having a spouse who was also active in the military was challenging for Dorene and Bryant, yet they carved out time for each other and their two sons. This required constant sacrifice, reconfiguring plans, and being stretched to their limits, but they worked together to make it happen. Because they had been married for six years prior to Dorene's decision to enlist, they had time to plan together, manage expectations, and move forward in sync with each other's goals. Dorene admits it took years to mature in achieving balance, but she shares wisdom learned along the way:

I am committed to being fully present for whatever I'm doing either at work or in my home life. I believe we earn our time off (e.g. leave time) so we should be able to enjoy

that time without distraction. For me, scheduling everything and getting it on the calendar is key to feeling like it's on track so I'm not continuing to think about it. Balance for me also means empowering and trusting others to do their work or to back me up when I'm not there.



Of course, things do not always go as planned. At the time when she retired from the military, Dorene had reached the positions of Chief Warrant Officer Four and Chief, Administrative Division in the Office of the Judge Advocate General and US Army Legal Services Agency. Prior to that, however, she found herself in a situation that forced her to reevaluate her steps and shift gears:

There was a time when I was passed over for a position that I thought I'd been prepared for by my leadership and my mentors, and I thought it was a given. But it wasn't, and a colleague was offered the position instead. Suddenly, it seemed like my entire career path had been wiped away and I didn't know what was next for me. It was hard to resist feelings of betrayal and a loss of trust in others. I shared my disappointment with those I did trust, I reflected on what was most important to me, and I established new goals for myself and for my career. Looking back, it worked out so very well for me and was a big lesson in not getting too comfortable in a fixed mindset. It forced a growth mindset in me and was a perfect example of the adage, "what got you here won't get you there."

Dorene attributes her resilience to developing a growth mindset and being open to change. To her fellow veteran colleagues, she passes along this career guidance:

1. When opportunities present themselves, sincerely consider walking through those doors. Many of her career decisions were introduced by others who saw her potential and challenged her to do something different.
2. Likewise, when you recognize potential in others, encourage them to take bigger strides toward career-building activities like seeking a detail or doing an unusual assignment that broadens their skills, experience, and network.
3. Know your worth and be confident in it when making career decisions.



## A look back at Memorial Day 2023

The USPTO Military Association (UMA) hosted the annual Memorial Day Tribute and Walk of Remembrance from the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) Madison atrium to the Alexandria National Cemetery. Matthew Seelinger of the Army Historical Foundation provided remarks. (Photos by Jay Premack/USPTO)



Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, began during the American Civil War when citizens placed flowers on the graves of those who had been killed in battle--indeed, it is believed that the end of May was chosen as the date because flowers are in bloom. After World War I, it came to be observed in honor of those who had died in all U.S. wars, and its name changed to Memorial Day. Memorial Day was declared a national holiday through an act of Congress in 1971.

Unlike Veterans Day, Memorial Day honors all military members who have died while serving in U.S. forces.

## Want to help with Veterans Day UMA event planning?

Send an email to [uma@uspto.gov](mailto:uma@uspto.gov) with subject "Veterans Day."

CONTINUING TO SERVE





## Photos from around the services

**ARMY**



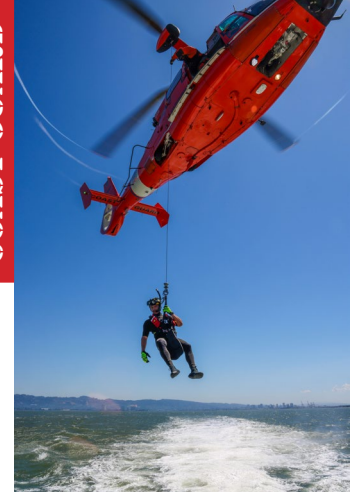
Joint Task Force 50 (JTF-50) search, rescue and recovery elements conduct search operations of areas damaged by wildfires in Lahaina, Maui, Aug. 18, 2023. Members of JTF-50 from the Hawaii Army and Air National Guard, U.S. Army Active Duty and Reserve are actively supporting Maui County authorities to provide immediate security, safety, and well-being to those affected by the wildfires to ensure unwavering support for the community of Maui and first responders. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Sean Walker)

**NAVY**



An MH-60R Sea Hawk, attached to the “Spartans” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 70, prepares to take off from the flight deck, Aug. 16, 2023. Gerald R. Ford is the U.S. Navy’s newest and most advanced aircraft carrier, representing a generational leap in the U.S. Navy’s capacity to project power on a global scale. The Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group is on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. Naval Forces Europe area of operations, employed by U.S. Sixth Fleet to defend U.S., allied, and partner interests. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Maxwell Orlosky)

**COAST GUARD**



The U.S. Coast Guard San Francisco Sector Search and Rescue (SAR) team rescue diver lowers himself from the Eurocopter MH-65 Dolphin onto the teams ship during the Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) in the San Francisco Bay, California on Aug.17, 2023. Rescue divers aid in identifying and assisting the pilot into the basket, they also help establish communication between the pilot and the Helo. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Colin Smith)

**MARINE CORPS**



U.S. Marines with Charlie Company, Battalion Landing Team 1/6, 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU(SOC)) Bravo Command Element, demonstrate how to use an M240 B machine gun to members of the Norwegian Army, as part of a Norwegian Bilateral Exercise in Setermoen, Norway, Aug. 14, 2023. The San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19) is on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. Naval Forces Europe area of operations, employed by U.S. Sixth Fleet to defend U.S., allied and partner interests. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Michele Clarke)

**SPACE FORCE**



U.S. Space Force Tech. Sgt. Vince Couch, 527th Space Aggressor Squadron (SAS), conducts Global Positioning System (GPS) electromagnetic interference training with a GPS electromagnetic attack system at Schriever Space Force Base, Colorado, July 18, 2023. The 527th SAS’s mission is to know, teach, and replicate modern, emerging, and integrated space threats in order to prepare service, joint, and coalition forces to fight in and through a Contested, Degraded, and Operationally-limited environment. (U.S. Space Force photo by Ethan Johnson)

**AIR FORCE**



A U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon refuels from a U.S. Air Force KC-135 Stratotanker assigned to the 912th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron over the Arabian Gulf, Aug. 19, 2023. To maintain their efforts to protect the security and freedom of navigation across the area of responsibility, U.S. Air Forces Central (AFCENT) has bolstered their presence in the region. These actions reaffirm their unwavering commitment to maintaining stability and safeguarding global trade in this vital maritime route. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Farnsworth)

\*All photos this page are courtesy of the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service ([DVIDS](#))

## Headline highlights: A look at news affecting veterans

**New kind of myPay account for Gray Area Retirees:** For Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, and Air Force Reserve Gray Area Retirees (those who've retired but are not yet eligible to draw retired pay), there is a new "Future Retiree" myPay account to stay connected and informed between the time they stop drilling and the time they start receiving retired pay.

**Health care enrollment for veterans who deployed to combat zones:** Until 11:59 p.m. local time Sept. 30, 2023, veterans who deployed to a combat zone, never enrolled in VA health care, and left active duty between Sept. 11, 2001 and Oct. 1, 2013 are eligible to enroll directly in VA health care. This special enrollment period gives veterans who served in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other combat zones an opportunity to enroll in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits.

**VA expands breast cancer screenings and mammograms for veterans with potential toxic exposures:** Veterans under 40 who may have been exposed to burn pits and other toxins during their service are now eligible for breast cancer risk assessments and mammograms (as clinically appropriate) at VA.

**Blind veterans can now read decision letters:** For the first time ever, blind veterans can now read their VA benefits decision letters inside the VA Health and Benefits mobile app. This new feature is part of VA's move to improve its accessibility and enable veterans to view their decision letters immediately, online.

**The USPTO is helping veterans and military family members start new businesses:** The USPTO is engaging with the military community to foster entrepreneurship through in-person and virtual events, networking, and online resources.

**Director's Blog | Supporting our military community:** The USPTO continues to address assisting the military community with entrepreneurship efforts.

## Creative Corner

Please email your, or your family member's, veteran, civil service, or patriotic photos, original art, or short poetry to [uma@uspto.gov](mailto:uma@uspto.gov). Note that submission constitutes your approval for UMA to share the content in the newsletter and on social media and the editorial team reserves the right to approve or deny content. Have A LOT of creativity to share? Consider contributing to [Veterans' Voices](#), which publishes veteran prose, poetry, and art.



(Digital drawing by Charlotte C., age 12)



"Les Braves" Sculpture at Vierville-sur-Mer, on Omaha Beach in France. The three parts of the sculpture represent hope, liberty, and fraternity. (Photo by Elizabeth Caraway)





## Coming Soon: UMA Launches Youth Communications Apprenticeship

Have a student in your life who likes to write? The USPTO Military Association is offering members' children the opportunity to write for the group's Facebook page and this newsletter with the upcoming Youth Communications Apprenticeship program.

**Who is eligible?** If you are a dues-paying UMA member, your student writer is invited to reach out (parent must be cc'ed). They must be old enough to research and draft at least a couple paragraphs about significant military events, people, and history, but not yet graduated from college.

**What is required?** Students are asked to write one piece per quarter (4 profiles over the course of the year) but may write more for social media if desired. To ensure continuity, students are asked to commit to a year at a time. Journalistic "assignments" will be in line with student age and ability and may include writing about a famous historical battle, significant military figure, or even interviewing UMA members. We want to ensure it's a positive experience.

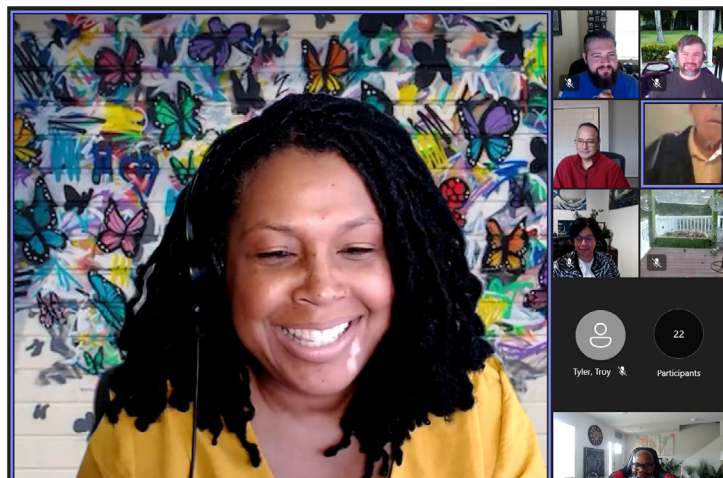
**Why?** For young writers building a portfolio, resume, or curriculum vitae, having links to published works on public-facing websites is a boon. This is an opportunity for young writers to practice their craft, get direction from experts, and share it. The *Scuttlebutt* editor will work with students on their writing. Older students may be asked to mentor younger students.

**When?** Students will be asked to complete their first written piece by Dec. 1. The sooner they sign up, the sooner they will get their assignment(s).

Questions or ready to sign up? Email [UMA@uspto.gov](mailto:UMA@uspto.gov). NOTE: Parent must be cc'ed in all emails with minors.



(Pixabay stock photo)



*Ivana Miranda of Federally Employed Women shares her career story and experiences during a UMA Coffee Break*

**Have a message to share?**

**The USPTO Military Association is looking for Coffee Break speakers.**

Contact [UMA@uspto.gov](mailto:UMA@uspto.gov).

## Join our new Facebook group: USPTO Military Association Mess

Now that more members of UMA are teleworking, it can be more difficult to ask questions, share accomplishments, and get to know one another. Our new unofficial Facebook group, [USPTO Military Association Mess](#), seeks to provide a place to do that. The tongue-in-cheek name refers both to the "beautiful mess" that is everyday life, as well as a military mess, a designated area where military personnel socialize and eat. Fun fact: the root of the word "mess" is the Old French word "mes," meaning a "portion of food."



# Let's talk about why you should continue to inspire Americans

By Mark Overberg, Director, Army Retirement Services

Reprinted with permission from [Aug. 2023 issue of Army Echoes](#)

Did you know that less than 7 percent of Americans are veterans? And less than 0.6 percent of Americans are retired from the military?

**The number of veterans in the United States declined by about one third, from 26.4 million to 18.0 million between 2000 and 2018.<sup>1</sup>**

Most Americans aren't aware that the "Greatest Generation" is almost gone, and our Korean War veterans and Vietnam War veterans are now increasingly leaving us.

**Fewer than 500,000 World War II veterans were alive in 2018, down from 5.7 million in 2000.<sup>1</sup>**

And the trend is expected to continue.

**By 2046, the Department [of Veterans Affairs] estimates there will be around 12.5 million veterans, a decrease of about 35% from current numbers.<sup>2</sup>**

What is my point?

As fewer and fewer Americans serve in the military, three things happen:

- 1) There are fewer veterans to explain what serving means, and why military service is necessary and important to Americans.
- 2) Americans lose touch with their military.
- 3) The civil-military divide widens. That's dangerous in a democracy.

Each veteran's voice counts. There are fewer and fewer of us. If you are quiet, if you leave this mission to other veterans, Americans will forget, and America's democracy will be threatened.

You can't be quiet. We need you to inspire Americans. You can be humble, and yet inspiring. They may not want to hear war stories, but they do need to understand what day-to-day military service is about and why they should encourage their children to serve.

<sup>1</sup>[Census Bureau Releases New Report on Veterans, June 2, 2020](#)  
<sup>2</sup>[The changing face of America's veteran population, April 5, 2021](#)



DVIDS photo

## Military Retiree Newsletters



[Army Echoes](#)



[Air Force Afterburner](#)



[Coast Guard The Long Blue Line](#)



[Navy Shift Colors](#)



[Marine Corps Semper Fidelis](#)



[DFAS newsletter](#)



## UMA helps raise PTSD awareness with webinar

The USPTO Military Association (UMA), Patent and Trademark Office Society (PTOS) and ResponsAbility: USPTO Disability Advocates, commemorated Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Month on June 20 with [Dr. James Doty](#), Stanford University Professor and Director of the Compassion and Altruism Center.

Veteran Angela Jenkins highlighted different psychological trauma experienced by veterans on a daily basis.

Professor Doty highlighted his own childhood trauma, which is discussed in his book [Into the Magic Shop](#). Doty, an Army veteran, mentioned PTSD experienced by veterans as well as traumas affecting people throughout society. He also discussed the biological effects these individuals experience.



Dr. James Doty

Doty highlighted the neurological pathways of trauma, sympathetic nervous system and parasympathetic nervous system, and their role in trauma. In addition, he discussed developing self-empathy to treat depression and trauma. Lastly, he highlighted Stanford University's Center for Compassion and Altruism Research Education work related to PTSD.

The event was well attended by the USPTO community.

Missed the event but want to check out the content? Here's a link to the recording: [PTSD Awareness with Dr. James Doty](#)

## Veteran Resources and Contacts

USPTO Veteran Hiring Program Manager: Sharon Gibson, [sharon.gibson@uspto.gov](mailto:sharon.gibson@uspto.gov) or [HireVets@uspto.gov](mailto:HireVets@uspto.gov)

USPTO OHR Military Service Time Buy Back Contact: Gladys English, [gladys.english@uspto.gov](mailto:gladys.english@uspto.gov)

### [Veterans Affairs \(VA\) Information](#)

[GI Bill](#)

[Defense Finance and Accounting Service](#)

[TRICARE](#)

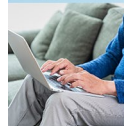
[Combat-Related Special Compensation](#)

[Veterans Service Records](#)

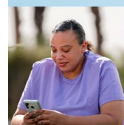
[Veterans Crisis Line](#): Dial 988 then Press 1, or Text 838255



**CALL** Dial 988 then Press 1



**CHAT** [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/Chat)



**TEXT** 838255



Looking for physical locations of veteran resources or information about state-specific benefits for areas like taxes, education, health insurance, and more? Check the benefit library tab at either <https://www.myairforcebenefits.us.af.mil> or <https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil>.